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THE CASE
OF THE
FREE-LABOUR
BRITISH COLONIES,

SUBMITTED TO THE
BRITISH LEGISLATURE & BRITISH NATION
FOR AN IMPARTIAL RE-HEARING.

LONDON:
JAMES MADDEN, 8, LEADENHALL STREET.
1852.

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The Sugar-planting Interest has not had fair play in this transaction, and it has not been intended that it should have fair play.—LORD GEORGE BENTINCK.

(See his *Life by Disraeli*, 5th Edit., p. 544.)

How much of the power of Government in this country depends upon the general belief of the people of this Empire that the public business is fairly and honourably transacted!—
EARL GREY.

(*Speech in the House of Lords, June 27th, 1848.*)

LONDON:
JAMES MADDEN, 8, LEADENHALL STREET.
1852.



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For detailed and other information upon this subject, besides that contained in the Parliamentary Blue Books on Sugar Cultivation, Slave Trade, and Colonies, the Reader is recommended to peruse the following works, which all contain much valuable matter :—

Edwards on the West Indies.

Madden's Cuba.

Bigelow's Jamaica.

Lord Dundonald's Notes on the British Islands.

Taylor's United States and Cuba.

Lord Stanley's Letter and Farther Facts.

A Cry from the Middle Passage.

Statement of Facts relative to the Island of Jamaica, by

Messrs. Thompson, Smith, and Girod.

Petition of Acting Committee of West India Planters and Merchants, May 13th, 1849.

Jacob Omnium's Letters to Lord John Russell.

INTRODUCTION.

IN laying the following statements before the public, the Colonial Sub-Committee of the National Association for the Protection of Industry and Capital throughout the British Empire deem it right to preface them by a few words, explanatory of the reasons which have induced this appeal, as well as of the object in view in making it.

Setting aside all intention, on the present occasion, of approaching that great fiscal and commercial question which has so long agitated the country,—inasmuch as, in the case before us, the object aimed at by the

present policy of Great Britain is in the nature of things impossible of attainment, whilst the application of that policy, by securing to the slave-holder the protection of coercive labour is in fact productive of the very evil it proposes to remove,—the Sub-Committee desire, in the following pages, to place the peculiar grievances of the sugar-growing Colonies fully and fairly before the country. And they deem this step to be absolutely necessary, because the constituted guardian of the interests of the Colonies, instead of pursuing such a course, has, throughout Parliamentary discussions involving the welfare or ruin of a million of fellow subjects, *adopted an entirely opposite mode of proceeding*, and one which the Sub-Committee believe to be an infringement of Parliamentary obligations and repulsive to the feelings of the British public.

It is almost unnecessary here to do more than call to mind the endeavours of the late Colonial Minister to extract from a letter,

stating the hopeless ruin of the writers, an apparent proof of colonial prosperity, and that too by means of a process which the Sub-Committee both hope and believe to be unparalleled in the annals of the British Forum.* It is perhaps unnecessary to do more than refer to the fact, that an all-important document could not, *at a time when it was earnestly demanded*,† be extracted from the hands of the highly-paid officer, who was alike answerable for its safe custody as well as for its ready production; and that another despatch, containing the very information which the Colonial Committee of the House of Commons were anxiously seeking, was kept back, although a document to which it gave cover was readily brought forward unasked for.‡ It is not perhaps absolutely necessary to state here that the Noble Lord, whose acts are in question, thought it no breach of Parliamentary duty and no in-

* See Appendix, pages 51, 86.

† *Ibid.*, page 73.

‡ *Ibid.*, page 77.

fringement of the rights of the colonists, not only to withhold or garble document after document, but to assert in his place as a Minister of the Crown, upon the sole authority of a Colonial newspaper* notoriously under Government control, that “the most satisfactory arrangements as to labour actually existed in British Guiana between the employers and the employed,” although despatches from the Governor of the Colony were *at that very time* in his possession, (of which, however, he made no mention,) stating that, “as matters stood on “the 31st December, 1847, half the estates of “the colony must go out of cultivation;”—the importance of which intimation is sufficiently proved by a despatch† written to the Colonies by Earl Grey himself, only four days after he had made the assertion above alluded to. Neither would it appear necessary to print *in extenso* the Report of a Board of Commissioners specially appointed to enquire into

* See Appendix, page 96.

† *Ibid.*, page 99.

the state of British Guiana,* which commences by stating “*the alarming picture of “ruin and distress in which all classes of the “community concur in representing the present “state of this once flourishing colony,”*” were it not the fact that, with this statement in his possession, Earl Grey, availing himself of some expression of hope from Governor Barkly, thought it admissible, in a speech on the 14th April, 1851, to set before the Parliament “*the dawning prosperity of the colony.*” †

* This Report, which will be found in the Appendix, page 96, *et seq.*, though received at the Colonial Office on February 26th, 1851, was not printed in the usual Blue Book for 1850; whilst a despatch, received on the 7th July following, calculated to produce a very different impression from that of the Report, was inserted. Nor did the former document make its appearance until published by an order of the House of Commons, under date August 1st, 1851, *at which time it had been privately printed and circulated for upwards of three months.*

† It is somewhat difficult to reconcile the importance attached by Earl Grey to a Governor’s “*opinion,*”—*as opposed to* a long series of carefully collected and substantiated *facts*,—with the following statement from the lips of the noble lord himself, which is to be found in page 92 of the Appendix :—

“The despatches which we received from the colonies are in one respect of

With facts like these ringing in their ears, with results before their eyes (very much arising from the temporary acceptance by Parliament of the above assertions as correct) which exhibit *the irrecoverable destruction* of so much British property and the reduction of so many British subjects to the brink of ruin, the Sub-Committee have deemed it a duty not only to publish the real state of the sugar-growing Colonies, *whose actual condition has been studiously withheld from the Country*, but to accompany these statements by the well-known despatch of the Colonial Secretary to Jamaica, bearing date October 30th, 1847;* and, setting aside for the moment all consideration of the unchristian act of this Country, in making the possession of slaves *compulsory* on the West Indies in the first instance, and when this blot

no slight importance—they are most important for the *facts* which they contain; but as to the *opinions* set forth in them, we consider, that here, in this country, we are enabled to take more enlarged views of general interests,—that *we are not biased by the presence of great distress*,—that we therefore can form sounder judgments; BUT THE FACTS, AS FACTS, ARE OF THE UTMOST VALUE.”

* See Appendix, page 42, *et seq.*

upon the English character was wiped out, the commission of a positive fraud by the payment of a compensation, or rather composition of less than forty per cent. upon the apparent (but by no means real) loss,—setting aside (if it be possible to do so even in thought) that monstrous injustice, the act of supporting, through a foreign medium, a system of cruelty and wickedness that could not be sanctioned in British possessions,—the Sub-Committee trust that *the entire falsification of all the expectations held out in the despatch alluded to, will be at once sufficient to prove, that the political sagacity displayed in it is as little to be relied on, as the truth of the assertions that have since been made to sustain the anticipations it contains.*

In placing this little work before the public, the Sub-Committee would observe, that, if the haste in which the advices from the Colonies have been collected and put together, renders them less voluminous or less useful than they otherwise might have been, yet that amply

sufficient evidence is introduced to show the urgency of the case, and the hard treatment to which the sufferers have been subjected. And they therefore submit the results of their labours with a confident reliance on the uprightness of a British public to examine into a case of injustice, which they believe to be unprecedented in any legislature, *and to hold up to its merited reprobation the practice of concealment and misrepresentation in all cases*, but more especially where interests vital to all concerned in them are at stake, and thus to vindicate the honour of the British peerage and remove the dark stain that now rests upon it.

Under a solemn sense of the importance of the subject, as viewed in any light,—under a painful feeling of the injustice to which the traffic of the sugar-producing Colonies has been subjected, by being placed in a category to which it does not belong, in order that it may be sacrificed to the requirements of a name, one-half of which name will be in-

applicable to the emancipated negro if the Act of 1846 be permitted to remain in force, and can never be made to characterise the trade by which the West India colonists have hitherto subsisted, so long as the protection of slave labour remains in the hands of competitors without a counterpoise,—the Sub-Committee, on the part of the colonists, for whom they act, earnestly implore a fair and unbiased consideration of the following records of colonial misery and British misrule. And happy will they be if these statements become in any way conducive to the adoption of a new method of Colonial Government, more analogous in its operations to the admirable system by which the administration of our Empire in the East Indies is conducted, and thus more suitable to the West India Colonies; nor will the sufferers be entirely without comfort, notwithstanding the irrecoverable and ruinous losses they have sustained, if the exposure of the devastating effects of the legislation of 1846 shall prove the means

of placing both them and their emancipated fellow subjects in a position to compete with slave-holding Colonies, without reducing the labourer *in reality* to the very state from which *in appearance* he has been recently emancipated.

SOUTH SEA HOUSE,
London, November 9th, 1852.

THE CASE
OF THE
FREE-LABOUR BRITISH COLONIES,
ETC.

WITHOUT intending to place before the public an elaborate account of our West India possessions, with the origin, increase, and downfall of slavery and the slave trade with reference to our own possessions, we shall endeavour to confine our representation of the case of the British Colonies within the smallest limits, and to state it with the least possible circumlocution; by showing how far Great Britain is to blame for the evils of slavery, and how much more of the suffering consequent upon the removal of that deep stain upon its legislation has been placed upon the colonists, than, by any argument of justice or even of expediency, they ought to have been called upon to bear. To this effect we cannot do better than commence by giving the substance of Mr. Higgins's

statement, published some few years ago in the *Times* newspaper.

First, then, as it was in fact in point of time, we commence with the Slave Trade, which was instituted by the Crown in the year 1585; and as it is all-important to show that it was carried on as a mere mercantile speculation, irrespective of the Colonies altogether, the reader is reminded that England at that time did not possess any West Indian Colonies at all. Up to the year 1710 the trade was a royal monopoly, and it was then partially opened for the benefit of the manufacturers of Great Britain. From 1711 to 1749, the demands of the manufacturers for a more unrestricted trade continued to be the subject of Parliamentary investigation and dispute. As if *to fix the responsibility* of this nefarious traffic upon Great Britain, *all foreigners were excluded from participating* in a trade, pronounced by Parliament to be so highly *beneficial to the kingdom*.

In 1745, grants from the Crown were made to British subjects, of lands in Jamaica, *on condition* that the lands so granted should be stocked with a stipulated proportion of negro slaves, and that in case such stipulation was not complied with within a given time, the patent was to be deemed null and void. In 1760, the colonists, anxious to limit the number of wild negroes imported by English speculators, passed laws, imposing a duty on them, which Great Britain refused to sanction, rejecting

the Acts with indignation, and declaring that *the Slave Trade was beneficial and necessary to the mother country*. In 1765 and 1774, the Assembly of Jamaica repeated the offence, and passed bills to restrain the importation of negroes. Lord Dartmouth, then secretary of state, wrote to Sir Basil Keith, the governor of Jamaica, forbidding him, upon pain of removal from his government, to assent to such laws adding;--“At the same time I am to acquaint you, that the alarm taken by the merchants of this kingdom on account of that Act has been greatly increased, and fresh complaints of a very urgent nature have been made by them, from their having received advice, not only that such additional duty has been continued for another year by an Act passed in November last, but that propositions have been adopted for laying the slave trade under further restrictions, and subjecting it to impositions THAT WILL HAVE THE EFFECT OF AN ENTIRE PROHIBITION. *It is therefore our express will and pleasure that you do not, on any pretence whatever, and upon pain of being removed from your government, give your assent to any Act or Acts, by which the duties and impositions upon slaves imported into the island of Jamaica, as the said duties stood before the 13th day of February, 1774, shall be in any respects augmented or increased, or any alteration made in the proportion of such duties, which, by the provisions of such laws, was made payable on the importation of such slaves.*”

The Colonies, by the agent of Jamaica, remonstrated against the resolution of the government; but the Earl of Dartmouth replied, "*We cannot allow the colonies to check or discourage in any degree a traffic so beneficial to the nation.*"*

Violent national struggles, however, took place, in which the cause of justice and of truth became finally triumphant; and the accursed traffic—which, as Bandinel informs us (p. 105), annually carried off nearly 100,000 human beings from the comforts of home to the regions of slavery,—was abolished in 1807. The British nation, however, progressing in justice as it did in wealth, could not long remain satisfied. The most vigorous efforts were resorted to, to wipe out the remaining marks of that stain which had so long defaced the national character; and on the 1st of August, 1834, the lash fell powerless from the driver's hand, and the fetters were broken from the limbs of those whom God had made free and man had enslaved, and 770,280 human beings rejoiced in the full enjoyment of a tardy justice, which greediness of gain alone had withheld. And now, by a singular dispensation of Providence, the very statesman to whom it fell to carry out and enforce that glorious act is called upon to perform the double part, and to fulfil the double duty, of preventing the stultification of the lawgivers who

* For a continuation of the history of Slave traffic, see Bandinel, pp. 47-67; Edwards, vol. ii., p. 52; &c.

released the slaves, and of averting the approaching ruin of those whom the nation itself had compelled to assume a false position:—he is called on to prevent foreigners from benefiting by means of the infraction of laws which all nations had promised to respect, and his fellow-subjects from being ruined by their obedience to those laws:—he is called upon to protect, by the same act, his British and his African brethren.

When British legislation took from the colonists the means of cultivating their estates, thereby so reducing their value that the result in many cases has been a total abandonment, it did consider, even if it did not carry out, the principle of compensation. Commissioners were appointed by the Crown to set a value on the slaves, based upon a computation of their price on an average of years, and the return given in was £51,467,436*—an enormous sum, yet less than the valuation would be if made at the present moment. Carefully taken and accurately made as this valuation might be, it was infinitely beyond the expectations and intentions of the country:—£20,000,000 had been appropriated as a compensation, and £20,000,000 were to stand in the place of £51,000,000! But how was this composition of less than forty per cent. to be made, to any appearance, reconcileable with justice? What was the make-weight to

* Account of the Compensation Commissioners in the writer's hands.

balance this account? An apprenticeship—most desirable with reference to the real interests (as it proved,) of the quondam slaves, yet still an infringement of the rights of man; and an exclusion of all other sugars from the British market. The terms seemed the best that could be made for both parties, in the false position in which they found themselves,—had only those terms been kept. Impatient, however, whilst a vestige remained of that crime which had now become hateful in British eyes, the colonists were urged to give a generous consent to shorten the apprenticeship, and leave the negro free as the air he breathed. They yielded to the moral sense of justice and the appeal of the mother country; and then commenced that struggle for existence which thenceforth was to mark the career of the colonists, who, nevertheless, with British determination and British confidence, steady and uncomplaining, bore up against their future fortunes.

Those who were acquainted with the habits and dispositions of the men of tropical climates, foreshadowed the result of the recent legislation; whilst the more sanguine, because less experienced, judging of the natives of Africa as they would of those of Europe, believed that a rise in the scale of humanity would awaken the negro to his altered position, and impart a new stimulus to his exertions. The hope was vain. Following the dictates of climate and the impulses of uncivilized nature,

the negro restricted his labour to his necessities, and became capricious in the exercise of it; and whilst the country which gave him his freedom ceased to demand his labour as a right, and sought for it as a favour entitled to remuneration, the African, unambitious of improving his condition, became in his turn rather the master than the servant.

The disasters of St. Domingo ought to have taught a lesson to our legislators on this subject, and the future want of labour should have been foreseen; yet still, with this conviction on the mind, it is nevertheless gratifying to see that even the colonists themselves—satisfied with the motives which prompted their anticipation of the promised freedom—did no more than deplore the unsatisfactory results of a legislation, just, as far as it could be just. They suffered, but they murmured not.

When, however, the scene became changed,—when the preference in that very market, which they had been promised in return for their submission, was taken from them, and free-labour sugar from the East Indies was let in to compete with them, and drove them almost to despair,—they became, for the first time, sensible that the sin committed in the first instance by the home government was to be visited in its direst effects upon themselves. The greatest alarm spread on all sides; and it was speedily seen that nothing but the outlay of fresh capital, and the employment of extraordinary ex-

ertion, could save the West Indian colonists from utter ruin. The capital was invested,—the exertion was made;—and so satisfied was the follower of Mr. Huskisson that any interference with the struggle thus commenced, was one of life and death to those concerned, that, in a speech (which will be found in the Appendix), he stated his unshaken conviction that, as a matter of justice, no further pressure ought to be added to that load which the unoffending sufferers already had to bear.

A new administration had, however, assumed the ministerial reins,—a party pledged to contend for cheapness, however it might be created; and, sooner than displace this party from its ascendancy, the statesman above alluded to made expediency the master of his convictions, and voted for the introduction of that very labour (in the shape of produce), which it had been the glory of a nobler dynasty to exclude. The result of this legislation has been commented upon and witnessed to by all who have seen its effects. *Their testimony is uniform.** And it remains to be seen, when the experience of years and the sufferings of hundreds of thousands have been fairly laid before the country and the legislature, whether the assertion of Sir Robert Peel, that the case of the West Indians, involved in the question of slave labour

* See Madden, Bigelow, Dundonald, Sullivan, Taylor's *United States and Cuba*, Lord Stanley's *Letter and Farther Facts*, &c.

and the produce of slave labour, "*was excepted from the principles which govern, and, in his opinion, ought to govern, our ordinary commercial intercourse,*" is to be received or not; and whether a measure, whose *success* is announced as carrying with it that of "a great principle," is to be persevered in, when experience has shown that "success" to have become a *hopeless failure*.

The following statements of the different colonies, and the documents thereto added, will show how far the British colonists, deprived of labour, *can* compete with foreign slave-owners, whose gigantic resources are proved by the strength they can suddenly and unpreparedly put forth*—and will enable the British nation, as free men, to judge how far it is possible to make the free labour of six hours compete with the coerced slavery of eighteen, or, *if it were possible, how far it is desirable to make the necessities of the free man equal, in the tenacity of their gripe, to the case-hardened manacles of the slave.*

With a sense of the justice of the British nation,—under the ministration of a party, the antecedents

* The shipments of Sugar from Slave-holding Colonies in the west, during the years 1846 and 1847, into Great Britain, were as follows:—

	1846.	1847.
Cuba	513,198 cwt.	914,544 cwt.
Porto Rico	96,472 „	248,481 „
Brazil	302,067 „	701,675 „

Par. Pap. No. 264, 1851.

of whose leader give sure promise that he will aim—nay, more than aim, will arrive, at least in his own mind,—at an impartial verdict, the colonists claim to be judged upon the merits of a case especial, unmixed with any and all other cases,—by a jury, unshackled either by previous impressions or by considerations foreign to the present subject. And by the verdict now about to be given—as the verdicts in our courts of law are given—*upon the true point at issue and none other*, the sufferers must abide. If it be given in their favour,—if the promises of previous Acts of Parliament—if national pledges—if implied and accepted stipulations—are to be redeemed, renewed energy on their part will follow in the footsteps of tardy justice. But if the verdict be against them,—if might is to make right, and the clamour of the unprincipled is to overwhelm the just claims of the oppressed,—then they must seek (as many in Jamaica have already done) a subsistence out of the reach of a partial legislation, in lands where time and a better treatment may enable them to forget alike their injuries, their sufferings, and their country.

ANTIGUA.

*To the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and to the
Honourable the Commons House of Parliament,
in Parliament assembled.*

THE HUMBLE MEMORIAL OF THE BOARD OF COUNCIL AND HOUSE
OF ASSEMBLY OF THE ISLAND OF ANTIGUA.

SHEWETH,

That the Agriculturists of Antigua are utterly borne down by the unrighteous competition with slave-grown sugar, forced upon them by the Act of the Imperial Parliament, 9 and 10 Vict. c. 63. That they have struggled with energy to maintain the contest, but that with every exertion to increase production by improved agriculture, and to diminish the cost of cultivation by implemental husbandry, the depreciation in prices has reduced them to a state of embarrassment and distress plainly precluding, without prompt relief, the hope of their being able to continue the cultivation of their estates.

That their antagonists, the slave-holders, possess the overwhelming advantage of continuous labour at a cheap rate, obtained by trampling upon the verbally venerated rights of humanity, and—alas! that it should be so—upon solemn treaties made with Great Britain, while the British colo-

nists cannot obtain that indispensable element of profitable cultivation, continuous labour, or, if at all, only at a rate which enhances the cost of the product beyond its market price, and involves him in positive loss.

That your memorialists, referring to the course pursued by Antigua of conferring unqualified emancipation, without apprenticeship, upon her population, and to the oft repeated Parliamentary declarations, that in justice and honour, protection would be afforded to the British colonies against countries employing the labour of slaves—declarations to which your memorialists clung devotedly, as pregnant with hope and assurance for the future,—cannot contemplate her present prostration and appalling prospects without the most poignant disappointment and the deepest sorrow.

That, confident in the faith of Parliament to sustain them against competition with slave-grown sugar, the planters were encouraged, with renewed energy, to embark both capital and industry in the continued cultivation of their estates, and were cheerfully maintaining a fair contest with the free-grown sugar of their rival colonists of the east, and of the world in general, when the subversive legislation of 1846 blasted every expectation, and reduced them to utter despondency.

That since that period the struggle between the British colonists, producing by wages to free labourers, and the foreigner, producing by the in-

centive of the lash to the slave, which in its commencement was so disastrous to the cause of freedom and humanity, has become year by year more ruinous to the colonists, and as the reduction of the foreign duty takes place, threatens, more and more distinctly, the extinction of this island as an exporting colony of Great Britain.

That your memorialists cannot regard the prospect of colonial property becoming thus absolutely valueless, and of proprietors and the various classes dependent upon them being reduced to a state of destitution and beggary, without emotions of terror and dismay; and without a consciousness that it is their imperative duty, as the local Legislature, to make an earnest and emphatic appeal to parliament to rescue the colony, alike proprietors and emancipated labourers, from the sweeping ruin which so certainly impends over it.

That your memorialists desire to speak with just respect, but, at the same time, with the plainness and freedom characteristic of British subjects, and due to the vital importance of the subject matter of their appeal. They submit, with all deference, then, that the farmer of Antigua has the same right as the farmer of the mother country to send his produce to market free of duty. That considerations of revenue cannot justify a total exemption from taxation of one staple, and simultaneously, the grievous taxation of another. That while, for example, Australian wool and

Canadian corn are admitted free of duty, it is not right that an oppressive duty of ten shillings per cwt., being one-third of its gross value in the market, should be levied on West India sugar.

That the Sugar Duties Act of 1846 gave a lamentable impulse to the slave-trade, and conferred most unmerited advantages on Brazil, Cuba, and Porto Rico; while it dealt grievous injury and discouragement to our own colonies. That Spain and Brazil evade the fulfilment of their treaties for the abolition of the justly-abhorred traffic, and that although the vigorous proceedings of the British cruisers may have produced some temporary cessation of it in Brazil, it is carried on with shameless profligacy in the Spanish colonies.

That, as an unmistakeable evidence of national hostility to the slave-trade, and the surest means of obtaining the co-operation of slave-holding States, the existing differential duties should be maintained on slave-grown sugar at least, until the faithful execution by these States of their treaties with Great Britain for its suppression; and that, upon general principles of justice and policy, the duty on British colonial sugar should be gradually reduced, extended production and consumption compensating for the apparent loss of revenue.

That the colonies are meanwhile subjected to

great disadvantage in not being permitted to send their produce home as a raw material, duty free, to be wrought upon and perfectly manufactured by British skill and science. That the duty exacted upon their produce in a state of syrup, or in however crude a form, amounts to a prohibition of its transport to the mother country, and perpetuates the existing imperfect modes of manufacture in the colonies.

That proprietors, whatever may have been their former ability, do not now possess the means of purchasing the necessary machinery, nor of attracting the necessary European skill, to establish a manufacturing competition with English refiners ; and that, referring to the probable cultivation of the beet-root in England, the Colonists will again be placed at a disadvantage, the produce of beet-root paying the likedyuty levied on common Muscovado sugar, not however, on the raw material, but on the perfectly manufactured or refined product.

That the existing laws in regard to refining in bond are extremely injurious to the Colonists, and that in justice, notwithstanding any consequent inconvenience in regard to the revenue, they should be permitted to refine their produce in bond for home consumption as well as for exportation, paying no duty on the raw material, but on the perfected product turned out of hand, on its delivery for consumption.

That your memorialists have laid before your Lordships' House no overcharged representation ; but on the contrary they are firmly assured that *without the speedy repression of the slaveholder and special encouragement to the British producer, Antigua, in common with the other British sugar colonies, will fast degenerate into a moral and physical wilderness.*

Your memorialists therefore humbly implore your Lordships' House to take into consideration the foregoing statements, and to grant unto your memorialists such relief in the premises as your Lordships' House may see fit.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray, &c.

MEADE HOME DANIELL,
President of the Council.

OLIVER NUGENT,
Speaker of the House of Assembly.

April 1st, 1852.

JAMAICA.

To the Lords Temporal and Spiritual of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE CUSTOS, MAGISTRATES, CLERGY, AND OTHER INHABITANTS OF SAINT GEORGE'S, IN THE ISLAND OF JAMAICA, ADOPTED AT A PUBLIC MEETING HELD IN THE COURT-HOUSE, BUFF BAY, JULY, 1852.*

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners are deeply interested in the welfare of Jamaica, an interest which painfully increases as ruin advances—a ruin unfortunately neither imaginary nor speculative, but actual and real, founded on palpable facts.

The want of adequate labour, and the high and disproportionate rate of wages consequently forced upon us, have been the great evils long complained of. But your Petitioners, without referring to lesser grievances, proceed at once to point out and to denounce the two great causes of their present deplorable condition. In the year 1844, a sudden alteration was made in the Coffee Duties, whereby the former protection was broken down

* A similar Petition (*mutatis mutandis*,) to the House of Commons was at the same time adopted, and forwarded with the above to the National Association for presentation.

by the favourable admission given to slave coffee into home consumption. The effects were immediately felt by the coffee planters in this parish, and throughout the island. In 1846 the still more fatal measure of the Sugar Duties was enacted, whereby foreign slave sugar was not only permitted, but encouraged to be brought into the British market for home consumption, the effect of which was to give a great impulse to the slave trade, and to the introduction of thousands upon thousands of slaves into the Brazils, Cuba, and Porto Rico; which has rendered it impossible for the free labour produce of Jamaica any longer to compete with slave labour produce of these countries. The consequences are now painfully felt, and are alarmingly increasing throughout the island, by the abandonment of cultivation and ruin of properties.

This danger was foreseen by the Assembly of Jamaica as far back as the year 1837, when they addressed the sovereign on the subject of the Cuban and Brazilian Slave Trade. But the admission of slave sugar into British home consumption, now permitted, was then never dreamt of. Thus, while Jamaica is on the brink of ruin, Cuba is daily flourishing with all the adjuncts of modern improvements; railways, steam carriages, steam vessels, both for coasting and steaming up rivers, coal works, and lighting of places with gas. And now the Cubans having a dense slave popu-

lation, are wisely seeking to augment their labourers by the introduction of a superior and more intelligent race from China, as an antidote to the negro character and temperament.

Notwithstanding our distressed condition, the public and parochial taxes of this parish (containing, since the cholera, about eight thousand inhabitants on an area of about sixty-seven thousand acres), are for the current year, double the amount assessed in 1850. The taxes throughout the whole island are on the increase, although one-third of the taxable property has been swept away in the last ten years, as appears by the journals of the Assembly, and on the same authority, the appalling fact is seen that, in the last years, viz. 1850-51, the assessed value of hereditaments throughout the island has decreased no less than £2,056,579 in amount, which has since further decreased, and at this present time, after careful investigation, is now £2,441,142. *The value of the whole export of sugar from Jamaica this year, will not, in all probability, equal in amount the public expenditure for the same period;* a state of finance fearful to contemplate; the downward tendency of which is still further exemplified by the decreasing amount of circulation issued by the banks and island notes, as shewn by official returns to the Stamp-office, viz. :—

	Total Circulation.
1844.....	£258,816
1851.....	145,000
1852.....	127,194
	C 2

The white population is greatly decreasing, which is remarkably exemplified in the militia. Nor is there any prospect of an increase; on the contrary, the desperate state of agricultural affairs, now leads many to quit the place of their blighted fortunes after years of toil.

The labouring population increase in idleness; so far from seeking labour, or employment, or being stimulated by the desire of obtaining wages, they become daily more unwilling and more idle; preferring squatting on their own, or clandestinely occupying the lands of other persons; particularly those of abandoned estates, *i. e.*, abandoned as to cultivation, but not abandoned as to ownership. They attend less to the instruction of their religious pastors and ministers; they pay less attention to the education of their children. Vice and immorality are on the increase; and shortly, if the island does not revive from its present prostration, they will revert into a state of semi-barbarism.

We ask protection not merely on the general principle, but also on the exceptional principle, which rules exclusively in our free labour question, as against the produce of slave labour, thus taking it out of the same category.

Jamaica was the first of all the West Indian Colonies to give legislative effect to the abolition law. On which occasion our then governor (Lord Mulgrave) in his speech at the closing of that eventful session, said—"In conclusion, I must

express my firm belief, that in all your future difficulties, your ready recognition of the natural rights of your fellow-men, will meet its best reward in the diffusion of national sympathy, and the cheerfully continued extension of British protection." We are now overburdened with difficulties, which, if not speedily removed, must produce irretrievable ruin. We, therefore, humbly appeal to your lordships for protection.

We pray that our fellow-subjects in England may be relieved from the degradation of eating slave sugar and drinking slave coffee by the prohibition of its use.

We pray, that the free labour of our negro population be not forced into competition with slave labour.

We pray that a large supply of industrious labourers be introduced into this island, at the national cost, as the means, through competition, "of promoting the habits of industry," contemplated by the Imperial Act of Abolition.

We pray, if protection be deemed inexpedient, that foreign slave sugar, and slave coffee, be taxed exclusively for revenue purposes, and that our free labour sugar and coffee may be entered duty free for home consumption, when as an article of food, which has become of subsistence, our produce will be afforded to the people at a cheap rate, and at the same time enable us to continue cultivation.

Lastly, we pray your lordships to take our peti-

tion into consideration, and to afford us such relief as our peculiar situation may seem to your lordships to require.

And we ever pray, &c.

On behalf of the meeting,

(Signed) J. R. GROSETT,
Custos and Chairman.

ST. LUCIA.

*To Her Most Gracious Majesty Victoria, Queen
of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and
Ireland.*

THE MEMORIAL OF THE INHABITANTS OF THE ISLAND OF
ST. LUCIA,

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

That the memorialists again approach the throne of your Most Gracious Majesty, with sentiments of loyalty and attachment towards the constitution of the United Kingdom, and towards your Most Excellent Majesty as the rightful and worthy head of the realm, and beseech your Majesty to permit them to lay their grievances at the foot of the throne.

Under the date the 21st of February last, the inhabitants of this colony had the honour to lay before your Most Gracious Majesty a memorial,

containing an exposition of the *deplorable condition to which the Imperial Act of the British Legislature, in the year 1846, admitting foreign sugar the growth and produce of slave-labour into consumption in the United Kingdom, had reduced them*; and earnestly praying for some modification of this legislative enactment; and your Most Gracious Majesty was graciously pleased to receive the same. But the memorialists have just learned with deep disappointment, that on the 1st ultimo the Imperial Parliament was prorogued by your Most Gracious Majesty, and that no measure tending in any way towards the relief of the British free-labour sugar-producing colonies had been adopted by the legislature. The memorialists, therefore, most humbly pray, that it may please your Most Gracious Majesty to suffer them to appeal again to your justice and sympathy in the same behalf.

The memorialists will not here repeat and enumerate all the grievances set forth in the memorial of the 21st of February last alluded to, for your Majesty's consideration; but will simply refer to those grievances to assure your Most Gracious Majesty *that they have all acquired additional force in augmenting the pecuniary distresses and embarrassments of the colonists since the date of that memorial*, by the further reduction, that took place on the 5th ultimo, of the import duties in the United Kingdom, on all sugar the

growth and produce of slave-labour; whilst the import duty on the free-labour sugar of your memorialists remains the same as it was on the 5th of July, 1851. *No one can doubt that this diminution on the import duty on slave-labour sugar is a further encouragement to slavery and the slave trade, and a further discouragement to the production of free-labour sugar.*

Your Most Gracious Majesty is earnestly invited to consider the following lamentable facts : --That whilst the exportable produce of the colony has remained stationary, or pretty nearly the same, on an annual average for the last twenty years of 2,493 tons of sugar, the amount of annual taxation has been increasing instead of diminishing. The annexed table or statement* of sugar annually exported, and of taxation annually levied, since the years 1832 and 1833 (these two being the last two years of slavery) will abundantly prove the fact. Yet the inhabitants of this Crown colony have been compelled to sustain the charge of the Colonial Government at a rate ranging from £12,000 to £14,000 sterling annually, out of an average crop of 2,493 tons of sugar raised by paid labour; and at the same time to withstand a competition with the island of Cuba, raising and exporting annually a quantity of sugar, reckoned, not by thousands of tons, but

* See Appendix, IX.

by hundreds of thousands of tons—and this raised by unpaid or slave labour. It is certain the expenses of the island of Cuba, calculated on between 200,000 and 300,000 tons of sugar annually exported, must be a trifle compared with the annual charge of £12,000 to £14,000 sterling levied in this colony on 2,493 tons annually exported. It must be self-evident that the proprietors of this colony cannot be otherwise than in a state of the greatest distress.

With such lamentable facts brought under your Majesty's consideration, it will create no surprise, but the deepest sorrow in your Most Gracious Majesty, to be informed, that, in the struggle which this colony has already had to encounter, many families have been reduced to poverty;—that many others are on the verge of ruin;—and that all have drunk deeply of the bitter cup of misfortune which such an accumulation of pecuniary distresses has heaped upon them.

Impelled by the pressure of their accumulated sufferings, the memorialists now humbly, but most earnestly, reiterate their prayer :

- 1st.—That your Most Gracious Majesty may be graciously pleased to recommend to Parliament *that the further reduction of the import duty on sugar the growth and produce of slave labour for consumption in the United Kingdom, be suspended, until slavery and the slave trade be abolished.*

2nd.—*That a further reduction be made on the duties on all sugar the growth and produce of the free British colonies, imported into the United Kingdom, from 10s. per cwt., to 5s. per cwt., or such other reduction as the circumstances of the empire may justify and admit of.*

3rd.—That sugar the growth and produce of free British colonies be admitted into the United Kingdom to be refined in bond for home consumption or exportation.

4th.—That immigration into this colony be encouraged by every just and lawful means likely to prove beneficial to both labourers and employers.

5th.—And such other relief as to your Majesty's wisdom may seem just and necessary.

And your memorialists, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

St. Lucia, 14th August, 1852.

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE INHABITANTS OF GEORGE TOWN, DEMERARY, IN THE COLONY OF BRITISH GUIANA, ADOPTED AT A PUBLIC MEETING, HELD ON JULY THE 19TH, 1852.

That the distressed position of your petitioners, the large number of ruined families and abandoned estates, and the series of causes to which these distresses are owing, have already been repeatedly laid before your Honourable House; and to the late very able exposition of their case by the Lord Bishop of Oxford, and other noble Lords, in the House of Peers, your petitioners would merely add, that while they feel deeply grateful for the favourable disposition of the present Government, they do not seek any relief that would trench on the comforts of any other class of Her Majesty's subjects; they ask only for those legislative measures which, while they would afford the relief sought for, would, at the same time, not only increase the comforts of their fellow-subjects in the United Kingdom, profitably employ their capital and industry, consume their manufactures, load their ships, and extend their commerce, but would also tend,

finally, peaceably, and most effectually, to extinguish that trade in slaves to the foreign sugar countries, the unequal competition with which, under the circumstances adverted to, has brought the British Colonies to the very verge of ruin.

That the evidence lately so forcibly adduced by the Anti-Slavery Society of England shews that the number of victims to that traffic which, previous to the passing of the Sugar Act of 1846, had materially decreased, has since then increased at the rate of 24,500 per annum, and clearly proves that the further reduction of the duty on slave-grown sugar will tend to add fresh stimulus for the more vigorous development of the slave trade, and the perpetuation of slavery itself in foreign countries, unless that reduction, &c., be also applied to the duty now levied on the free produce of the British Colonies, — a reduction which, by thus giving a still cheaper sugar to the people of the United Kingdom, would increase the consumption without impairing the revenue, and offer the most efficient check, by the cheapness thus produced, to the extension of the cultivation of slave-grown sugar.

That it being so clearly the object of the British Parliament to place within the reach of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects an abundant supply of cheap sugar, it is the interest of the British Colonies to co-operate by every means in their power with the wishes of the mother

country ; but the want of continuous labour to which British Guiana has hitherto been subjected by unnecessary and vexatious restrictions on the voluntary immigration of free labour, and the compulsory enactment of laws permitting the infraction of voluntary contract of service, has disabled her from competing, with any chance of success, with those slave-holding countries where such labour can be at all times commanded, and prevented her from that co-operation with the wishes of the mother country in the production of cheap sugar, for which she is so pre-eminently qualified, while the following statement for the year ending 5th January, 1852, of her imports, show how profitably that sugar would be exchanged for British goods :—

With a population of only 127,695, the imports are to the value of £855,419; employing 671 ships, 111,771 tons, and 7,247 seamen; in exchange for exports of sugar, rum, &c., to the amount of £865,133.

That with the view of being better able to compete with foreign countries, your petitioners have expended large sums of money in introducing the best machinery from the United Kingdom, for improving the quality of their produce by more effectually depriving the sugar of molasses and increasing its purity ; but beyond a certain point they cannot go, being met by the imposition of an additional duty at home, in consequence of such increased purity, though produced from the

cane, by one process only without any refining. This they humbly conceive is a hardship equally injurious to themselves, as a bar to all further improvement, and to the people of the United Kingdom, by raising the price of a purer article, checking the industry of her artisans, and impeding the manufacture and sale of her machinery, for the exclusive protection of the sugar refineries of England and Holland, the latter receiving a bounty in the exportation of their refined sugar.

That the operation of the present Patent Laws of England press with great severity on the inhabitants of the British West India Colonies in as much as the improvements of many of these patents obtain admission into the Slave Colonies, divested of the expensive royalties charged by the patentees, and thus add most materially to the unequal competition already adverted to.

Your petitioners are fully impressed with the conviction that the legislative enactments they now seek, in order to save the British Colonies from impending ruin, would be equally beneficial to the mother country, as well as largely contribute to the final extinction of that traffic in slaves, for which Great Britain has already sacrificed so much blood and treasure; and that with such enactments, British Guiana might compete with any country in the world in the production of an unlimited supply of cheap sugar for the consumption of the people of the United Kingdom, and

and would become, to an equally large extent, not only the consumer of her manufactures, the employer of her ships, seamen, and artisans, but would also furnish, from her inexhaustible natural resources, an immense variety of productions well calculated for the profitable application of British capital, industry, and skill.

Your petitioners, therefore, humbly pray, that all impediments to the introduction of free labour into the British Colonies from all parts of the world, whether as restrictions on voluntary immigration, or compulsory enactments interfering with voluntary contracts of service, and imposing an onerous and unnecessary expense on the Colonies, should be at once removed.

That until the final extinction of slavery be fairly established by the Government of Spain and the Brazils, any reduction of the duty on foreign and slave sugar, including that contemplated by the Act of 1846, previous to the 5th July last, be applied *pari passu* to the duty now levied on the free produce of the British Colonies.

That these Colonies should be relieved from the great obstacle at present existing to the further improvement of their produce, by the abolition of the additional duty now charged in consequence of its increased purity.

That the colony of British Guiana should be exempt from the operations of the Patent Laws of England, and left to deal with the patentees as to any reward for the improvements by their inventions, as her own Legislature may deem fit.

And your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

ST. VINCENT.

To the Right Honourable the Speaker and the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled :

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF THE HONOURABLE THE BOARD OF COUNCIL AND THE HONOURABLE THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF THE ISLAND OF SAINT VINCENT AND ITS DEPENDENCIES, IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION ASSEMBLED :

SHEWETH,

That for a series of years, in successive Parliaments, and under every Government, the civil and political relations of the British West India Colonies with the parent state, and with each other, have been the subject of constant discussion and organic change. *A policy at one time established for the benefit of the State, regulating their*

connexion with it, and forced upon them, as in the case of the establishment of slavery, and the navigation and customs laws, has been overthrown at another time, to suit the political creeds of the various parties, who have been entrusted with the government of the empire, or the real or imaginary benefit of the British public. The Act for the emancipation of the slaves, whereby a contract was made by the British nation, between it and the proprietary body in the West Indies, under the guarantee of Parliament, had scarcely taken effect, when steps were taken in Parliament to annul it, to the great prejudice of your Petitioners and the proprietary body in the West Indies, and the period of the servitude of the apprenticed labourers, was in consequence, necessarily shortened by two years, without any compensation whatsoever to their masters.

That the effect of these frequent changes, has been to cause great fluctuation in the value of property in the West Indies, always to the prejudice of the proprietary body ; but the great increase in the consumption of sugar, enabled the proprietors to cultivate their estates at a profit, though considerably diminished in consequence. The comparatively limited field for the profitable investment of capital, enabled them to recruit their diminished resources by loans from the British capitalist; and though they were most unaccountably restricted by the British laws,

from the privilege of improving the manufacture of their sugar, they still reposed implicit confidence in the justice and good faith of Parliament.

That the anti-slavery tariff of 1844, recognising a differential duty on slave sugar, led to progressive improvements and to renewed confidence throughout the British West India colonies, which, unhappily for the interest of the proprietary body, was of short duration. The great principle upon which that measure was based, was destroyed by the sugar duties' Act of 1846, which remodelled entirely the fiscal regulations of Parliament, and recognised the admission of slave grown sugar into the markets of the United Kingdom for consumption, on a reduced and annually decreasing scale of duties, terminating, within a given number of years, in complete equalization, which, by recent enactment, will take place in 1854.

That the immediate effects of this precipitate and unjust destruction of the distinction between the produce of slavery and of free labour, are exemplified in the present prevailing distress amongst the proprietary body; by the declining value of all sugar estates in the West India colonies; and the abandonment of a vast number of them, producing a crisis, which if not arrested by the immediate interference of Parliament, will not only lead to the total destruction of sugar cultivation within them, but to the annihilation of all their institutions, civil and religious.

That your Petitioners are prepared to show, either at the bar of your Honourable House, or before a Committee of its members, that not only are the above results attendant upon the fatal regulations of Parliament, to which your Petitioners have referred, but from statistical facts to establish that *the prosperity of slave holding countries has advanced, and is advancing in the same proportion as that of the free colonies of Great Britain declines*. And whilst the average price of Havannah and Porto Rico sugar per cwt., for the six months ending 1st May, 1846, exclusive of duty, was 23s. 4d., and for the six months, ending 1st May in the present year, 22s. 1d., shewing a decrease of only 1s. 3d. per cwt., to the prejudice of the foreigner; the average price of British West India sugar for the six months ending 1st May, 1846, exclusive of duty, was 32s. 10d. per cwt., and for the six months ending 1st May in the present year, was only 23s. 6d., shewing an actual decrease of 9s. 4d. per cwt., to the prejudice of the British subject.

That your Petitioners are greatly prejudiced, by an undue advantage which slave-holding colonies possess over them, by the facilities they have in possessing themselves of all improvements for the manufacture of sugar, unrestricted by the operations of the Patent Laws, whereby they can economically improve their produce, whilst the British West India colonies are subjected to

onerous and oppressive Patent Laws, and unable to procure corresponding advantages, except at a price beyond their means ; and in particular your Petitioners would refer to the fact, that a Cuban planter can obtain from Belgium a centrifugal machine (where it was first applied) for curing sugar, at about one-third the cost at which a similar machine can be obtained from the patentees in England.

That various suggestions might be made to your Honourable House, on the subject of the relief to which your Petitioners are justly entitled. But, without venturing to enumerate the whole of them, your Petitioners would earnestly and respectfully suggest to Parliament,—the reduction of the import duty on sugar, the growth and produce of the British West India colonies, imported into the United Kingdom ;—the encouragement of extensive immigration into the British West India colonies, by loans for that purpose, and by removing all obstacles to the introduction of immigrants, from any part of the world, upon such terms as shall secure to your Petitioners a continuous and sufficient supply of labour. The admission of sugar, the growth and produce of the British West India colonies, into the refineries, to be refined in bond, in the United Kingdom, before payment of the duties, and the duties paid thereon when taken out for home consumption ;—The removal of the present discriminating duties

upon the produce of the cane, when manufactured in greater purity, and the removal of all impediments to such improvements, by exempting the British West India colonies from the operations of the Patent Laws, and the frequently usurious exactions of the patentees.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly and earnestly invoke the attention of your Honourable House to this detail of their grievances, and humbly pray— That all impediments to the introduction of free labour into the British West India colonies, from all parts of the world, whether as restrictions on voluntary immigration, or compulsory enactments, interfering with voluntary contracts of service, should be at once removed, and that your Honourable House will be pleased to grant loans, for the purpose of enabling your Petitioners to obtain immigrants, and to procure the apparatus necessary for the improvement of the manufacture of sugar.

That a further reduction be made in the duties on all sugar, the growth and produce of the British West India colonies.

That sugar, the growth and produce of the British West India colonies, be admitted to be refined in bond, in the United Kingdom, before payment of the duties, and the duty paid thereon when taken out for home consumption.

That all obstacles at present existing to the improvement of the produce of the cane, in the

British West India colonies be removed, by the abolition of the additional duties now imposed when produced in greater purity.

That the British West India colonies should be relieved from the operation of the Patent Laws of England, and their own legislatures be permitted to deal with the Patentees as they may deem fit.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

APPENDIX.

I.

EXTRACTS FROM THE SPEECH OF SIR ROBERT PEEL, IN THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS, JULY 27TH, 1846.

[From the MORNING HERALD of July 28th, 1846.]

THE measure which I should have proposed on the part of the Government, would have continued the exclusion from the markets of this country, of sugar the produce of slave labour, and it would have admitted, at lower rates than the present, sugar the produce of free labour in foreign countries, and coming in competition with sugar the produce of our own colonies

I, and those with whom I acted, *always felt that this question of slave labour and the produce of slave labour, was excepted from the principles which governed, and in my opinion ought to govern, our ordinary commercial intercourse.* I thought we stood in a peculiar relation, in the first place in respect, in particular, to the West India Colonies of this country. The question of the East Indies differs materially, in respect to the supply of sugar, from the West India Colonies; but those with whom I acted agreed in the opinion which I myself entertained, that this country did stand in a very special and peculiar relation to our West India colonies. You had emancipated from slavery those on whose labour in former years you had mainly relied for the

supply of this country with West India produce. You had given to the holders of the slaves a liberal, and, estimating it as to pecuniary amount, apparently a magnificent compensation for the sacrifice of their interests; *but whether or no (however large the sum may be) it was an adequate compensation for the eventual loss sustained, is a question open to some degree of doubt.** Be that, however, as it may, you did subject the West India colonies to great disadvantages in competing with those countries where slavery existed. The peculiar relation in which you stood to the West Indies did appear to us to justify a departure from ordinary rules, and it did appear to us to require, in justice to those colonies, that a considerable interval should be allowed before they could be expected to enter into competition with countries placed under very different circumstances

Therefore, it did appear to be a great inconsistency, in taking these vigorous measures for the suppression of the slave trade, which we ourselves carried on under the sanction of law but a few years since, at the same time by any act of ours to give encouragement to the trade. Under these circumstances, had we remained in power, it certainly was our intention to have given a further period to the colonies of this country—particularly to the West India colonies—in order that they might be enabled to bear the competition with the slave countries

Entertaining these opinions, and having apprehensions, I fear, which others do not entertain with respect to the possible effect of the measure proposed by the noble lord—fearing that it may at first, at least, give a stimulus to the slave trade—it is not without great reluctance that I have come to the resolution of giving my support to the motion of the noble lord. *I am forced to consider other than the mere abstract merits of this*

* "It was true we had paid the West Indian proprietors twenty millions as compensation when we abolished slavery—a large sum for us to pay, undoubtedly; yet, *so far as a permanent compensation to them for the loss sustained by our act, perfectly inadequate*, especially when the difficulties of their position in competing with the foreign slave owner were taken into account."—*Speech of Sir Robert Peel on the Slave Trade Suppression Bill, August 18th, 1843.*

*question. I am forced to consider the position of parties,** and the prospects that there are of forming a Government in this country

I do hope that the noble lord and the Government will reserve to themselves the full power of considering what are the equivalent advantages which you can give to the West Indies, for the purpose of enabling them to support the competition with countries where the opportunity is afforded of employing slaves

Honourable gentlemen say, "You may safely enter into a combination; but the noble lord will retain office." I do not say what course the noble lord might think fit to take; but this I must say, that I think the noble lord, under the circumstances under which he has accepted power, being obstructed and defeated on so important a measure of commercial policy as the present, would, I do not say be required to abdicate power, but would be fully justified in abdicating power

I earnestly hope that, as far as enabling free labour successfully to compete with slave labour, the noble lord will consider his great object to be, to effect a final and satisfactory settlement of the question in respect to an effectual control of slave labour. I hope that the noble lord will listen with attention to every proposal that may be made to him, reserving at the same time to himself his own principle of ensuring the abolition of all distinctive duties at an early period—that he will enable, as I said before, free labour successfully to compete with slave labour

I do implore of the noble lord to give ample and liberal justice to that formidable competition with which we shall then have to contend, *and which is calculated to ensure success to that great principle which this measure recognises*

I am come to the conclusion, not without hesitation and reluctance, to give my support to the principle of the noble lord's measure.

* "He would at once frankly say that nothing could be more fatal to the proper settlement of this question than *to connect it with party considerations.*"—*Speech of Sir Robert Peel on the Abolition of Slavery, June 3rd, 1833.*

II.

DESPATCH FROM EARL GREY, HER MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL
SECRETARY FOR THE COLONIES, TO SIR CHARLES E.
GREY, GOVERNOR OF JAMAICA.

[*From the TIMES of November 11th, 1847.*]

TO GOVERNOR SIR C. GREY, &c.

Downing Street, Oct. 30, 1847.

SIR,—I transmit to you herewith a copy of a Memorial from proprietors, merchants, and others, connected with the island of Jamaica, in which they represent the difficulties under which they labour, and apply for assistance to be enabled to surmount them.

The topics brought before Her Majesty's Government in this Memorial are, as you will perceive, the same which have been for some time past under their constant consideration; but the progress of events gives them every day an increasing interest and importance.

Long before the enactment of the act for the ultimate repeal of the discriminating duties on foreign sugar, it had become manifest that in the existing state of opinion in this country, founded as it was in reason and on facts, *if the cultivation of sugar by free labour could not be sustained on principles of free trade it could not be sustained at all.* So long as these principles were not brought into operation it was obvious that the basis on which this commerce and cultivation rested was hollow and unsound, and that all calculations connected with it must proceed upon very doubtful and precarious data. It was essential, therefore, *to the welfare of all parties* to commence

without delay the *experiment* of bringing the principles of free trade by progressive steps into full activity, and maintaining the cultivation of sugar with a reduction and early extinction of the discriminating duties. This experiment being indispensably necessary was to be undertaken in a spirit of hope and confidence, and in that spirit I trust it will still be carried on. But, at the same time, there is no application of the principles of free trade which was entitled to more anxious attention on the part of Her Majesty's Government with a view to promote its success; because, of all merely commercial measures it is that which involves the most momentous consequences, *moral* and *political*, as well as *commercial*. With the maintenance of the colonial agriculture and exports is bound up the *moral* and *industrial* well-being, the *education*, *enlightenment*, and *good government* of the negro race in the British colonies; and, along with that, the *abatement and ultimate extermination of the slave trade and of slavery throughout the world*.

It was with a full sense of the importance of the interests depending, and of the critical nature of the experiment, that I applied myself to the subject when I assumed the seals of this office; and then, as now, the want of an adequate supply of labour was the difficulty most dwelt upon by the planters and merchants; and this was the evil which it was obviously most essential to obviate.

For the early, though not, certainly, the immediate mitigation of this evil, I looked to the *education and industrial training of the negroes*, and I have pressed this subject repeatedly and most anxiously on the attention of the Assemblies. For a more direct alleviation I place great reliance upon the introduction of improved methods and implements of agriculture and processes of manufacture; and I have rejoiced to receive, from time to time, reports of improvements of this nature being in successful progress. But the supply of labour by immigration was the resource for which it was conceived that the assistance of Her Majesty's Government might be chiefly made available; and I lost no time in considering by what means this assistance might best be given.

The expense of the transport of Coolies from British India was such as to excite doubts on the part of the Jamaica Assembly as to the expediency of carrying that immigration forward, and I saw much reason to apprehend that these doubts were well founded, and that this immigration could not be conducted on any terms which would render it adequately remunerative. It remained to establish, if possible, an extended immigration from the parts of Africa where slavery does not prevail, and whence an intelligent and serviceable class of emigrants might be procured. After every practicable inquiry had been made in this country as to the prospect of succeeding in such an attempt, Her Majesty's steam-ship *Growler* was despatched to the Kroo coast for emigrants, and, although she has been for the moment diverted from the prosecution of that particular service by the occurrence of an opportunity of conveying a large number of liberated Africans to the West Indies, the intelligence which has been received by no means abates the hopes which have been entertained, and she has gone back to Africa with the additional advantage of conveying thither, as delegates from British Guiana and Trinidad, between one hundred and two hundred Kroomen and other Africans. These persons have been exceedingly prosperous in British Guiana, and they return to their country, according to a despatch from Governor Light, of which a copy is annexed, with large sums of money, the earnings of their labour in the West Indies; twenty-nine of them having deposited in the hands of the captain of the *Growler* no less a sum than £571 15s. 10d. I am not, therefore, without hope, that the succeeding operations of the *Growler* may realise the prospect of emigrants being obtained from the Kroo coast in large numbers, and Her Majesty's Government are prepared to take prompt measures for conveying them to the West Indies with the least outlay which may be found to be compatible with the proper conduct of the service. It is indispensable that that outlay should be defrayed by the colonies to which the emigrants are taken; nor is it possible for me, especially in the present state of the resources of this country, and having regard also to the extraordinary demands

made upon them from the various exigencies of the time, to hold out any expectation that Her Majesty's Government can recommend to Parliament that either a grant of money or a loan should be made by this country to the West India colonies for the advancement of these objects; but any number of merchant vessels will be employed which it is found possible to employ with advantage, and the expenses of which the colonies may be prepared to provide for. The manner of conducting the service must afford an absolute and indisputable security against any immigrants being taken without their free consent, obtained by fair and well-founded statements. Her Majesty's Government cannot for a moment admit the validity of the argument in favour of Africans being rescued from slavery by purchase, in order that they may be removed to a state of freedom. Such a proceeding would be sure to make more slaves than it redeemed, and to make them in the worst way, by furnishing, like the slave trade itself, a provocative to the system of barbarous outrage and warfare by which that traffic is fed. It is indispensable in order to guard against abuses of this nature, that the service should be conducted under the regulations of the Government, and on those parts only of the African coast where slavery and the slave trade are found not to prevail. At present, however, there is nothing to show that the employment of ships of war will be necessary, or that the cost of superintendence need be incurred beyond that of a Government agency on board the vessel and on the coast. Such a superintendence is, in fact, as necessary to the success of the undertaking as it is essential to the character of this country; for any occurrence of abuses would inevitably put an end to the operations.

With regard to the means by which the colonies might be enabled to meet the cost,—when I first came to the consideration of this subject, the wisdom of the Assembly of Jamaica had already furnished in the clause of their Immigration Act imposing stamp duties on engagements for immigrant labour, an example of legislation which I did not fail to adopt and recommend to other colonies. I added, as you are aware, and I still recommend

to the attention of the Legislature of Jamaica, a suggestion for the imposition of a monthly tax on immigrants introduced at the public expense, and not a stamped engagement to labour. This may not be required in the case of the Coolie immigrants, whose habits and comparative isolation in the community throw them upon engagements with the planters as a necessary resource. But I should fear that without it, the African immigrants introduced at the expense of the colony, in order that they may hire themselves to work, will not always be found to fulfil that expectation and repay the cost of their passage.

Such are the measures which I have hitherto adopted and recommended to meet the deficiency in the supply of labour, and the steps which were necessary to give effect to these measures, so far as they depended upon Her Majesty's Government, have been taken, I trust, with the least possible delay, and with all the care requisite to give them a fair prospect of success; and there is no other proper and practicable measure calculated to advance these objects in which we should not most gladly co-operate with the Legislature of Jamaica to the utmost extent of the means at our disposal.

If the measures now in contemplation, or any others which may be devised, for the introduction of immigrants, should have an extensive success; and if neither that success, nor the anticipation of it, be allowed to interfere with the diligent pursuit of every possible improvement in agricultural and manufacturing processes, and still less with the education and industrial training of the negroes, I trust there is good reason to hope, not only that the present difficulties of the West Indian interest may prove to be temporary, but that when they shall have passed away, any measure of prosperity which may be attained will be steady and assured in its progress, and not subject to that constant recurrence of revulsions and vicissitudes which was the characteristic of West Indian agriculture and commerce in former times.

The statements made to me by the gentlemen who waited upon me with the present Memorial were strongly corroborative

of this hope. They assured me that they had no reason to complain of want of industry on the part of the labouring population. The evil was not that they were wanting in industry, but that they were too few in numbers for the many employments of industry to which a state of freedom had given birth, independently of those in which the fixed capital of the sugar-planter is invested; and that such is the real state of the case is shown by the large increase of imports which has accompanied the decline of exports since the period of emancipation. Nor did these gentlemen complain of the rate of wages as exorbitant. On the contrary, they stated that they would be content to pay the present wages, if a sufficiency of labourers at those wages could be obtained with certainty and regularity. Under these circumstances, it is evident that no injury can arise to the native labourers of Jamaica by the introduction of foreign labourers; on the contrary, it is most important to the natives that this foreign aid should be given, deeply interested as they are in the general prosperity of the island and the support of the educated classes, and those of European extraction, on whom for a long time to come the civil institutions and the administration of the laws must mainly rest. And it is worthy of remark that, in some colonies at least, the negroes themselves have evinced no repugnance whatever to the introduction of immigrant labourers, such as might be expected in countries where there is a competition for employment; but that in many places the strangers have been very hospitably received by the negroes, and treated with a marked cordiality.

If this reception and the advantages they meet with shall induce the immigrants to settle finally in the West Indies, there can be no doubt that their gain will be great in doing so. But, if they prefer to return to Africa with the property they may have accumulated, there will be a fairer prospect than has ever yet been opened of at length introducing into that country the arts and habits of civilized life; *whilst the success of free labour in the West Indies will co-operate with these civilizing influences in extinguishing the slave trade, and it will no longer be the interest of*

48 *Earl Grey's Despatch, October 30th, 1847.*

nations claiming to be civilized to promote the worst barbarities of those on whom the advantages of Christianity have not yet been fully conferred.

I stated to the deputation which waited upon me some of the views which I have here developed, and, at their instance, I have thus communicated them to you ; and as it appeared to them that some advantage might be derived from making them known to the Assembly of Jamaica, I have to request that you will submit to that body a copy of this despatch.

I have, &c.

GREY.

III.

MEMORIAL TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL GREY,
HER MAJESTY'S PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE
COLONIES, FROM PROPRIETORS AND LESSEES OF SUGAR
ESTATES IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE ISLAND OF
JAMAICA.

[From BLUE BOOK, No. 250, H. L., 1848. "*Papers relative to Distress in
Sugar-growing Colonies.*"]

MY LORD,

We pray your earnest attention to the following facts :—

We, the undersigned, are the owners of nineteen and the lessees of thirteen sugar estates in the west end of the island of Jamaica, on which properties we employ daily an average of 2,898 labourers, who represent families numbering 14,490 people, lately redeemed from slavery. Our sugar estates, thirty-two in number, are expected to make this year 2,796 hogsheads of sugar and 1,354 puncheons of rum, which will cost us, by accurate computation, £60,315 13s. 5d. We have no hope of realising more than £15 per hogshead and £14 per puncheon (the maximum of the market at present), at which rate our produce will bring £60,896, leaving a balance over our expenditure of £580 6s. 7d. to go against six per cent., the common rate of interest which money bears in the colony, and which on £60,315 13s. 5d. would be £3,618 18s. 9d. *Our capital invested on these thirty-two sugar estates in live stock and implements of husbandry amounts, in*

live stock, to £32,094, in implements, to £14,630, upon which wear-and-tear capital we receive no interest whatever. The nineteen sugar estates that we own cost us £95,784, and we pay a rental for the thirteen other estates of £3,110 per annum, which sunk capital is likewise wholly profitless.

We are not so absurd as to expect that the British nation should abandon the principles of Free-trade, now upheld by the majority of the people, in order to afford us protection; but we submit it cannot be consonant with the spirit of Free-trade to give to the slave colonies a monopoly of the sugar market, by allowing them to cultivate sugar with means (slaves) denied to us; and we submit they must have that monopoly if the British West Indies cease to supply the market with sugar, as your Lordship must have ascertained that a supply from the East Indies cannot be obtained at the rates of slave-grown produce.

Now, we are resident proprietors, and all of us, with one exception, have purchased and leased our properties since the Emancipation Act. *It will be evident from the facts stated, that we cannot cultivate for another year; indeed we have not the means, unaided, of taking off the present crop; and the British West India merchants are now unable to assist us, and of course disinclined, where there is no hope of profit or even of recovering their advances. If we, being proprietors and lessees, living on and managing our own properties, brought up to tropical agriculture, and availing ourselves of every practical improvement, have only such a result to exhibit as is set forth in the statement of these facts, the inference is conclusive that the position of the absentee proprietor or mortgagee, represented by paid agencies, is still more deplorable. It is evident that unless some mode of suppressing slavery and the slave-trade, more effectual than that hitherto pursued, be adopted, and without immediate aid in the shape of money loans, sugar cultivation, upon which 300,000 of the emancipated negroes are wholly dependent, must cease in Jamaica.*

But our object in submitting these facts to your Lordship is to
ENABLE YOU TO DRAW YOUR OWN INFERENCES and suggest your

own remedies, and *we beg you will consider* OUR DESPERATE POSITION as an excuse for troubling you with the statement.

We have, &c.

(Signed) H. A. WHITELOCK,
(and fifteen others).

NOTE.—The use that Earl Grey made of the melancholy statement, given above, is shown by the following extract from his Lordship's Speech, in the House of Lords, on February 7th, 1848:—

“ He had been very much struck by one statement in a recent petition. The petitioners stated that they were all resident owners, or lessees of land; that they occupied land on their own account, and had invested 140,000*l* of capital in their plantations, and that with one exception, all had either purchased or leased their property since emancipation had been conceded. THIS SHOWED WHAT A GREAT CHANGE WAS GOING ON IN SOCIETY. He believed they would soon see the soil of Jamaica cultivated by resident owners or lessees of land only; and *he believed that so far from the prospects of Jamaica being bad, he was not aware there was any part of the British dominions in which SO FAVOURABLE A PROSPECT OF INVESTING CAPITAL as Jamaica presented was to be found.*”—*Morning Herald, February 8th, 1848.*

Schedule to the foregoing Memorial from Jamaica.

NUMBER AND VALUE OF ESTATES, LIVE STOCK, &c.

Number of Estates owned by Sub-scriber.	Number of Live Stock.		Value of Live Stock upon all the Estates for which each is interested.	Value of Imple-ments upon ditto.	Total Amount of Expenditure in 1847, for Wages, Taxes, Salaries, Lumber, &c.			Purchase Money of Free-holds.	Annual Amount of Rental paid by each Lessee.	Estimated Crop for this Year.		Average daily Number of Labourers employed on all Subscribers Estates.	Signature of Proprietor and Lessee.
	Cattle.	Mules.			£	s.	d.			Hds.	Sugar Puns. Rum		
2	660	138	£ 5,340	£ 2,000	8,734	7	6	£ 8,000	£ 550	430	215	500	H. A. Whitelock.
1	100	..	1,000	500	2,500	0	0	5,000	...	120	60	123	T. Tate, (sixty-five Coolies also employed daily.)
1	51	48	888	500	2,200	0	0	7,000	...	110	55	100	E. H. Clarke.
2	340	10	2,090	800	2,700	0	0	6,600	...	140	80	140	W. Walcott.
1	180	..	1,260	500	1,920	0	0	4,734	...	100	50	100	C. A. Abbott.
1	170	..	1,020	450	1,450	0	0	3,050	...	50	22	60	P. Easson.
2	610	7	3,765	900	6,250	8	4	13,000	...	300	150	250	B. Kitters.
3	566	37	3,766	3,000	9,149	14	7	1,750	500	408	152	410	T. M'Niel.
1	160	40	1,360	500	2,226	12	6	1,650	...	101	50	100	R. Dewar.
—	280	38	2,800	530	4,323	0	0	...	660	200	110	200	D. Sinclair.
1	185	76	1,335	1,200	4,850	0	0	6,000	450	218	109	240	G. B. Vidal.
1	80	23	790	500	1,500	0	0	9,000	...	100	50	70	S. Holt.
2	250	35	2,060	1,500	3,600	0	0	10,000	200	160	75	225	S. S. Hugh.
1	230	47	2,080	900	3,930	0	0	10,000	200	170	85	190	W. R. Cooke.
—	47	18	576	200	900	0	0	...	150	35	14	30	W. Whitmore.
—	169	56	2,024	650	4,081	10	6	...	400	154	77	160	W. Hutton.
19	4,078	573	32,094	14,630	60,315	13	5	95,784	3,110	2,796	1,354	2,898	

Grange Hill Post Office,
Westmoreland, Jamaica, 16th December, 1847

IV.

DEBATE IN THE HOUSE OF LORDS, ON TUESDAY, JUNE 27TH, 1848, ON THE CHARGE BROUGHT AGAINST EARL GREY, BY LORD GEORGE BENTINCK, IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

[*From the TIMES of June 28th, 1848.*]

EARL GREY.—My Lords, in pursuance of the notice which I have given, I rise for the purpose of moving that an humble address be presented to Her Majesty for copies of certain despatches relating to the condition of the West Indies. My Lords, the greater part of these despatches are included in papers which have already been laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament.

Your Lordships are probably, most of you, aware that it is reported, but I hope not correctly reported, that certain remarks have been lately made in the other House of Parliament in the course of a debate relating to the production of these papers. It is stated that I, as Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, have, in concert with Mr. Hawes, my friend the Under-Secretary of State for the same department, endeavoured to mislead that committee, to which had been confided by the other House of Parliament the task of investigating the important question of the distress of the West India colonies. *It is stated that we have deliberately concerted to keep back papers relating to the West Indies which favour the opinions of those who attribute the distress prevailing in those colonies to the act of 1846, while every paper leading to a contrary conclusion has been carefully selected and communicated to the committee.*

I am sure that your Lordships will agree with me in thinking this a charge of so serious a nature, and one involving imputations

so utterly disgraceful, that if it could be maintained, not only should I be utterly unworthy to continue to hold the station which I now hold in Her Majesty's councils, but it would be the duty of your Lordships and of the other House of Parliament, by some formal and solemn proceeding, to mark your sense of such gross misconduct on the part of one honoured by the confidence of the Crown. My Lords, I say the offence is no less serious than this ; because, what does it amount to?—*Wilfully deceiving a Committee of Parliament by garbling the evidence which is brought before it.*

My Lords, to my extreme astonishment I am told—and it is absolutely impossible I could believe it if I had not been told—that a distinction has been drawn upon this subject between that which was a personal imputation upon me and an imputation upon me in my political capacity. I am sure your Lordships will agree with me that in a matter of this kind no such distinction could for a moment be allowed. And I am indeed astonished that any one, looking forward himself to hold office under the Crown, can really pretend that a Minister of the Crown, guilty of deceiving Parliament, is not culpable personally for a crime and an offence far more serious and far more disgraceful than that of a poor man who, perhaps under the pressure of distress, commits some petty pecuniary fraud. In my opinion the offence of a Minister of the Crown so conducting himself is infinitely more disgraceful and more serious than that of any such petty criminal who may appear at the bar of the Old Bailey. I do hope and trust that it is not true that any gentleman, looking forward himself to hold office under the Crown, could for a moment have suggested even the shadow of any such distinction existing as that which I have stated. But if it be a charge of this serious nature, I am sure your Lordships will concur with me in thinking that it is one which it is my imperative duty to lose not one moment I could help in bringing under your consideration, and of refuting, as I trust I shall refute it, in a manner that will defy all contradiction.

My Lords, this charge, I understand, has been founded upon what has occurred with reference to three despatches—one being

a despatch received from Sir Charles Grey, dated the 21st of February last, and received in this country on the 27th of March. *It is complained that this despatch was wilfully kept back from the committee, while the enclosure in this despatch was laid before it.* Another despatch was one received from Sir Henry Light, late Governor of British Guiana; and the third despatch was one received from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad.

Now, with respect to Sir Charles Grey's despatch, I at once admit to your Lordships that it is one which ought to have been laid before the committee; it is one which I fully intended should have been laid before it; and up to a recent period I never suspected that it had not been laid before the committee. My Lords, I wish to show the evidence upon which I so state the facts; but before doing so, it will make the matter much more intelligible, if I explain the ordinary course adopted in the Colonial-office. The arrangement which has existed for many years, (and I may observe in passing, that it is an arrangement without which, or without some similar arrangement, it would be absolutely impossible for the great mass of papers that come under the consideration of that department to be disposed of); but the arrangement which has existed for many years is this—when a despatch arrives it is taken to that division of the Colonial-office to which it belongs, where it is opened and registered, and all the correspondence relating to it is placed with it. It is then forwarded, in succession, first, to the permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Department; from him it passes to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State; and, lastly, it comes to the Secretary of State himself. Each of those whom the despatch reaches makes his minute upon it, according as he thinks necessary, and it is desired that those minutes should, as much as possible, contain suggestions of what, in the opinion of each individual through whose hands it passes, ought to be done with regard to that despatch, so that all the ordinary business of the office may be disposed of by the Secretary of State himself by simply signifying his approval, or otherwise, of those suggestions. That being the ordinary course of proceeding, this particular despatch of Sir Charles Grey's arrived at the

Colonial-office on the 27th of March. It was opened by the gentleman whose duty it was to open it,—Mr. Cox, and this is his minute, addressed to Mr. Taylor, the senior of his department,—“This is a copy of the despatch for which the committee on West India distress have asked.” I would observe, in passing, that the Committee on Sugar and Coffee Planting had for some time asked for a copy of the report, by a Committee of the House of Assembly of Jamaica, upon the expense of cultivation. At that time we had received no report of the Committee of the House of Assembly. Subsequently, a copy of the report was received, but without any evidence or any despatch from the Governor of Jamaica. That report had been ordered to be sent to the Committee by the House of Commons; but a mere report, without any evidence, was apparently an unimportant document. It was the evidence attached to that report which was of any consequence. When, therefore, this despatch reached Mr. Cox, he made this minute,—“We had a copy of the document which was required in the votes of the House of Assembly. It was to be sent to the Committee to-day. Would it not be better to send, instead, a copy of this despatch, which is important, with the report and evidence which we have got now for the first time? There are two copies; and so it is desirable to send it to-day.” This bears his initials, and is dated the 27th of March. The next minute was written by Mr. Elliott, to whom Mr. Cox addressed the despatch; and Mr. Elliott says,—“I agree with you that this despatch ought to be given at the same time with the report and evidence to which it refers.” This is also dated the 27th of March, and bears his initials. The despatch was then addressed to Mr. Hawes on the same day—the 27th of March,—who wrote on it “I agree.” Then comes my minute. I wrote, “This may be laid before the Committee,” and I also suggested that the despatch would require to be answered with some care. There were some more important points adverted to, for my minute was rather long, and it was then dated the 30th of March. Now, my Lords, of course, having made that minute and directed the despatch and report to be laid before the Committee of the House of Commons,

I never doubted but that that minute would be attended to. Your Lordships must know that it is physically impossible that the Secretary of State for the Colonies can look minutely into the manner in which his orders are carried out. The multitude of despatches that arrive would render it utterly impossible. All through the progress of this inquiry I never by any accident have seen any of the copies which were called for, and which were laid before the Committee. I have given directions in pursuance of the orders of the two Houses of Parliament, and I have always expected them to be complied with. I have invariably and implicitly trusted that those orders would be carried out; and I must say that the character of the gentlemen, whose duty it was in that department, to see those orders obeyed, fully justified me in that confidence. But, undoubtedly, a mistake in this case has occurred;—a mistake which it is not difficult to explain. At the same time I am bound to say—because I should be sorry if I were to advance one single word beyond that which I was capable of proving,—that when I state to your Lordships my perfect recollection of the impression which was made on me at the time, I am, after consulting with the gentlemen of the Colonial Department, confirmed in the belief, that I can explain how that mistake occurred. Your Lordships will observe that my minute is dated three days after that of Mr. Hawes; and you will also observe that my minute contains a long direction as to the manner in which the despatch was to be answered. Now, as I could not give those directions until I had read the report of the Committee of the House of Assembly, and as that was a somewhat lengthy document, and as the mail was going out within three days, I gave verbal instructions at the time to make two copies of the printed report, and send one of them at once to the Committee; and I said that I would forward the despatch as soon as I had done with it. As to the despatch, I find that it was sent to me on the 28th of March. The minute of Mr. Hawes was dated the 27th, but as he only receives and peruses papers late at night, the probability is that I did not receive the despatch till the following morning. Well, having received both the despatch and the report, and having directed a

copy of the report to be sent to the Committee, on the 30th of March I wrote the minute of the answer to be returned to that despatch. My Lords, strictly in the ordinary course, the gentleman who is the senior of the West India division of the Colonial-office (Mr. Taylor) prepared a draught of the answer, and at once forwarded it to me. That was on the 1st of April. When that draught reached me I did not inquire whether the despatch had already been copied and sent to the Committee. It since appears that it had not been sent; because the copying of it had been postponed until the draught of the answer should have been returned by me. But it happened that when the draught reached me it required a little more correction and deliberation than would admit of my returning it on the 1st of April; therefore, thinking that the despatch had already been copied and communicated to the Committee of the House of Commons, I put by the draught (the despatch requiring to be answered with some care), as I was anxious that the answer should not be copied until I had given it more mature consideration. I therefore put by the despatch for two or three days, and it appears to have passed from me on the 14th of April. When it went back to the division of the office to which it belonged, the report, which the despatch enclosed, having been already sent to the Committee, it certainly does not seem to be an unpardonable oversight that the despatch which ought to have accompanied it was not sent at the time. I believe the mistake arose in this way,—I knew that it was of no use to send a single copy of the report which was enclosed in the despatch to the Committee; it was necessary that each member of the Committee should have a copy, and therefore it was sent to be printed. I sent the report on the 28th, in order that time might be saved by printing it, and I thought that when the despatch should be sent two or three days after, it would, in consequence of it being much shorter, be ready for delivery at the same time with the report. This undoubtedly is, to a certain degree, a conjectural explanation of the delay, but at the same time it is an explanation on the correctness of which I have the surest reliance; and, if so, I must say, not only for myself, but for the gentlemen em-

ployed in the department, that we are not justly liable to censure for a mistake of this kind; more especially when I state to your Lordships that there were called for, in the course of this inquiry, by the House of Commons and the Committee, 308 despatches, and with respect to miscellaneous questions 295 other despatches, making a total of 630 printed folio pages, which had to be furnished by the department. Under the pressure of business to that amount, I think that in common fairness it must be admitted that a mistake of this kind was not a very unnatural occurrence. But, whether the mistake occurred precisely in the manner in which I have stated or not, this, at all events I can state, and to this I pledge my honour, that it was a mistake—that I and Mr. Hawes both firmly believed that the despatch had been communicated to the Committee. I say you cannot doubt that, unless you believe, what, indeed, I am told, has been suggested, that these minutes have been concocted since the subject was noticed in the House of Commons; that is to say—for upon these matters I think plain speaking is best,—that Mr. Cox, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Elliot, Mr. Hawes, and myself have concurred in deceiving the House of Commons by a deliberate act of forgery. Upon that charge I will say no more than this—that I hardly know which is the most worthy to be despised, the man who not entertaining that suspicion could express it, or the mind so lost to every generous feeling as to be capable of conceiving it.

Another complaint is, that a despatch of Sir Henry Light, received on the 24th of April, was not laid before the Committee, but that a short extract from it was communicated to them. I have no hesitation in saying that it was by my direction that the despatch was kept back, and the extract given. I did not think it necessary that the despatch should be communicated to the Committee, for reasons which your Lordships may or may not deem insufficient, but which to my mind appear to be conclusive. On the 24th of April the Committee was supposed to have some considerable time before they closed their inquiry, and at that stage of the proceedings it was deemed much more

convenient that whatever further information might be received from the colonies should be contained in the collection of papers which it was proposed to present to the House, unless indeed any of the documents happened to contain some new matter of peculiar importance. On looking at the enclosure of Governor Light's despatch, I perceived that it contained some rather curious matter bearing upon the subject of the Committee's inquiry, and therefore I directed that it should be taken down to them; but the despatch itself I did not send. It is said that I suppressed the despatch, because it contained this passage :—

“ The cessation from labour at the present moment is partial. Many of the Creoles have returned to their usual occupation on estates; but, while the average of produce throughout the province is one or one and a quarter hogshead per acre, it will be very difficult to compete with slave sugar. The crop of last year would have been remunerating had the prices kept up; on that of Berbice, as large as during slavery, but little profit has accrued. The difficulty of the planters is now increased by their not being able to raise money even on their sugars.”

Now I would be the last man to dispute the facts stated in that extract, they are perfectly notorious; and information to that effect would have been laid before the committee to the fullest extent, if they had wished for it. The statement that the planters could not compete with slave-grown sugar whilst their produce continued to be one and a quarter hogshead per acre, combined with the statements contained in the same despatch, that the system of manufacture in force in the colony was crude and imperfect, and that, under a different system, the produce might be doubled, instead of making against the views which I am supposed to have been anxious to press upon the committee, forms the strongest possible argument in favour of those who entertain opinions adverse to protection.

The case of the despatch from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad, is of a similar character. No doubt that despatch was of great importance, and well worthy of the attention of both the Committee and the House of Commons, but it was not received until the 5th of May. The Committee at that time had already

had two or three meetings for the purpose of considering their resolutions. The despatch reached me, as I find by a minute, on the 8th of May, and it happened that on that very day Lord George Bentinck himself moved in the House of Commons an address to the Queen for copies of all despatches, bearing on the subject, received by the then two last mails from the West Indies, to be laid, not before the Committee, but before the House of Commons. The motion would, I believe, have been made some days sooner had it not been for circumstances into which it is unnecessary for me to enter. This* is the collection of papers printed in consequence of that motion, and if the Committee had waited until they were prepared, they would have been detained a considerable time from the ultimate termination of their labours. This is the only reason why Lord Harris's despatch was presented to the House of Commons, instead of being at once laid before the Committee. An observation arises here which is so obvious that it is hardly necessary to make it. If dishonest concealment had been my object, I should undoubtedly have taken care that the papers were not laid before the House of Commons. It would have been quite as easy to suppress them for the Commons as for the Committee. If I had been guilty of an improper suppression of information as regarded the Committee, it would have been a good deal easier and safer for me to have persevered in concealment, and withheld the documents from the House of Commons, more especially as it was the vote of the House of Commons, not of the Committee, to which importance would be attached. The decision of the Committee was a matter comparatively unimportant, and the only resolution they came to seems to be universally and by common consent abandoned. I find by the published votes of the House of Commons, that an honourable gentleman who voted for the resolution of the Committee gave notice of a motion in the House of Commons which was nothing short of the resolution agreed to by the Committee; but finding, I suppose, that he was not likely to be supported, he altered it into a general censure on the pro-

* Holding up a Blue Book.

position of the Government, in the hope of drawing to its support the votes of all those who dissented from the plan of the Government, however opposite their views might be. If then, it had been my wish to deceive, it was the House of Commons, not the committee, I should have selected for the object.

I am told, that since the charge was originally made, further charges of the same kind have been preferred against me, relative to the suppression of some papers and dishonest quotations from others. *It is said that I have quoted from a Memorial of certain persons in Jamaica a passage in support of my own argument, and without reading the rest of the paper. Undoubtedly I did so, and I wish to know which of your Lordships ever made a speech in this house without quoting only those parts of a document which he thought important to his case.* Having, a few days ago, seen the report of my speech upon the occasion referred to, I find that it is somewhat imperfectly given; but, it is undoubtedly true that I quoted in favour of my argument, certain facts from a memorial of certain persons in Jamaica. Those persons were complaining of the existing state of things in that colony, and of the distress under which they were suffering. My argument was, that the parties making that complaint had themselves admitted facts which, according to my views of the case, made for my opinion. I did not trouble the house with reading the passage at length; I read the passage which I thought important, and nothing else; but that despatch, together with every other paper, was laid before the House of Commons.

I cannot, without going into greater detail than I could expect your lordships to listen to, refer more particularly to the despatches which it is said I have failed to present in due time to the Committee and the other house of Parliament. I therefore meet the allegation merely by the general assertion, that every call for papers made by the Committee or the house was obeyed with the utmost promptitude possible—considering the mass of documents with which we had to deal—and with the most perfect scrupulousness and good faith. I defy any man to search the archives of the Colonial-office and to find there a single important line

written on the subject bearing on either view of the question which has not either been printed at once without being called for, or in obedience to the orders of the other house of Parliament. My directions to the Colonial-office were to take care that the fullest information should be furnished both to the Committee and the house.

Such is the vindication I now offer to your Lordships of my conduct, and I will offer a very few further remarks before I conclude. I must confess, that when informed that I was charged with a practice so utterly disgraceful, the intelligence excited in my mind lively emotions both of anger and indignation, but a very little calm reflection dissipated those feelings. I soon felt that there was no real cause for anger, because, whatever had been intended, no real injury was done to me. I hope I shall not be deemed guilty of any undue presumption in saying, that having been now for nearly twenty-two years a member of one or the other house of Parliament, having taken some share in public affairs, and having never before, during that period, had imputed to me a mean and dishonourable act, I think I have earned a character which is proof against such an attack as has been made upon me. I have so much confidence in the generosity and justice of my countrymen, that I do not entertain the fear that they would lightly believe that by such conduct as that which has been imputed to me I would have disgraced myself and tarnished the unsullied honour of a name which I am proud to inherit, because I received it from one who was even more distinguished for his pure and irreproachable character than for his talents and public services. I feel that I cannot be injured by such an attack, and further that I ought rather to be obliged to the noble lord for having directed it against me, inasmuch as it has given an opportunity to my friends to come forward in my defence with a generosity which, I assure them, I will never cease to hold in grateful recollection. I therefore feel that I can treat the attacks which have been made upon me—I will not say with contempt, because I wish to avoid any expression of angry feeling—but with disregard; convinced, as I am, that they must have elicited

the censure of all high-minded and honourable men, by showing that one who aspires to taking a leading part in the public affairs of his country is so ignorant of the manner in which those affairs ought to be conducted as to bring down a great question of policy to the miserable ground of petty personality.

Although I am not anxious for myself, I think I have a right to say that this system of personal attack and imputation upon the motives of public servants is one that ought to be prohibited by your Lordships and the other house of Parliament. Let me remind your Lordships that this is not the first instance of the kind from the same individual. Two gentlemen of unsullied character have been accused on grounds as trivial as those on which this charge against me is founded. Mr. Porter has been accused of having drawn up a return in such a way as to deceive Parliament; and another gentleman is said to have fenced with questions when under examination before a committee, for the purpose, I suppose, of deceiving them. It is an offence against the best interests of the country to adopt such a system as this; it is one full of evil and danger. Hitherto in this country it has been our boast, that although party contests at times run high, yet they are conducted in an honourable manner, by fair discussion and argument. It has not been usual for charges of personal dishonour to be preferred by one public man against another, and, above all, it has not been the practice that a deliberate charge of violation of public duty should be brought against a Minister of the Crown, unless it was the intention to make it the foundation of some solemn proceeding. Within the course of the last few years, the noble lord opposite (Lord Stanley) filled the office which is now much more unworthily represented by me. It has been my misfortune to have thought it my duty to join those who have entered into a somewhat strong opposition to the policy of the noble lord; but it never occurred to us, in conducting that opposition, to charge the noble lord with withholding documents, and with unfairness. I never dreamt of any such thing, and yet, if any person had chosen to exercise a plausible ingenuity in collating passages from speeches in *Hansard*, with extracts from

despatches in volumes of blue books, he would have had no great difficulty in making out a plausible case upon which to found such a charge as has been brought against me. When there is a desire to make such charges, and readiness to listen to them, there is no great difficulty in finding materials for them. Again, the noble lord opposite has been in opposition as well as in office, and in opposition it has not been his habit to be particularly sparing in the severity of criticism upon his political opponents; yet I have never heard accusations of this kind proceed from him. As far as I am aware, the noble lord has always abstained from using the poisoned arrows of insinuations of personal dishonour.

In connexion with this subject I will just mention a fact which was communicated to me only a few minutes before the house assembled. Your Lordships may be aware that it is reported that in the discussion which took place on this subject in the other house a great impression was made by the assertion that my friend, the noble duke behind me (the Duke of Bedford), acted as chairman at a meeting of the Jockey Club which voted a testimonial for the zeal and perseverance which the noble lord (Lord G. Bentinck) had exhibited in exposing certain frauds. The fact was announced, as I am informed, by a friend of Lord G. Bentinck's, on the suggestion of the noble lord himself. It happens curiously enough that this fact, so opportunely stated, and the stating of which made a great impression, turns out to be no fact at all. The authentic records have been examined,—I am stating this on the authority of the noble duke,—and it is found that not only was he not chairman, but that he was not even present on the occasion adverted to, and I believe that he did not attend a meeting of the stewards of the Jockey Club on the question until the funds had been diverted from their original object to a charitable purpose. How easy would it be for me to say that the principal actor in that transaction could not be ignorant of the real state of the case—he presumed upon the ignorance of his audience, and ventured on an assertion which, for the moment, produced great effect, taking his chance of the truth being subsequently made known. How easy would it be for me to take

that course ; but I disdain to do so. I say, and say most truly, that I firmly believe that in the excitement of the moment those who made the assertion believed it to be true. However ready they may be to believe that all who differ from them in political matters are capable of any conduct, however vile and disgraceful, I entertain no such feeling. I acquit them at once of such intentional deceit. But I call your Lordships to observe what proof is afforded by this mistake so committed by them at the very moment of charging falsehood upon another, how much care and abstinence there should be in bandying such charges from one to another. I believe it is impossible, with the tone of feeling which exists in this country, that any Minister of the Crown should be guilty of the conduct which has been imputed to me. The very gentlemen in his own department would refuse to assist or bear him out in such iniquitous proceedings. But, my Lords, if these accusations are to be bandied about from one to another,—if these things are to be talked of as possible to be done,—then men's minds will gradually get used to think of them, and to believe that they are possible ; and one of the great safeguards of the purity of the system of public administration in this country, of which we are proud, and which forms so great a contrast to what in other countries is known to take place—one of the greatest of those safeguards will be destroyed. My Lords, I say that the high character of public men is of the deepest importance to the country. How much of the moral strength of our institutions, of the power—I do not say of the Administration of the day, but of the Government in its widest sense, including both the executive and the legislative authorities of the state—*how much of the power of Government in this country depends upon the general belief of the people of this empire that the public business is fairly and honourably transacted !*

My Lords, I think we have an awful warning on the other side of the Channel of the effects which a contrary belief is capable of producing. Is there any man who doubts that the sudden crumbling, in the midst of its apparent power and prosperity, of the Government of France, within the month of

February last, and the calamities and bloodshed which have since ensued—that all those frightful events which have startled and alarmed the whole of Europe are in no small part to be attributed to the impression which, rightly or wrongly, justly or unjustly, certain unfortunate events and disclosures have latterly made on the public mind of France, that there was something corrupt and rotten in the manner in which the public affairs were managed, and in those in high places by whom they were conducted? The public confidence in those by whom affairs were conducted, whether in the Opposition or in the Government, had been shaken, if not destroyed. My Lords, I say that that was undoubtedly the case; and I ask if it is not a practice to be severely reprobated by your Lordships and condemned by the public, if we are to have introduced into our party contests this system of unfounded attacks upon the characters of public men, which, if adopted on the one side, cannot long go on without being followed by the other, and which if it does go on—if the system is once established, must end in this, that the character of public men in general, on both sides in politics, will be lowered and degraded in the public estimation.

These are the observations which I have to submit to your Lordships. I add nothing further but an expression of my hope that in what I have said, I have executed that which I most earnestly desired, and that I have succeeded in avoiding the use of any of those expressions, or the uttering any of those personalities, which I have so much condemned. I have to move your Lordships that an humble address be presented to Her Majesty, praying that she will be graciously pleased to direct that there be laid before this house copies of, or extracts from, any recent correspondence between the Secretary of State and the Governors of sugar-growing colonies as to the distress now existing in those colonies.

LORD STANLEY.—My Lords, although I certainly cannot feel any wonder that the Noble Earl should have desired to take the earliest opportunity which presented itself, or, if no opportunity presented itself, to make one for himself, for the purpose of vindicating himself and the department over which he presides from

charges which have been made, not (permit me to say) against him in his personal, but against him and them in his and their official, capacity, in another place,—I yet regret that the noble earl has felt himself compelled to take the opportunity of making the statement which he has done; because, in the first place, the debate as introduced by the noble earl, and as it is necessary that it should be continued, is itself wholly irregular and inconsistent with the orders and practice of your Lordship's house; but, in the next place, and most of all, because it brings me very unwillingly into the position, while vindicating the conduct and the motives of a noble and honourable friend of mine in another place, of appearing as that which I was least of all desirous of appearing to be—the accuser both of the Department to which I had once the honour of belonging, and also of the noble earl opposite, of whom, at the outset, permit me to say that, in his personal character, I believe him to be a man possessed of a sense of honour as high and blameless as any one of your Lordships. But, on the other hand, while I pay that tribute, which is no more than is due to the personal character of the noble earl opposite, I must also claim for my noble friend in the other house, the subject of the noble earl's attack this night, that he also is a man of as high and unblemished honour as the noble earl himself as incapable of stating anywhere that which he did not believe to be the fact, as strenuous in supporting opinions which he believes to be well founded, and as fearless of the consequences to himself of the bold assertion of what he believes to be the truth, as any human being upon the face of this earth.

I know not precisely what application the noble earl conceives the reference which he made to the present state of affairs in France to have to the question now under your Lordships' consideration. And I confess it was with some surprise that I heard the noble earl advert to another point, which, for the credit of some concerned, I should have thought that he would have been among the first to desire to consign to eternal oblivion, namely, the reference that was made in another place to pursuits in which my noble friend was said—was known to have been engaged. But I

am not sorry, foreign as the whole question is from the subject of discussion now, that the noble earl has introduced the topic, because it affords me an opportunity of bearing public testimony to the high honour and the disinterested character of my noble friend. It was with some surprise that I heard it reported that no insignificant individual, no person in a low and humble and unimportant position, but that the First Minister of the Crown had thought it consistent with the dignity of his station, consistent with the position which he occupies, and the respect which he owed to the audience he was addressing, to cast out against my noble friend that anything base and sordid was analogous to the pursuits of that—I will not call it profession—but analogous to the character of those pursuits in which my noble friend was known to have been engaged. And still more was I surprised when I heard that the noble lord condescended to taunt my noble friend with having been the instrument, as a member of the Jockey Club, of exposing, sifting to the bottom, and completely putting an end to one of the grossest and most disgraceful systems of fraud that ever was practised. The charge was, that the pursuit in which my noble friend was engaged was one which was of a lowering and degrading character; and it was answered, and not unnaturally, that the noble lord's nearest relation, the noble duke himself, than whom there could not be a more high bred or honourable gentleman, was also engaged with my noble friend, and without reproach, in these same pursuits; and that he, by his presence and his countenance, had borne testimony to the exertions of my noble friend for defeating and exposing fraud. It may or may not be true, that the noble duke was in the chair at the time that a particular resolution was come to, expressing the thanks of the body at large to my noble friend for his exertions in that matter; but that was the fact. My noble friend, with great personal exertion, at great expense to himself, at great inconvenience and with great labour, was successful in exposing and destroying, with entirely disinterested motives, a disgraceful system of fraud; and those who were interested in the same pursuits, and who had the same desire to put an end to that

fraud, in token of their approval, and of the feeling they entertained with regard to his exertions, voted a testimonial, for which I believe there was subscribed somewhere between £3,000 and £4,000, and one of the first subscribers to that testimonial in honour of my noble friend was the noble duke opposite (the Duke of Bedford), who is now cited as a witness before your Lordships. What was my noble friend's course of proceeding? Gratified any man must have been by receiving such a testimony of a body of the gentlemen of this country. But my noble friend, with that disinterestedness which is characteristic of him, declared that of the pecuniary testimonial he would not receive one shilling; but that the £3,000 so subscribed should be allotted as a fund for the purpose of the relief of the widows and orphans of those persons who, ministering in a humble capacity to the pleasure and amusement of the patrons of the turf in England, had conducted themselves with uniform good conduct and character, and that the fund intended as a compliment to him should be set apart as an encouragement to such conduct. I beg your Lordships' pardon for occupying these few moments with this statement; certainly one of the last topics I expected to be called upon to discuss here was the proceedings of the Jockey Club and the connexion of my noble friend with them.

I now proceed to the distinct charges which were made against the Colonial-office; not against the noble earl personally or separately, but against the Colonial-office as a public body, in the performance of public duties. *And I have yet to learn that if any public man in this or the other house of Parliament is of opinion that any public servant or any public board is neglecting or violating his or its duty, it is a breach of the ordinary courtesies of life that he should in his place as a member of Parliament, state his belief that such violation of duty is going on, and submit the grounds upon which he thinks he can substantiate the charge. Whether the person so charged be the chairman of the Board of Excise, or whether he be a gentleman engaged on the part of the Board of Trade in preparing documents, which have had the effect, certainly, of misleading a considerable portion of the people of this*

country upon a very important question, or whether it be the noble earl at the head of the Colonial-office, or the noble lord at the head of Her Majesty's Government, I hold that it is not only consistent with, but that it is the right and duty of a public man, without reference to personal feelings, to expose that believed delinquency, and that he is not to be told he is indulging in mean and petty personalities, if in the performance of his duty he thinks it necessary to take that course.

Now I will present this case to your Lordships, and I will follow the noble earl through his statement; I will present it without heat or passion, and, if possible, without an aggravating expression. I do not stand here to vindicate every expression of which I am not cognizant, which may have been made use of elsewhere; I am here to state the charge which has been made—I am here to state the facts which appear to corroborate that charge, and to leave your Lordships to draw your own inference; I am not here to state whether that charge is well founded or not, but I am here to state facts upon which I think your Lordships will be of opinion that there was a ground for suspicion, which rendered it just and right that the case should be presented to the notice, and for the opinion of Parliament. *The charge is this—that systematically, for the course of the last year, the Colonial-office presided over by my noble friend—by the noble earl opposite—has been in the habit, in the first place of suppressing documents, or portion of documents, material to the due estimation and judgment of important political questions actually under consideration; and next, that the Colonial-office and the noble earl at the head of it, have been in the practice of perverting from their intention and meaning documents exclusively in their own possession, not accessible to others, and from those documents leading Parliament to inferences wholly alien from those which the documents themselves furnished.* That is the charge, and I proceed now to state the circumstances under which the charge was made.

All these statements have reference to the present alarming and distressing condition of the West India colonies; and there were two periods in the course of the past year when it was more peculiarly

important that Parliament should be in possession of the latest, the most accurate, and the most impartial information. One of these periods I take to have been that at which the affairs of the West India colonies came under discussion, in this and the other house of Parliament, immediately after Christmas; in the other house upon the motion of my noble friend for the appointment of a committee to inquire into the state of those colonies, and in this house somewhat later, upon the presentation of certain petitions which I had the honour of laying before your Lordships, and to which the noble earl made his reply. The other occasion when it was peculiarly important that accurate information should be furnished was when the committee appointed upon the motion of my noble friend were about to present to Parliament their report of the whole of the evidence taken, and their recommendation of the course to be pursued to save the West India colonies from utter ruin; and the charge is, that at those precise periods important information was not given which ought to have been given, and that documents were garbled in a statement made of them to this house in such a manner as to convey wholly erroneous inferences with regard to the contents of those documents.

The first of these cases to which I would turn is the case which the noble earl took first in his statement—that of the despatch from Sir C. Grey, received on the 27th of March. On the 27th of March the committee had been appointed, which was presided over by my noble friend with an untiring zeal, and with an ability which obtained for him the admiration of all who witnessed those continuous and arduous labours; that committee was on the point of closing the evidence, and proceeding to consider its effect: the main question, observe, between the Government and the West Indies being this—whether the distress which was universally recognized to prevail throughout those colonies was to be traced to causes connected with the legislation of this country, or to the negligence, the apathy, the want of skill, of the planters themselves. At that period, on the 27th of March, Sir C. Grey, the Governor of Jamaica, sends over to this country a report, prepared by a committee of the Legislature of Jamaica, accompanied

by evidence as to the state of the distress, and the causes which they believed to have produced that distress, agreed to by a committee of the House of Assembly, and accompanied by a despatch from Sir C. Grey himself, in which he refers to the general condition of the colony, and not only states his view of the causes of the distress, but states distinctly and plainly what is the measure which alone he conceives to be capable of relieving or even of alleviating that distress. *That despatch was received on the 28th of March*; the committee closed their evidence on the 5th of April. On the 5th of April the Under-Secretary of State was examined before the committee. It had been matter of frequent inquiry, whether there were no general reports from the Governor of Jamaica with regard to the state of that colony, and whether, as the governors of all the other colonies had transmitted accounts of the colonies under them, no such report had been received from the Governor of Jamaica. The question was distinctly put to the Under-Secretary on the 5th of April. But not only was this document not forthwith laid before the committee previous to the period at which they closed their evidence, but that document, all-important as it was, conveying the evidence of your own governor and the opinion of your own governor as to the course to be adopted for the relief of the colony over which he was placed, and with whose welfare he was intrusted,—*that despatch was never laid before the committee at all, although they continued their sittings until the 29th of May*; and they came to their decision in ignorance of its contents. And now let me go further, and state, that it so happened that one of the questions studied in that committee, and proposed to be reported on, was whether there should be a differential duty of 10s. per cwt. imposed upon sugar, a duty of 20s. upon foreign, and 10s. upon British, as nearly as possible a differential duty of one penny per pound; and that proposition was lost in the committee, I think, by a majority of a single vote. *Now I ask your Lordships what effect might not have been produced upon this nicely balanced committee if, at that time, it had been known by them that that very measure of a differential duty*

of 10s. per cwt. was the measure recommended by the Governor of Jamaica? That recommendation was in the hands of the Government; and, nevertheless, the committee went to a decision upon that question in ignorance that such a communication had been received, and, *moreover, with an excuse made for the governor, that he had been but a little time in the colony, and had not had an opportunity to give his attention to the preparation of a report.* Do not let me mislead your Lordships. I am stating what to a member of the committee must have been a strong ground of suspicion. I myself do not believe that that document was purposely withheld; I give credit to the assertion of the noble earl opposite and the honourable gentleman (Mr. Hawes) in another place, that the document was intended to be communicated to the committee; and, knowing the course of proceeding in that Department, and knowing that the minutes which are stated to appear upon the back of that despatch are precisely those which in the ordinary course of business would appear in reference to any such despatch, I have no doubt it was the intention of the noble earl that that document should be communicated. But that that was a most important document you cannot fail to admit,—that it was one directly bearing upon the very question the committee were called upon to discuss, and upon which they had to decide. I confess that, with the knowledge of that fact, notwithstanding the character borne by the Under Secretary for the Colonies (Mr. Hawes) as an honourable and straightforward gentleman, I cannot reconcile his answers before the Committee on the 5th of April. The despatch of Sir C. Grey stated, that unless a permanent *Gazette* price of 30s. per cwt. could be secured, he firmly believed that the greater portion of the sugar cultivation of the island would be abandoned; and Sir C. Grey then proceeded to recommend a differential duty of 10s. per cwt. On the 5th of April the Under Secretary for the Colonies was examined before the Committee. He was asked, “Can you explain the reason why we have no accounts in the papers laid before Parliament, from Jamaica, of the character of those from other colonies?” He said, in reply, “I imagine you allude to the blue book—to

the annual account from Jamaica?" He was next asked, "There is no account of the state of the island, as in the other cases?" and he replied, "That is generally comprised in the annual report called the 'blue book,' and that it has not been received." "Does not the Governor write despatches to the Colonial-office on the subject of the state of the island besides that one particular paper in the course of the year?" "Yes, certainly, but I am not aware of any despatches from him of any importance which have been withheld from the committee." (Cheers from the Ministerial benches.) I am going to state this case with perfect fairness, and it was not necessary for noble lords opposite to interrupt the statement I was about to make with that cheer; for I am willing to believe that at the time that answer was given Mr. Hawes was under the impression that his statement was correct. But the examination went on—"We have received from other colonies very considerable details as to the state of those colonies, and as to the prospects of agriculture; *but from Jamaica I can find nothing of the kind.*"—"Until very recently I think there has been no such general despatch received; that despatch is now printing for the committee. I ought to add that the Governor has been in the island a very short time." "That is preparing, is it?"—"There is a despatch, *but still not of the nature to which the right hon. gentleman alludes.* However, whatever we have will be furnished."

Now, I must say, *considering the character of this despatch, when not one word had been said by any other person with regard to the blue book, and when the question was whether any information had been received as to the state of the colony, I cannot understand why the Under Secretary for the Colonies stated vaguely, that a despatch had been received, but not of the nature alluded to—although, in point of fact, such a despatch had been received, instead of stating that, within the last few days, a most important document had been received which would furnish important information to the committee.* I confess I do not understand an Under Secretary's merely saying to a committee, five or six days after the receipt of such a despatch, that until very lately

no despatch had been received ; that the despatch which had been received was then printing; *but clearly leading the committee to believe that such despatch had no important bearing upon the subject under their investigation.*

I now come to another part of the case, which I must say, to the mind of any dispassionate person, gives a greater character of suspicion to the whole of this transaction ; and I must therefore beg your lordships' attention to what I am about to state. This despatch should have been sent before the committee ; and it is said, and I have no doubt truly, that the noble earl opposite (Earl Grey) gave directions, on the 30th of March, that it should be laid before the committee, but it was not laid before them. The Under Secretary was examined on the 5th of April, but he made no distinct reference to that despatch. The committee met again, I think on the 5th, the 9th, the 18th, the 22nd, and the 29th of May,—seven weeks after the time at which the examination of the Under Secretary took place ; but they did not come to a decision upon the merits of the case until the 22nd of May. On the 8th of May, I believe, a motion was made in the House of Commons for an address to the Crown for all the latest despatches from the West India colonies. Now I say that, unless the business of the Colonial-office is carried on in a much more lax manner than used to be the case when I had the honour of being connected with it, it is morally impossible—not that the noble earl himself, but that other parties, his subordinates, in collecting those further despatches to be submitted to Parliament, should not have perceived that the important despatch to which I have referred, and which was intended to have been sent before the committee, had not been communicated to them. *I conceive, also, that it is equally impossible to believe that, upon the discovery of such a material omission, instant steps should not have been taken to repair that omission, and to furnish the document to the committee before they came to their decision. And yet, although these papers were moved for on the 8th of May, and the committee did not come to any decision till the 2nd of May, and did not come to a final decision till the 29th of May; in all that time this acknowledged*

blunder was not corrected by the Colonial-office. The committee remained in the state of ignorance in which they had unintentionally been left; and this document was first made known to the House of Commons in the Whitsuntide holidays. Now, although I give entire credit to the statement of the noble earl (Earl Grey) and of the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hawes) that they did not intend in the first instance to withhold this document from the committee, I say that its having been withheld formed a reasonable ground for suspicion, and *that the fact of its not having been communicated to the committee during the long interval during which the blunder must have been discovered, and might have been rectified, affords strong grounds for the belief that the Government were not very willing that—previously to the decision of the committee—this document should be placed in their hands.*

But how will it add to the suspicion which has been entertained, and which is entertained, when we find that *other similar circumstances have occurred with regard to other despatches and other colonies, and that at the precise period when it was most important that accurate information should be obtained.* On the 24th of April—just before the committee were on the point of coming to their decision—a despatch was received from the Governor of Demerara, containing several enclosures, and expressing his own opinion with regard to the distress of the colony, and the impossibility that the colonists, in their then condition, could compete with slave labour. *This despatch enclosed a number of other documents; but there was one, and one only of those documents, which was selected and sent down to the committee; and that document, which was handed to the committee without the accompanying documents, and the despatch commenting upon them, was the report of a stipendiary magistrate, charging the planters with gross apathy and negligence, and attributing to that cause the distress of the colony.* Now, I say again that this may be capable of explanation, but it is a subject of grave suspicion that, when the committee were upon the point of coming to so important a decision, one enclosure only, and that a document favouring the views of the Government, and adverse

to those of the planters, should have been selected and sent to the committee at the very moment that it might have so great an effect in influencing their decision. There may have been some discrepancy and difference of opinion between the noble earl at the head of the Colonial-office and the Under Secretary; for I am informed that within the last twenty-four hours the hon. gentleman (Mr. Hawes) has expressed his regret that the despatch was not communicated to the committee, and that in his judgment it ought to have been communicated to them, while the noble earl to-night takes upon himself the full responsibility of the despatch not having been communicated, and states that he thinks he was justified in withholding it, and that the committee had no claim to see it.

I now come to a third case to which the noble earl has referred—namely, that of the despatch of the 18th of September, received from Lord Harris, the Governor of Trinidad. At the commencement of the present session of Parliament, in the month of November last, the hon. member for Montrose moved for the production of the latest despatches received by the Government from the West Indies, and especially from Trinidad. The House of Commons sat, I believe, till the 23rd or 24th of December; yet, in all that time, although notice had been given that a committee was about to be moved for by my noble friend (Lord G. Bentinck) immediately after the recess, and although it was stated that the information afforded by those despatches would be most material in the discussion which might probably take place upon that proposal, these documents moved for in the month of November, were not laid upon the table of the House of Commons till the discussion upon my noble friend's motion was in progress, when consequently they were utterly unavailable to any human being; and I believe they were not printed, and in the hands of members, till that discussion had been brought nearly, if not quite, to a close. This may have been a case of inadvertence; it may have been a case of prudent omission; but, when I read to your Lordships the language held by Lord Harris, *I think you will be of opinion that this was a*

despatch which, before the state and prospects of the West India colonies were discussed, either in this or the other house, ought to have been placed before Parliament. The despatch is dated the 18th of September, 1847, and was received on the 22nd of October following; and this is the language in which Lord Harris speaks of the then state of the colonies :—

“I have already mentioned to your Lordship the distress existing at this time in the colony, and which is increasing daily, and amounts to an unprecedented stagnation of business, the cases of which are constantly brought to my notice, viz., estates having the finest promise of a larger crop than was ever previously produced being almost abandoned for the want of means to pay for the necessary labour, are most distressing.”

Again he says,—

“I have also stated the chief cause of this, which is, though it is to a certain extent produced by the state of the money market, that the prices received for sugar this year will not repay the cost of its production.”

He goes on to say,—

“I do not hesitate to express to your Lordship my conviction, that if this colony is not to be left to subside into a state of comparative barbarism, which would result from the ruin of its larger proprietors, that some more than ordinary relief is necessary to support it in the contest in which it, in common with the other British West Indian colonies, is now engaged. Circumstanced as it is, I believe it incapable of successfully competing in the British market with the produce of countries in which slavery is still permitted, unless the advantages of free trade are conceded to it as well as the disadvantages; and I would add, that relief should come speedily if it is to produce any effect.”

I hold in my hand the copy of a despatch from Sir C. Grey, dated the 21st of September, 1847, and which was received by the Government on the 22nd of October, in which Sir C. Grey says,—

“I think it my duty to mention, that the low price to which sugar has recently fallen in the London market, without any corresponding reduction of duty, really threatens with ruin many of the planters who have latterly been struggling hard to keep their heads above water; and that I perceive indications of a movement within the island to support, in the next session of the Imperial Parliament, the party which asserts the principle of protection. It is not unlikely that, with this object in view, there may be an effort of the planters’

party in the House of Assembly here to delay the annual revenue bills and the principle business of the session of the island legislature, until after Christmas. My utmost efforts and most studious endeavours will be employed to persuade them to the most temperate and salutary course of action, but I cannot deny that, whilst corn and cotton are imported into the United Kingdom duty free, the duty of 14s. on the hundredweight of muscovado sugar, which amounts to sixty-six per cent. on the Kingston price, and which having been about forty-two per cent. on the London price when the reduction of duty took place in March, 1845, is now about fifty-six per cent. upon the latest London price, as given in the *Gazette*, is a very heavy toll to be paid by British consumers for admission into the home market; *nor that there is a sincere apprehension amongst the persons most thoroughly acquainted with the subject, that with the present London price of West India sugar and the present rate of duties, it will be impossible to carry on here, without loss and ruin, the cultivation of sugar for exportation.*"

Now that document and the despatch from Trinidad were in the hands of the Government in the month of October, but the Trinidad papers were not laid before Parliament till the discussion to which I have referred had commenced,—I believe, indeed, not until it had terminated,—and the despatch I have just read was not laid before Parliament till the 28th of March, when it was placed in the hands of the committee. On the 8th of February, these documents being in the possession of the Government, but not having been produced to the house, a question was put on the subject in the House of Commons, and an answer was returned by an honourable, high-minded, and most sincere man—the last man in the world to disguise, conceal, or colour any fact whatever—the President of the Board of Trade (Mr. Labouchere). I will read the question and answer to your Lordships,—“ Mr. Goulburn wished to know why Jamaica had been omitted in the statement of the affairs of the several West Indian colonies laid before the house; and also, if there would be any objection on the part of the Government to lay the last intelligence from Jamaica on the table?—Mr. Labouchere said, that as the right hon. gentlemen had had the kindness to give him notice of his intention to ask the question, he had applied to the Colonial-office on the subject, and was enabled to state, that the reason no blue book had been laid on the table respecting Jamaica was

that it had not been received. With respect to the latter part of the right hon. gentleman's question, he had to say that *no despatch had been received giving any general account of the state of Jamaica*; but that as soon as such a document should be received, it was the intention of the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to communicate it without delay to the house." No general account from Jamaica had been received, and, therefore, the answer was apparently a compliance with the demand, as far as the Colonial-office could comply with it. *Upon the latest intelligence from Jamaica the fate of that island, as far as the discussions in the committee were concerned, might be supposed to turn; and when we find it stated by one Minister, relying on the authority of his colleague, the Colonial Minister, that no information on the subject of Jamaica was in the hands of the Government, while the Colonial Minister had in his possession, and had had for weeks, a despatch which stated, that unless some relief was afforded, the cultivation of sugar in Jamaica must be given up—this is another point of strong suspicion with regard to the motives of the Government in withholding these documents.*

I hope the noble earl will forgive me if I use a very humble simile to illustrate the position in which I conceive the noble earl and his colleagues are placed. The noble earl has himself said that he considers, if he had been guilty of the conduct with which he is charged, he would be more criminal than many poor wretches who stand at the bar of the Old Bailey, and therefore I hope he will not be offended if I resort to the same source for an illustration. It is perfectly possible that any of your Lordships, or I myself, might have imposed upon us, and pass to some one else, a counterfeit piece of money. We might any of us pass quite unintentionally, a bad half-crown; and I apprehend that if this were done by the noble earl, by any of your Lordships, or by myself, no human being would suspect us of any improper motives. But if it turned out that, after passing one bad half-crown, an individual proceeded to pass half a dozen more, and was found with half a dozen counterfeit half-crowns in his possession, I apprehend these facts would very materially alter the

appearance of the whole transaction, and that what might at first have seemed an act of inadvertence would, in consequence of the subsequent disclosures, be deemed by a jury at the Old Bailey or elsewhere, an offence committed with guilty knowledge. Now, though I sincerely acquit the noble earl of intentionally withholding the first document, yet *the suspicion engendered by the fact of its being withheld is materially augmented by the circumstance that documents of equal importance, containing the same view of the question, and all on one side of the question, have not been produced, and that too precisely at the time when their production might have been attended with important results.*

But I now approach, and I do so with great pain, another part of this subject. All that has hitherto passed is applicable directly to the conduct of the Colonial-office, and not directly and personally to the noble earl, for it is impossible to say who has been responsible for these impositions upon Parliament, if they have been impositions, or for these neglects and blunders, if they have been a series of blunders. But the subject to which I am now about to call your Lordships' attention is one which personally concerns the noble earl. On the 7th of February I felt it to be my duty, in presenting various petitions complaining of the distressed condition of the West Indies, and suggesting different remedies, to call your Lordships' attention to the state of the colonies at some length; and *I expressed what was then, and is now, my opinion, namely, that the bulk of that distress had been occasioned by acts of the British Legislature, and more especially by the act of 1846, which introduced slave-grown foreign sugar into unlimited competition with our colonial sugar.* In replying to me on that occasion, it was the object of the noble earl (Earl Grey) to show, that admitting the distress under which the colonies laboured, that distress was not attributable to the causes to which I had ascribed it, but to many other causes, among which the noble earl more especially adverted to the waste and extravagance in the management of property, to the great number of absentee proprietors, and to the neglected condition of the estates. In the course of his speech the noble earl referred to a

document which he held in his hand, and which he styled, I think, a most able and admirable despatch, from Governor Higginson, of Antigua, every line of which deserved the attention of Parliament. Now, if I am not mistaken, that able and admirable despatch was not at that time, nor for two months afterwards, communicated to this house, although I believe it was placed in the hands of the committee of the other house of Parliament. But on the occasion when the noble earl adverted to this able and admirable despatch he omitted to state that it contained these words, which deserve the serious attention of your Lordships,—*“It must be conceded that, for obvious reasons, free-grown sugar can never yield so lucrative a return as that produced by the labour of foreign slaves.”* The noble earl has alluded to a doctrine which I consider capable of being defended, and which may be acted upon and has been acted upon by every Government, namely, that the Government must use their discretion in giving to Parliament extracts from despatches they have received, omitting from those despatches such passages as it would be inconvenient and mischievous to the public service to lay before Parliament. But if the noble earl extends that doctrine as he seems inclined to do, and if he defends his own proceedings on the ground that Government should lay before Parliament just so much of despatches as may suit their own views, and exclude everything that is counter to those views—then the doctrine promulgated by the noble earl confirms and strengthens the charge made against the Colonial-office in the House of Commons, namely, that they have adopted the principle of suppressing and perverting information which they had in their possession, but which they have not communicated to Parliament. Extracts from despatches must always be made, but it is the solemn duty of the Minister to take care that the extracts he gives afford a fair and impartial view of what the despatch contains on both sides, and enable Parliament to judge on the merits of the case as clearly and plainly as if the whole despatch was before it.

But what shall we say of a Minister—and I regret to have to say it of the noble earl opposite—who, holding in his hand a

document the whole gist and bearing of which are in one sense and in support of one particular view,—I am speaking now not of the despatch of Governor Higginson, but of the Memorial, which excited great attention on the part of the noble earl, and from which he read some extracts to their Lordships,—and I am about to show that not only were they not fair extracts, but that they involved an inference directly and diametrically opposed to the whole tenour of the Memorial itself, and that the next sentence which the noble earl did not read, would have utterly annihilated the inference which he sought to lead your Lordships to form.

The noble earl, adverting to the causes of distress in the West Indies, and reckoning among them absenteeism, proceeded on the 7th of February to say,—“A very great change was going on in the West Indies at the present moment. Among many documents which had passed through his hands connected with the state of these colonies, he was very much struck with one which he had received the other day from a number of planters in the western part of Jamaica, and who stated that they had invested capital to the extent of not less than £142,000 in plantations in the colony; and they added, what was a most remarkable fact, that, with one exception they had all purchased or leased their plantations since emancipation.” I suppose I am not misrepresenting the noble earl when I infer that the Memorial I now hold in my hand is the precise Memorial to which the noble earl in that speech referred; it proceeds from the undersigned owners of nineteen and lessees of thirteen sugar estates in the western part of Jamaica, and states,—“We are resident proprietors, and all with one exception, have purchased and leased our property since the Emancipation Act.” I think that this circumstance, added to the amount of the capital mentioned in the Memorial, which very nearly corresponds with the statement made by the noble earl, sufficiently identifies this Memorial with the one which the noble earl referred to on that occasion as a proof of the great and beneficial change going on in the cultivation of Jamaica, and to show us what was the change and progress in that island. The noble earl said,—“He

believed that in the course of a few years more they would see the soil of Jamaica cultivated by planters carrying on business for them, and forming resident owners or lessees of the land. *So far from believing that the prospects of Jamaica were bad, he was not aware of any part of the British dominions in which there was so favourable a prospect for the investment of capital at this moment as Jamaica.*" The noble earl endeavoured to lead your Lordships to the conclusion that in consequence of this great change, in respect to resident proprietors, the prospects of Jamaica were far from being unfavourable; that its example would be followed, and that the other colonies would be in the hands of resident proprietors, and that Jamaica, moreover, offered such a field for the employment of capital as rendered it not second to any place in the British dominions. The noble earl expressed that opinion, and led your Lordships to entertain the same opinion, and, as far as he could, induced the country and the capitalists of the country to entertain it. Yet this, which I am about to read, is the statement of those identical parties, which statement the noble earl, when expressing those sanguine expectations, held in his hand, but did not communicate to your Lordships. They state, so far from expecting any return for the £142,000, which the noble lord stated that they had invested, that the price of sugar at the present time is such that their produce would only give them a gross return of £60,800, to be placed against an annual expenditure of £60,300, leaving a balance over expenditure of only £500 and odd, to go against the interest of the annual outlay, and precluding the recovery of a single shilling on the original investment. *The noble earl tells your Lordships, without reading the facts, that he expects great prosperity to arise from the system of resident proprietors, and that this example will be followed by hundreds; while these memorialists state, after detailing the facts which were in the knowledge of the noble lord while he made his statement, that—*

"We are resident proprietors, and all of us, with one exception, have purchased and leased our properties since the Emancipation Act. It will be evident, from the facts stated, that we cannot cultivate for another year; in-

deed, we have not the means, unaided, of taking off the present crop, and the British West India merchants are now unable to assist us, and of course disinclined, where there is no hope of profit, or even of recovering their advances. If we, being proprietors and lessees, living on and managing our own properties, brought up to tropical agriculture, and availing ourselves of every practical improvement, have only such a result to exhibit as is set forth in the statement of these facts, the inference is conclusive that the position of the absentee proprietor or mortgagee, represented by paid agencies, is still more deplorable. It is evident that unless some mode of suppressing slavery and the slave trade more effectual than that hitherto pursued be adopted, and without immediate aid in the shape of money loans,—sugar cultivation, upon which 300,000 of the emancipated negroes are wholly dependent, must cease in Jamaica. *But our object in submitting these facts to your Lordship is to enable you to draw your own inferences, and suggest your own remedies; and we beg you will consider our desperate position as an excuse for troubling you with the statement.**

Could these parties believe, that *when they state their object and exhibit their desperate condition to the Secretary of State for the Colonies*—he who is the natural protector of their interests, who should watch over them and the colonies, taking care that they sustain no injury from the course of British legislation,—could they believe that the noble earl, *with this statement in his hand, would come forward and read a portion of the document and withhold the remainder, leaving your Lordships to infer, from the portion he did read, that this experiment of resident proprietors was eminently successful, when the parties told him that they could not cultivate for another year? Could they believe that he would assert that no part of the British dominions afforded such encouragement for the employment of capital, when he had a proof in his hand that many resident proprietors, in attempting to carry this plan into effect, had lost £142,000 capital sunk, and were receiving no return sufficient to meet the interest on their annual outlay?*

I have followed the noble earl through the whole of his statement, and leave it to your Lordships to say how far the noble earl was justified in that tone of high indignation at any suspicion being entertained in which he had thought it necessary

* See the entire Memorial at page 49, *ante*.

to indulge. I do not ask your Lordships to say that there has been a wilful suppression of truth, or to say that there has been a perversion of documents to purposes the very opposite to those for which they were intended ; but I do say, that I have demonstrated to your Lordships and to every fair and candid man, that under the circumstances as I have stated them, and as they are reported to have occurred, it is not surprising that a man like my noble friend (Lord George Bentinck), who has devoted himself heart and soul to the cause of the West India interest, and who presided over the committee with unexampled assiduity,—who on this, as on every other occasion, is most anxious to arrive at the truth,—should feel deeply hurt that facts, a considerable portion of which were favourable to his views, should be intentionally or unintentionally, withheld from the committee ; and, looking to all the circumstances, should in the performance of his duty as a member of Parliament, and as chairman of a committee to which an important inquiry had been delegated, express in strong and warm terms—too strong, perhaps, for the occasion, in the absence of entire and conclusive proof—his impression that there were circumstances of grave suspicion attending the manner in which the business of the Colonial-office had been carried on for a considerable time. In making these charges, then, my noble friend was not descending unduly, as the noble earl stated, to mean and petty personalities. He was taking the course, in the statements he made, which in fair argument he was justified in taking, and which ought to have been met by fair argument. The noble earl or the Government ought not to be offended with the plainness of his statements, and *the noble earl may consider himself well out of this matter if he satisfies your Lordships and the country that he is altogether free from the charge of having communicated, through partial extracts, to your Lordships, an inference on an important case very opposite to that which was intended to be conveyed by the documents in his hand.*

After a speech from Lord Brougham,

EARL GREY, whose opening sentences were very imperfectly heard, said,—I ought to begin the few observations with which I

think it necessary to trouble your Lordships, by saying that I am much obliged to the noble and learned lord opposite for the manner in which he has addressed himself to this subject, and I am at the same time desirous of assuring your Lordships that I feel most sensibly the spirit in which you have received all observations which connected themselves personally with me. I need scarcely remind the house, that the noble lord opposite contended that it was alike the right and the duty of Lord George Bentinck—if he thought that the duties of the Colonial-office were in any respect neglected—to bring the nature and causes, and the authors of such neglect, under the notice of the House of Commons. I am by no means unwilling to admit the existence of that right, and the obligations which that duty imposes; but I take the liberty of saying that there is a great difference between discussions and professions on the one hand, and deeds on the other; and I think I may be permitted to observe that there is some difference between the manner in which subjects of this nature are usually brought forward, and the way in which the noble lord brings them before Parliament. I observe that he never enters into the discussion of any subject of this class without imputing vile and disgraceful motives to all his adversaries. I wonder it never occurred to the noble lord that I should be not less anxious than he or any other noble lord to avoid the remotest chance of any such motives being imputed to me, and that I should be not less anxious than he to promote that which I conscientiously believe to be the true interests of the country. I can assure the noble lord and the house that while I continue to hold my present office my constant study shall be, as it ever has been, to devise and carry into practical effect every measure which seems calculated to promote the advancement of the colonies and the true interests of the mother country; but unfortunately the noble lord, for some strange reason, seemed to assume that my object was to damage the colonies by unfair means. *Now, I really cannot help asking, whether it would not have been possible to discuss the question of protection for sugar, without entering into the further question whether I and those*

who supported me, and who are my colleagues in office, did not endeavour to promote views ruinous to the West India colonies, by means inconsistent with all fair and honourable principles. I must protest against this practice of suspecting the motives of public men, and this habit of some members of Parliament of imputing evil intentions to their adversaries. I heard with great regret the noble lord opposite—and it has greatly altered my opinion of his character and the sentiments with which I have been accustomed to regard him—I repeat, that it was with great regret I heard him adopt the views of his political allies, and address himself to the present question with all the ingenuity, all the ability, all the energy, for which he is remarkable above most men, and combining with these qualities, give me leave to say, all the arts of the most practised advocate, for the purpose of convicting me of intentional prevarication. I need scarcely say it was most distressing to my feelings to see him taking the utmost pains for the purpose of accomplishing that object; and not less painful was it to me to observe that he adopts that distinction between the personal and the official character of public men, which I altogether repudiate. I conceive that the personal and official conduct of men holding high stations cannot be fairly separated, and I maintain that these charges are not brought against the office, but against the man; further, I have little difficulty in saying—from what little experience I have had of public life—that men who shrink from the commission of unworthy deeds shrink also from lightly accusing others of any grave offence. Though most unwilling to prolong the personal part of this discussion, so far as it bears upon my own individual conduct, I cannot help noticing what fell from the noble lord at the beginning of his speech with respect to my noble friend in the other house, and in so adverting to it I cannot help expressing my strong surprise that the noble lord should have adopted so ungenerous and mean a view as he has put forth of what is reported to have fallen from my noble friend upon that occasion. The noble lord opposite imputed to Lord John Russell that he had accused Lord George Bentinck of having adopted habits for the

purpose of forwarding his pursuits on the turf, which habits he held to be inconsistent with personal honour; whereas my noble friend Lord John Russell never made any such charges, or threw out any such imputation. Indeed, it would have been most strange if my noble friend had so spoken. Considering a near and dear relation of my noble friend—a noble duke, who has, I believe, just left this house—it would have been most strange if Lord John Russell should have been the man to cast a general censure upon the pursuits of the turf,—it being well known that the noble duke to whose name I have just adverted has given to those pursuits the sanction of his influence and example. We all know that racing is often followed from the love of an ancient and manly sport, from the love, likewise, of the noble animal employed in that amusement. We are equally aware that racing most usefully contributes to important national results. But is it not, at the same time, perfectly notorious that racing is followed, not only as an honourable and manly sport, by gentlemen of the highest character, but that others make it a calling, or, as a noble lord said, a profession; that, in a vile spirit of gambling, men carry on the business of the turf in a manner as unworthy as is the practice of picking pockets; that their habit is to bet upon horses which they know can never start; that they pay for information; that they literally practise bribery, in order to secure the secrets of the stables; and that the greed of money often induces them to descend even to more direct cheating. These are amongst the offences of the turf; but my noble friend never said, or even insinuated, that Lord George Bentinck, by being brought into contact with persons who practised those crimes, had been in any degree infected by their company or example. It is quite true, and perfectly well known, that Lord George Bentinck conducted an inquiry of great importance, for the purpose of exposing those practices, upon an occasion of not very distant date; that with great perseverance and ability, he detected some of those frauds. Now, the effect of what my noble friend said was not that Lord George Bentinck contracted any vileness in exposing villany, but that he had contracted habits of suspicion—that, like the detective police,

who are always on the track of delinquency, he imagined crime where crime had no existence. I conceive an assertion of that kind to be perfectly fair and legitimate, to be an argument in all respects just and allowable, and I will go somewhat further, and say, that if in the heat of argument my noble friend was betrayed into any ill-considered expression, and went beyond the bounds which Parliamentary usage prescribes, it formed a striking exception to his general habits, and I venture to say that no one is more entitled to admiration than he is for the manner in which he endures attacks made upon himself. On such occasions his character stands out a striking example of patience, temper, and forbearance. It is well known that he has sustained attacks the most irritating without betraying any unnecessary heat, and if in reference to this matter he showed something of the indiscretion of a generous mind, let it not be forgotten that he did so in repelling charges made against an absent friend. I am surprised, therefore, that the noble lord opposite should have made the use that he has done of the language held by Lord John Russell, for the purpose of swelling the cry that has been unjustly raised against me. I do affirm that this is unworthy of the noble lord.

With these observations I should be almost inclined to content myself, for I feel scarcely equal to the task of grappling with the lengthened argument which the noble lord opposite has laid before the house. I have not the ability or the memory to follow him through all the dates and circumstances to which he has called your attention, and I am perhaps not as collected as I might, under other circumstances, have been. I acknowledge my inability at present to unravel the extended web of sophistry which he has woven, and the effect of which I might hope to neutralize, if I had time sufficient for that purpose. I say, I should hope to do so, skilful as he is in the art of dressing up a case, in the practice of which art he never appeared to more eminent advantage than when he is engaged in driving home a poisoned arrow. For the reasons, then, that I have stated, I shall only touch on one or two simple points; and now, in the first place, as regards these Trinidad papers, they were not ready to be laid before

Parliament previous to the Christmas recess, but they were presented on the very day that Parliament met after the recess.

LORD STANLEY.—They were not put into the hands of members till after the conclusion of the debate in the month of February.

EARL GREY.—The debate came on the day Parliament met, and on that very day they were presented to the house—at the earliest practicable moment they were laid on the table of the house. With respect to the printing of those papers, I cannot speak as to a day or two, but of the facts which I have stated I feel as perfectly certain as I can be of any fact whatever. The next point is the use that I made of one of the despatches. I defended that use, and nothing has since then occurred to shake the view which I have already taken respecting that part of the subject. *The despatches which we received from the colonies are in one respect of no slight importance—they are most important for the facts which they contain; but, as to the opinions set forth in them, we consider that here, in this country, we are enabled to take more enlarged views of general interests,—that we are not biassed by the presence of great distress,—that we, therefore, can form sounder judgements; but the facts, as facts, are of the utmost value.* Then these facts, as contained in the papers to which I have referred, were communicated to Parliament as speedily as possible, and if it had been intended to bring the question before this house, those papers would also have been laid before your Lordships with the least possible delay; and I beg to add, that they were communicated to the committee of the other house amongst the very first papers that were laid before them.

I now come to the Jamaica papers, and there seems to have been some discontent about the despatch of Sir Charles Grey, received on the 22nd of October. It stated the fact of the existence of great distress, and it was suggested that some change of duties might be regarded as necessary. There was no secret on the subject at all; the same opinions he expressed in

his opening speech, and that speech was published in every newspaper throughout England and the colonies. I have not the speech before me, as the noble lord had, but, as far as my memory serves me, it complained of great distress, and what made the document of considerable value in my eyes was, that it admitted a fact which led to a conclusion of great importance; and this fact was, that in a part of the Island of Jamaica a great change had taken place—that many of the resident owners had engaged in the cultivation of sugar on their own account. The whole tenour of my argument was the existence of undoubted distress; that is now admitted and notorious, but I venture to believe that there are causes in operation which will lead eventually to improvement. *I accepted the testimony of the Memorial as to the facts of the case, if I did not abide by its authority in matters of opinion.* I no more took for granted all that was said as to the cultivation of sugar in Jamaica as a matter of opinion, than I did all that was said by the noble lord opposite on a recent occasion, and by some farmers in this country, as to the cultivation of wheat in this country. If in the latter case I were justified in judging for myself, notwithstanding the strong opinions expressed by those who cultivate the land in this country, I was equally justified in the former case in forming my own opinions as regards the cultivation of sugar in Jamaica. You may think me wrong in my views, but in my opinion, if you read the whole of that Memorial, it will support the argument I was addressing to the house at the time still more strongly than if you read only the passages I selected. I may here mention that that Memorial was included among the papers laid before the committee at a very early stage of the inquiry. I do not now mean to enter further into the matter. I can only say that whatever may have fallen from me has been extorted. I did not willingly enter into this discussion, and I assure my noble and learned friend that I have no disinclination to accept the advice he has proffered of bringing this matter to an end.

LORD STANLEY said, that with respect to any change of feeling towards him which the noble earl might entertain in conse-

quence of the course he (Lord Stanley) had taken, he must submit to the penalty, conscious that he had only fulfilled his public duty. Whatever had occurred in this debate had not been of his seeking, and he had no desire to raise this or any other question relating to the conduct of the noble earl. In the observations he had felt it his duty to offer, he had strictly followed the line which had been taken by the noble earl himself; referring to those cases to which the noble earl had himself referred, not with a view of fixing any imputation upon the noble earl; but, looking to the nature of the documents that had not been laid before the committee, and to the time at which they ought to have been produced, he had felt there was fair and reasonable ground for believing that some improper interference had taken place at the Colonial Office. He had stated his firm conviction that as regarded the original intention, the defence of the noble earl was conclusive, and had expressed his entire conviction that it was not the intention of the noble lord to withhold the despatch; but as regarded the general question, he had felt it his duty to show to their Lordships that this was a case which justified the expression of opinion on the part of a public man. Upon one point only he had thought, and still thought, the noble earl had committed a grave error, that of conveying to the house an erroneous inference from that Memorial from the planters which he had held in his hand on that occasion. He (Lord Stanley) had nothing to say as to the relative merits of opinions on the one side or the other. *He did not say that these planters were capable of forming a better opinion than the noble lord; or, on the other hand, that the noble earl was capable of forming a more accurate judgment upon colonies he had never seen than all the resident colonists put together.* It was not the opinion of the colonists as to whether they should or not go on which the noble earl had not read, but the statement of the actual result of their endeavours as resident proprietors. *He (Lord Stanley) had not complained of the noble earl suppressing opinions, but of the noble earl giving portions of facts, and suppressing other facts which appeared in the same despatch. What he had*

complained of was, that the noble earl had quoted in support of his views, the declaration by these planters that they had invested £142,000 in Jamaica, and had argued that, consequently, there was a prospect for a good investment of capital; while at the same time the noble earl had not stated the other fact set forth by the same parties in the same Memorial, namely, that the investment of the £142,000 had been a total and entire failure. The Memorialists stated that they had invested £142,000 after the Act of Emancipation, and the noble lord thought it fair to suppress, not the expression of any opinion by them, but the fact that that money had been wholly lost, and that the annual outlay was hardly less than the annual income. That was the point he (Lord Stanley) complained of—the noble lord was aware of all the facts, and their Lordships were not. The noble earl had led the house to an inference from documents he had, but which had not been presented for two months afterwards, and in the meantime the noble earl had misled the house.

Earl GREY denied the inference of the noble lord. The only fact he had quoted was to show that a great change was taking place in the manner of occupation of the land. He had expressed his own opinions as to what the prospects of Jamaica were, and he had said that there had been a year of great and acknowledged distress.

V.

EXTRACTS FROM THE FIRST REPORT FROM THE SELECT
COMMITTEE ON CEYLON AND BRITISH GUIANA.

[BLUE BOOK, No. 297, H. C., 1849]

From the Draft Report as proposed by the Chairman.

That additional difficulties in the arrangement of this dispute have been engendered by the statements made by Earl Grey on the 8th of February, 1848, announcing to Parliament, on the authority of a colonial newspaper, that the most satisfactory arrangements as to labour actually existed in Guiana between the employers and the employed; *it having been proved to your committee that Earl Grey was at that very time in possession of despatches which had arrived by the same packet as the newspaper in question from the Governor of the colony (of which however he made no mention), stating that, "as matters stood on the 31st of December, 1847, half the estates in the colony must go out of cultivation."*

From the Examination of M. J. Higgins, Esq.

2072. Do you think there is a bad feeling with respect to the Government at home?—I think that everybody connected with the West Indies is more or less dissatisfied with the way in which their cause has been dealt with by the Colonial-office.

2073. Are you aware of what took place in the Houses of Parliament here, and in the Court of Policy in Guiana, respecting the statement made by Lord Grey as to the strike in Guiana in 1847 and 1848?—I had the honour of hearing the debate in the House of Lords upon that occasion, and I have read the

debate which ensued upon certain misrepresentations made by Lord Grey with regard to the strike which was in existence at the time, which occurred in the Court of Policy in Guiana. I see the debate in the Court of Policy in Guiana was on the 21st of March, 1848.

2074. Will you read the extract from the speech of Lord Grey upon which this discussion took place?—It was on the 7th of February, 1848; Lord Grey alluded to the strike in these words:—"He had also seen it stated in the local newspapers that on the east coast of Demerara, where a contemplated reduction of twenty-five per cent. in wages had taken place, it had been met cheerfully and in perfect good humour by the negroes, who would submit to the reduction of wages when they saw it was necessary, but who, when they saw the planters anxiously competing for their labour, would endeavour to get the last farthing they could obtain. The consequence of that reduction was, that at once, and without the expense of immigration, the colony obtained the advantage of an increase of one-fourth to its working population. If that were the case, would any man tell him that the system of protection was to the advantage of the planter? He (Earl Grey) held, on the contrary, that if protection were admissible on the grounds of the general interests of the country, it would be for the interests of the planter himself that we should adhere to the wise determination which Parliament came to in 1846." That is an extract from Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, volume 96 of the third series, page 198.

2075. That speech was made on the 7th of February, 1848? —It was. •

2076. Can you state any facts which may tend to elucidate that matter?—A week before the debates on the sugar question in February, 1848, two packets arrived, within two or three days of each other, from the West Indies. *The latest of those two packets brought a letter from Governor Light to Earl Grey, dated 31st of December, 1847, and received on the 3rd of February, 1848, four days before his Lordship made that speech in the House of Lords.* The despatch states, "My knowledge of the very

critical position of the planter interest of the colony made me readily adopt the suggestions of the unofficial members of the Court of Policy to instruct the stipendiary magistrates by private communications to exert themselves amongst the labourers of their respective districts, in order to induce a consent to a reduction of wages, or at all events to lower their pretensions to heavy payments for the ordinary labour of the estates. In August and September, 1838, when I visited the different districts of the province, I endeavoured to impress on the minds of the labourers, in opposition to their ideas of emancipation, that their sole property consisted in the industry of their hands; if they asked too much for their hands, which they were very much inclined to do, the planters would close their sugar works and abandon their cultivation. *As affairs now stand, one-half the sugar estates will be unable to carry on the cultivation unless the price of labour is reduced*, and the labourers will learn the truth of my doctrine. I allowed and approved of Mr. Walker's letter to the magistrates, and respectfully submit it for your Lordship's approbation." The enclosure in this, is an address to the labourers written by Mr. Walker, the Government Secretary, exhorting them to accept lower wages and to go to work.

2077. *Mr. Hume.*] How do you identify that with the strike to which allusion has been made?—In an answer which Governor Light gave to this committee, he states that at the end of 1847 and at the beginning of 1848, the labourers in Guiana did no work. He wrote in his despatch of the 31st December, 1847, to say that, "as affairs stand, one-half of the sugar estates will be unable to carry on cultivation unless the price of labour is reduced." That evidently refers to some previous despatches which had arrived by previous packets, on the same subject, which we have not.

2078. Are the committee to understand you to say that that despatch of the 31st of December, announcing the critical state of affairs with regard to labour, was in the possession of Earl Grey at the time he made those statements which you have now read from *Hansard*?—*If the committee will look at the date, they*

will see that it was received on the 3rd of February, 1848, and that Lord Grey made a contrary statement in the House of Lords on the 7th of February, 1848.

2079. *Mr. Villiers.*] In the despatch he says the sugar estates would be thrown out of cultivation if the labourers did not consent to a reduction of wages?—Yes.

2080. I take Lord Grey's statement to have been, that they had consented to a reduction of wages. There is no inconsistency in that, is there?—If you will look at only the next page 451, *four days after Lord Grey's speech, he writes thus* in acknowledgment of Governor Light's despatch: "I have to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch of the 31st of December, No. 224, transmitting a copy of a letter which, with your sanction, Mr. Walker, the Colonial Secretary, had addressed to the stipendiary magistrates, *directing them to exert themselves in order to induce the labourers to consent to a reduction of their wages.* I have to express my approval of this circular. The subject to which it relates is one of the deepest importance to the landed proprietors of the colony, and you will not fail to keep me fully informed of the results to which *it may lead.*" *The newspaper from which Lord Grey quoted came over in the same packet as those despatches.* It was not very likely, if a sudden change had taken place in two days, that, Governor Light would not have acquainted his Lordship with it.

2081. *Mr. Hume.*] Are the committee to understand you to say that Lord Grey had official information from the Governor of Demerara at that time, stating that the labourers had not consented to the reduction of wages?—Those two despatches are now before the committee; they can judge for themselves whether Lord Grey was justified in making that statement.

2082. *Mr. Villiers.*] The Governor stated that every exertion was being made at that time to induce labourers to accept lower wages; the newspaper arrived, as I understand you, two days later than that in which it is said that the labourers had consented to accept a reduction of twenty-five per cent.?—I did not say that the newspaper was two days later. There was a

despatch also received by the Colonial-office two days later than that of the 31st December, 1847, which is printed in the blue book on West Indian affairs, presented to the Lords in 1848, p. 451; but in that despatch, which is dated 1st of January, there is not one single word allusive to the strike.

2083. *Chairman.*] What is the next despatch with reference to this subject which was received at the Colonial-office?—The next despatch was received on the 25th of February, 1848, from Governor Light to Earl Grey: “The end of the year closed the manufacture of sugar and employment of creoles who held out against any diminution of wages; and to this moment whatever is done, and very little is doing, is performed by the Portuguese and Coolies, who are, however, often driven from the fields by the Creoles. It is in vain that the ministers of religion tell the creoles that the planters are reduced to such a state by the low prices as not to be able to afford, without absolute ruin to themselves, the same rate of wages as before; they stubbornly refuse to work at any reduction of price. Within one fortnight three fires, incendiary, have occurred, a return of which I annex.”

2084. Does not that prove that Lord Grey could not have received any despatch from Governor Light saying that the labourers had resumed their work?—Lord Grey said he had read it in a newspaper; he did not say he had received any despatch from Governor Light. I think we are not in possession of any despatches which had arrived during the months of November and December preceding, except that of the 31st December, 1847. There must have been despatches received at the Colonial-office, written in those months, which probably would throw very great light upon this subject.

2085. Will you now state what took place in the Court of Policy with reference to this subject?—Mr. Rose, in addressing the court on the 21st of March, 1848, said, “I do not wish to take up the time of the court, but before I resume my seat I beg to say, and I believe the other members of the elective section will bear me out, that we have no desire to do anything that would embarrass your Excellency. We are compelled by dire

necessity to adopt a line of conduct which we should be glad under other circumstances to forego. It would afford us great satisfaction to be enabled to raise the supplies. We are convinced that your Excellency has laid before the Government a true statement of the condition of the colony, and that if they had listened or paid any attention to the despatches which you furnished—if they had not been deaf to reason and justice, things would have been otherwise; but what are the statements which Earl Grey makes in the House of Lords? He tells them that great reductions have taken place in the wages of the labourers, and he quotes an article in the *Royal Gazette*, in confirmation perhaps of what your Excellency wished should take place. He quotes an article from the *Gazette* which, according to his version, states that a reduction of twenty-five per cent. has absolutely taken place in the wages of the labourers, and that they are working cheerfully. ‘*Governor.*—I did not make that statement.’ ‘*Mr. Rose.*—No; I say that your Excellency’s statements, so far as his Lordship has given them, are perfectly correct and satisfactory; but by way of supporting his views he read an article, which he said he found in a local paper, containing a statement that the labourers were working cheerfully at a reduced rate of wages by twenty-five per cent., which, in his opinion, was at least equal to so many additional labourers. I wish his Lordship better information in future.’ ”

2086. *Mr. Hume.*] Are the committee to understand that it was admitted that the *Royal Gazette* was the paper in which that statement existed?—I presume it was by Mr. Rose quoting it.

2087. *Is the “Royal Gazette,” the medium of publication by Government in the colony?—The “Royal Gazette,” has the Government contract for printing, and is considered the Government organ.*

2088. *Mr. Hawes.*] It is the organ of the Government in the colony?—Yes.

2089. Do you think the speeches of Her Majesty’s Ministers,

in February, 1848, engendered any bad feeling in the minds of the colonists, as connected with the proceedings in this country? —I think there is no doubt of it. *Any person who reads the West India newspapers will see that the colonists were very much surprised and irritated at various misrepresentations which had been made, and more especially when they perceived that the real state of the various colonies, as described by the respective Governors in their despatches, was not alluded to at all.*



VI.

REPORT TO HIS EXCELLENCY HENRY BARKLY, ESQUIRE, GOVERNOR AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN AND OVER THE COLONY OF BRITISH GUIANA, &c. &c. &c.

[BLUE BOOK, No. 624, H. C., 1851, pp. 244—257.]

The Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into and Report upon the Condition and Prospects of the Colony of British Guiana.

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH,

That your Commissioners have proceeded to inquire into the condition and prospects of the colony, and have agreed to the following Report:—

Your Commissioners will commence by stating, that for the purpose of pursuing their investigation in a manner suitable to the grave importance of the subject, they found it expedient to place distinct portions of the colony under the charge of separate Commissioners, whose duty it was to obtain accurate answers to the printed questions, prepared by the Commission, from every manager within their respective districts.

Your Commissioners have also examined many of the principal owners and attorneys of plantations, as well as some of the leading merchants of the colony; and they have, moreover, been furnished with such official returns from the public offices as seemed calculated to aid the prosecution of their inquiries. *From the body of evidence thus collected, it is with deep concern that your Commissioners observe the alarming picture of ruin and distress in which* ^{State of the Colony.}

*all classes of the community with startling unanimity concur in representing the present state of this once flourishing colony.**

Before entering at length into the consideration of the question submitted to them, your Commissioners consider that it may not be unadvisable to take a rapid summary of the past and present condition of the colony, as well as to trace its progressive history, as briefly as possible, from the days of slavery until the present time.

The colony of British Guiana, consisting of the three counties of Demerary, Essequibo, and Berbice, was finally ceded to the mother country at the Peace of Paris, in 1814, by the King of the Netherlands. Its staple productions then consisted principally of coffee and cotton, which were cultivated to a very large extent. Labour was abundant, so much so, that by the first registration, made in the year 1817, it appears that the number of slaves at that time amounted to 110,000 souls; and the planter obtained remunerative prices for his produce in the British market, the mother country sedulously protecting the fruits of his industry. Under this system the colony rapidly prospered, and its resources were developed by a liberal expenditure of British capital. The climate and soil being found to be singularly adapted to the cultivation of the sugar-cane, many of the cotton plantations were converted into sugar estates at a very great expense. This change in the cultivation was carried on to a very large extent for some years, in consequence of the great fall in the price of cotton, caused by the rapid increase in the culture of that article by the United States of America, where, in addition to an inexhaustible supply of labour, superior natural advantages exist for this species of produce. The cultivation of coffee, also, in this colony, from similar causes, gradually declined, so that

* This report was transmitted to Earl Grey in a despatch from Governor Barkly, dated Jan. 25th, 1851, and was received at the Colonial office on February 26th following. On the 14th of April, in answer to a speech of Lord Derby, Earl Grey said, that "*since 1846 there had been much improvement, and if the noble lord looked into the state of the colony, he would find, that the governor had been able to congratulate the legislative body on the dawning prosperity of the colony.*"—*Times*, April 15th, 1851.

when the prædial labourers were finally emancipated on the 1st August, 1838 (two years prior to the time contemplated and provided for by the Imperial Act), the few estates which still continued in coffee and cotton dwindled away year after year, and the labourers located upon them were either absorbed into the gangs of neighbouring sugar plantations or became petty settlers on small lots of land. Thus commenced the pernicious system of what may be termed licensed squatting, of which your Commissioners will have occasion to speak more particularly hereafter.

With the decline of coffee and cotton in this colony, the tables of produce, which your Commissioners have caused to be prepared, show a large increase in the manufacture of sugar. In the year 1829, which your Commissioners have selected, as will hereafter appear, in contradistinction to 1849, for the purpose of showing the change which the vicissitudes of twenty years have effected upon the fortunes of the colony, the exports of British Guiana consisted of no less than 66,722 hogsheads of sugar, besides 6,778,350 lbs. of coffee and 7,272 bales of cotton. The cultivation of sugar continued to be carried on at a profit to the planter, and the exports averaged upwards of 66,000 hogsheads, until the proprietors of sugar estates, in common with others, received a severe blow by the premature termination of apprenticeship in 1838. The exports in 1839 at once fell off to 38,443 hogsheads of sugar; and from that date to the memorable year 1846, they only averaged 35,949 hogsheads.

Undaunted, however, by repeated discouragements, the proprietors of estates made in the interval every exertion to retrieve their former position. They had not yet lost the confidence of capitalists at home, and vast sums of money were spent on re-establishing their cultivation. Immigrants from Africa, Madeira, India, and other parts of the world were imported as field-labourers at enormous expense—every improvement in machinery was eagerly sought after and adopted—and the energy of the proprietary body at length bade fare to be rewarded by the returning prosperity of their country. *In the midst of these pleasing anticipations came the Sugar Act of 1846, which at once prostrated*

Effects of
the Act of
1846.

the whole landed interest of the country, and has already been the total ruin of many a once opulent proprietor. Names, the highest and most influential, have followed one another in the "Royal Gazette" with ominous rapidity; and the estates of men formerly holding the first position in the colony have been successively brought to the hammer, and their owners absolutely beggared. The previous increase in cane cultivation caused larger crops to be reaped in the following years of 1847 and 1848, but the exports last year show a decrease of upwards of 9,000 hhds. The colony still continues to retrograde—estate after estate is being abandoned—the labouring population are daily becoming more idle and disorganised—and it is the deliberate opinion of your Commissioners, that if the British West Indies are much longer exposed to their present competition with foreign slave-owners, without any alleviating measures being adopted, the great majority of estates, in this colony at least, will cease to be cultivated.

Your Commissioners will now proceed to address themselves more particularly to the several points submitted to them by your Excellency, and beg to report,—

FIRST.—*Upon the present condition of the Agricultural Districts of the Colony generally.*

To judge of the prosperity or depression of an agricultural country, the first and most direct test is the extent of its cultivation and the amount of its produce as compared with former periods. Your Commissioners have therefore drawn a parallel of twenty years; and the contrast between the condition of the colony in 1829 and its present state is melancholy in the extreme. In the year 1829 there existed 230 sugar and 174 coffee and cotton estates in British Guiana, of which almost the whole were in full cultivation; while on the 31st December last the colony numbered but 180 sugar and 16 coffee estates, even nominally carried on. Of these a great proportion are on the verge of abandonment, and the coffee plantations hardly deserve to be reckoned in cultivation at all. The alarming difference in the crop of these two years will be seen at once from the following summary, which is compiled from the returns of pro-

duce sent in for taxation to the office of the Colonial Receiver General from every estate throughout the colony. *The Tables of Exports also furnished by the Comptroller of Customs, show the same disheartening result, for, on reference to them, your Commissioners find a diminution of no less than 28,811 hhds. of sugar, 6,677,800 lbs. of coffee, and 7,272 bales of cotton. It would be but a melancholy task to dwell upon the misery and ruin which so alarming a change must have occasioned to the proprietary body, but your Commisioners feel themselves called upon to notice the effects which this wholesale abandonment of property has produced upon the colony at large. Where whole districts are fast relapsing into bush, and occasional patches of provisions around the huts of village settlers are all that remain to tell of once flourishing estates, it is not to be wondered at that the most ordinary marks of civilization are rapidly disappearing, and that in many districts of the colony all travelling communication by land will soon become utterly impracticable.*

CROP OF 1849.

CROP OF 1829.

DISTRICT.	lbs. Sugar.	lbs. Coffee.	lbs. Cotton.	DISTRICT.	lbs. Sugar.	lbs. Coffee.	lbs. Cotton.
DEMERY.				DEMERY.			
East Coast	18,275,147	507,507	1,127,471	East Coast	17,106,384		
River—East Bank . .	7,029,974	1,394,024		River—East Bank . .	4,073,591	2,180	
River—West Bank . .	7,173,964	2,040,965		River—West Bank . .	3,526,292	51,049	
West Coast	13,878,095	507,627		West Coast	7,524,027		
Essequebo.				Essequebo.			
Leguan Island	10,905,911	6,800		Leguan Island	2,504,215		
Hog Island	1,092,000			Hog Island	332,152		
Wakenaam Island . .	9,363,934			Wakenaam Island . .	3,583,942		
Tiger Island	1,240,650			Tiger Island	387,182		
Troolie Island	174,000			Troolie Island			
West and Arabian Coast	22,518,656	101,866	89,798	West and Arabian Coast	9,227,412	300	
Berbice.				Berbice.			
Whole County	12,246,286	4,671,697	378,902	Whole County	12,546,657	37,527	
Total	103,898,617	9,230,486	1,596,171	Total	60,811,854	91,056	
GENERAL SUMMARY.							
COUNTY.	lbs. Sugar.	lbs. Coffee.	lbs. Cotton.	COUNTY.	lbs. Sugar.	lbs. Coffee.	lbs. Cotton.
1829.				1849.			
Demerary	46,357,180	4,450,123	1,127,471	Demerary	32,230,294	53,229	
Essequebo	45,295,151	108,666	89,798	Essequebo	16,034,903	300	
Berbice	12,246,286	4,671,697	378,902	Berbice	12,546,657	37,527	
Total	103,898,617	9,230,486	1,596,171	Total	60,811,854	91,056	

Thus showing a gross Deficiency between the two Returns of—

lbs. Sugar.	lbs. Coffee.	lbs. Cotton.
43,086,763	9,139,430	1,596,171

To commence with the district of Abary, once blooming with fields of cotton, your Commissioners find that the line of road is nearly impassable, and that a long succession of formerly cultivated estates presents now a series of "pestilent swamps," overrun with bush, and productive of malignant fevers. Following the coast from Mahaicony Creek to Mahaica Creek, Plantation Farm seems to be the sole estate left in cultivation, and the remainder are either given up to form a pasturage for cattle, or else totally abandoned, with the exception of some few patches of reef land on which ground provisions have been planted. Proceeding still lower down, your Commissioners find that the public roads and bridges are in such a condition, that the few estates still remaining on the upper west bank of Mahaica Creek are completely cut off, save in the very dry season; and that with regard to the whole district, unless something be done very shortly, travelling by land will entirely cease. In such a state of things it cannot be wondered at, that the herdsman has a formidable enemy to encounter in the jaguar and other beasts of prey, and that the keeping of cattle is attended with considerable loss, from the depredations committed by these animals. The people scattered in villages along this district support themselves principally on the produce of their own provision grounds, and also by hunting and fishing, while some few occasionally work on neighbouring estates; but taken as a body, their labour with regard to the staples of the country may be said to be nearly valueless. From the last official returns prepared by the Acting Commissary of Population, your Commissioners find that from the Abary to Plantation Friendship, a distance of only thirty miles, there are no less than eleven villages, four hamlets, and twenty-two detached freeholds, containing 1,521 houses, and a population of 6,678 souls, who for the most part, led away by the temptations of an idle life, have withdrawn from their former occupation of resident labourers upon plantations, contributing their assistance only occasionally in particular descriptions of work, and never in a way to be much depended upon.

Your Commissioners now approach what is generally con-

sidered the most flourishing district of the colony, usually denominated "the East Coast;" and here it must be observed, that the extent of cultivation and amount of produce of many of the plantations equal that of former days. The following list will show the large crops made by some estates in this district last year:—

	Sugar.	
Enmore	1,162,800 lbs.	} All old cotton properties.
Annandale	924,000 „	
Lusignan	1,129,600 „	
Mon Repos	1,182,004 „	
Le Resouvenir	952,943 „	
Ogle	1,200,000 „	

A number of circumstances have occurred to render this part of the colony peculiarly favoured. The Demerary East Coast Railway intersecting it, has naturally attracted a large number of the labouring class, and villages have in consequence been formed along the line, containing a vast number of the population who have emigrated from other quarters of the colony, and who, as before stated, afford their labour occasionally, though not continuously, to the estates in that district. Its peculiar soil has enabled it to resist the effects of those heavy rains which have often proved disastrous to other parts of the colony, and above all, many of the plantations happening to be in the possession of wealthy capitalists, enormous expense has been gone to in their improvement and the development of their resources. This district, however, still feels most severely the want of continuous labour, and in consequence, great competition exists for the services of the villagers on the coast, amounting to no less than 4,677 people, who are able to dictate what terms they please to their employers, and rove from plantation to plantation in the most unsettled manner. *Whether, with all the advantages the East Coast possesses, it will be able to extricate itself from the ruin now becoming so universal throughout the colony, is a problem which time alone can solve. The question rests, however, upon the line of policy to be pursued by the British Government with regard to the West*

Indies in general; for your Commissioners are of opinion that few estates (if any) in this country, however favourably situated, can long continue to resist the tendency of the present Free Trade measures.

Passing the city of George Town, in the suburbs of which are situated the following villages :—

Albert's Town . . .	containing	771
Newburg . . .	„	879
The Lodge . . .	„	1,019

making a total of 2,669 Freeholders,

your Commissioners approach three of the finest estates in the colony, Plantations “La Penitence,” “Ruimveld,” and “Houston.” From their vicinity to town a supply of labour can always be obtained; but of the irregularity with which the villagers work, Plantation Ruimveld affords a convincing example. This estate, in common with its neighbours, is almost entirely dependent on village labour, and the monthly number of field labourers on the pay list last year averaged 893. With this large number, a monthly average of only 3,515 tasks was obtained, thus showing that each man on the pay list only worked $3\frac{234}{893}$ tasks *per month*! When it is considered that a task, or day's work, may be easily performed in six hours, what can show more strongly the uncertain and precarious nature of the work to which employers in this country are forced to submit?

Proceeding up the east bank of the river Demerary, the generally prevailing features of ruin and distress are everywhere perceptible. Roads and bridges almost impassable, are fearfully significant exponents of the condition of the plantations which they traverse; and canal No. 3, once covered with plantains and coffee, presents now a scene of almost total desolation. The Haago Bosche seems the only estate left in cultivation in the canal, and that plantation, after formerly returning immense crops of coffee, last year yielded but 1,400 lbs. Upon the long line of abandoned estates up this bank of the river, the system of squatting prevails to a very great extent; and difficult as

it is to obtain accurate statistical information upon the subject, your Commissioners have too much reason to fear that the number of settlers in this district who have almost wholly withdrawn from field labour amounts to more than 5,000.

Coffee
Crop, 1829
and 1851.

On the opposite bank of the river from the ferry to canal No. 1, a few estates still remain, which, from their vicinity to town affording them a supply of labour, and the spirited manner in which they are carried on, keep up a cultivation worthy of better times. Canal No. 1, however, with its sister No. 2, exhibits in the strongest possible light the total ruin which has overtaken the coffee planters of this colony. In 1829 these canals contained thirty estates in coffee and plantains, producing 1,027,120 lbs. of coffee alone, and now there remain but eight which even keep up the semblance of a cultivation. Of these, five are rented out by negroes, and split up into endless fractions; while *the whole coffee crop of British Guiana last year amounted to only 91,056 lbs. being a diminution of more than 100,000 lbs. from the crop made by the single estate "Java" in the year 1829!!!* During the days of slavery, these estates contained on an average about 100 working people each, but now the villages formed along the canals, harbour a dense and over-crowded population, whose labour is almost useless to the community. The influx of strangers into the canals from various sugar estates has been very great during the last two years, and your Commissioners are informed that at this moment they contain nearly 6,000 people. Their mode of life is thus described by Mr. Tighe, a resident coffee-planter, who has lived in canal No. 1 for more than twenty years. "They live by renting plantain-land on estates, by working as day-labourers on the few estates working, *and a great many by stealing coffee and plantains, the latter especially.*"

Ascending the river still higher, your Commissioners learn that the district between Hobaboe Creek and "Stricken Heuvel" contained, in 1829, eight sugar and five coffee and plantain estates, and now there remain but three in sugar and four partially cultivated with plantains by petty settlers; while the roads, with one or two exceptions, are in a state of utter abandon-

ment. Here, as on the opposite bank of the river, hordes of squatters have located themselves, who avoid all communication with Europeans, and have seemingly given themselves up altogether to the rude pleasures of a completely savage life.

On the west coast of Demerary but few estates have been abandoned, comparatively speaking. This district formerly contained thirty fine plantations, of which twenty-one are still nominally kept up; but the alarming diminution in crop may be seen at once on reference to the Receiver-General's Tables, which show that while a large coffee cultivation has entirely disappeared, the return of sugar has at the same time fallen off one-half. The want of labour is severely felt on this coast, which contains five villages and several detached hamlets, with a population of upwards 1,500 people pursuing the same idle and unprofitable mode of life as the great majority of their fellow freeholders throughout the colony.

Having thus reported upon the general condition of the various districts of the county of Demerary, your Commissioners beg leave to call attention to the gradual diminution which has taken place in the amount of its produce for the last three years since the passing of the fatal Sugar Act of 1846 :—

COUNTY OF DEMERARY.

Year.	Sugar.	Coffee.	} No Cotton.	Diminution of Produce.
1847	36,103,433 lbs.	114,016 lbs.		
1848	33,362,830 „	212,603 „		
1849	32,230,294 „	53,229 „		

Your Commissioners further beg to refer to the Tables annexed, numbered 9 and 10, showing the crops of each estate throughout the country for a successive period of years, commencing with 1829, as evidencing in the strongest manner the grievous falling off in the colonial staples for this division of the colony.

If the present state of the county of Demerary affords cause for deep apprehension, your Commissioners find that Essequibo has retrograded to a still more alarming extent. In fact, unless

a large and speedy supply of labour be obtained to cultivate the deserted fields of this once flourishing district, there is great reason to fear that it will relapse into total abandonment. As your Commissioners consider that this division of the colony has suffered the most severely, they have added to the Tables of Crops the estimated value of each plantation within the country during the time of slavery, and up to the year of emancipation. The amounts were arrived at by doubling the values of the respective gangs of slaves, as appraised for compensation upon each estate; for it was formerly considered that the buildings and cultivation of a plantation were worth fully the slave gang located upon it; and your Commissioners have no doubt they are quite within the mark in their estimation of the value of property up to 1832. With these figures before them, it is fearful to contemplate the enormous depreciation which has since taken place in West India property.

To commence with the island of Leguan at the mouth of the Rio Essequibo.

This fertile and beautiful island was for many years termed the garden of the colony, and formerly contained twenty-three sugar and three coffee and plantain estates, all of which continued in cultivation until within the last few years. At the present moment there are only eight plantations, which are even nominally carried on, and of these not more than three can be considered in full cultivation; while a large proportion of the remainder are on the very verge of abandonment. The appended Table of the returns of produce from the sugar estates on this island, will show how it has progressively declined, while the values of the respective plantations, with their gangs of workmen in the days of slavery, afford a melancholy instance of the disastrous change in our colonial circumstances.

From the termination of apprenticeship in 1838, this island has severely felt the want of labour. As soon as the people were at liberty to move where they pleased, great numbers left Leguan, and became free settlers on the east coast and the banks of the Demerary river, in order to enjoy the greater facilities thus

afforded them for communication with town. Then commenced the establishment of villages on the island itself, which quickly absorbed a number of the working people, for whom hunting and fishing have greater attractions than steady labour in the field. The general appearance of the island is thus summed up by Mr. John Mackenzie, of Plantation Amsterdam, who has been a resident planter for upwards of thirty years. "It is no overdrawn description, when I assert that its cultivation is now limited to one-third of its former number of estates, and these but struggling desperately to avoid that doom which seems inevitable. Forest-trees rapidly taking the place of once smiling cane fields, and the few of the latter that are left, scarcely discernible amid a savage bush."

The island of Wakenaam does not appear in quite the same deplorable condition as Leguan; but although none of the estates in it were completely given up, as on the 31st of December last, still a very large proportion are only in nominal cultivation. Your Commissioners beg to call attention to a similar Table to that prepared for Leguan, and here again the same symptoms of progressive decline are to be observed.

From these figures it will be perceived that, while the return of produce last year amounted to only 3,583,942 lbs. sugar, this is a diminution of 5,779,992 lbs. from the crop of 1829. When your Commissioners state that the system of freehold villages prevails in this island also, it cannot be wondered at that the want of labour is felt to a ruinous extent. Between Leguan and Wakenaam there are upwards of 2,000 people living in villages, for whom the abandoned cane pieces afford excellent hunting grounds, and the surrounding waters abounding in fish, an easy means of subsistence.

Abandoned cane pieces now hunting-grounds.

Of the smaller islands in the mouth of the Essequibo, the appended Table will give but a disheartening account.

With regard to Hog Island, the cultivation formerly amounted to 858 acres, it has now dwindled down to 308, and in a similar manner the crop has sunk from 900 to 200 hogsheads of sugar. This island appears at present to be kept up almost entirely by the coolies; and as their term of service expires in March,

1851, unless a fresh supply of labour be very soon obtained, there is every reason to fear that it will become completely abandoned.

The cultivation of Tiger Island has in like manner declined from 856 to 328 acres, and instead of a working population of 561, there remain but 125 creoles and 189 immigrants. As the estates here are carried on principally by the latter class, it is evident that speedy immigration can alone save this island from total ruin.

Crossing over to the main land, your Commissioners find the district between the Supenaam Creek and the Iteribissi Creek in the most deplorable condition. Here were formerly situated seven fine sugar estates, of which four nominally survive, but with a greatly diminished cultivation. Although the prostrate condition of this once beautiful part of the coast is to be attributed to the great scarcity of labour, the three villages of Dry-shore, Waroosie, and Supenaam, contain a population of nearly 700 creoles. The mode of life, however, pursued by these people, is thus described by Mr. Seward, who has resided in the district for twenty-seven years:—"About one-fourth work at a time on the neighbouring estates, while the other three-fourths sit down, fish, hunt, and *steal*, both from the estates and one another." Favoured by a genial climate and a boundless fertility of soil, the peasantry of this country seem to care very little beyond satisfying their appetites, and sit down in silent apathy while plantation after plantation is growing up in bush all around them. Unable to obtain a supply of labour, the proprietors on this coast seem to be keeping up a hopeless struggle against approaching ruin, and unless immigration very soon commences, their estates must be abandoned.

In the district between the Iteribissi Creek and Capoey Creek, three coffee and ten sugar plantations formerly existed; and now the whole of the former and two of the latter have ceased to be in cultivation at all; while of the altered condition of the remainder, the following summary will afford a most convincing proof:—

Plantation.	1829. Sugar.	1849. Sugar.
Onderneening . .	347,000 lbs.	193,650 lbs.
Bathsheba's Lust .	432,651 „	78,904 „
Zorg . .	709,500 „	227,835 „
Golden Fleece . .	863,700 „	387,000 „
Perseverance . .	415,937 „	230,971 „
Cullen . .	561,396 „	300,000 „
Hoff van Aurich .	279,900 „	96,000 „
Union . .	352,000 „	156,000 „
Total . .	3,962,084 „	1,670,360 „

being a diminution of upwards of one-half.

While these estates were making the above crops in 1829, the population of the district amounted to about 2,654 slaves, and 110 whites, making a total of 2,764; but on the 31st of December last, the population on estates including managers, overseers, &c., was only 954. The number of villagers, however, amounted to more than 4,000 people; but so little work is performed by them, that they can hardly be said to make any impression upon the labour-market of the district.

The once famous Arabian Coast, so long the boast of the colony, presents now but a mournful picture of departed prosperity. Here were formerly situated some of the finest estates in the country, and a large resident body of proprietors lived in the district, and freely expended their incomes on the spot whence they derived them. From Capoeey Creek to plantation "Better Success," are situated twenty-one sugar plantations, three of which (Aberdeen, Three Friends, and Better Success) may be considered as virtually abandoned, while almost all the remainder are in a very languishing condition. *From the return of the produce and value of the estates in the mainland of the Essequibo, it will be seen that the sugar crop alone has gradually dwindled away from 22,518,656 lbs. to 9,227,412 lbs.*

Diminished Crops.

The cause of the distress so severely felt here, seems to arise principally from the want of labour, which prevails to such an

extent that estates, in the words of Mr. Hughes, of Anna Regina, "are going fast to ruin for want of a proper supply." The district swarms with villages; but no dependence whatever can be placed upon the people inhabiting them, and the estates have hitherto been worked principally by the Coolies. They are, however, now flocking up to town in great numbers, as the end of their engagements approaches, in order to claim their back passage to India; and your commissioners learn with great regret, that the Creoles are also leaving the coast, in order to enjoy the advantages of a nearer proximity to town; so that unless a fresh supply of labour be soon obtained, Essequibo threatens to become abandoned for want of people.

The lower part of the coast, after passing Devonshire Castle to the River Pomeroon, presents a scene of almost total desolation.

Here were formerly situate seven estates in coffee, cotton, and plaintains, representing in the days of slavery a capital of more than £176,000; all of which are now abandoned and almost valueless. Of the few people living in villages here, numbering about 250 souls, some cultivate their own provision-grounds, and thereby, in the words of Mr. William Henery, "obtain partial support, which they eke out by fishing and *thieving*"; others go occasionally to the Essequibo coast, work for a month or two, then return and sit down in almost total idleness. Their working upon plantations on the coast is only however when sheer necessity impels. *The young people are growing up in a state most dangerous to social order and the well being of society.*"

Rising
genera-
tion.

Having thus completed the melancholy retrospect of the condition of Essequibo, your Commissioners beg to refer to the return of produce for the last three years from that county, as showing the gradual diminution of the crops since the Sugar Act of 1846:—

COUNTY OF ESSEQUEBO.

Diminish-
ed Crops.

	Sugar.	Coffee.
1847.....	20,212,185 lbs.....	30 lbs.
1848.....	16,321,894 „	500 „
1849.....	15,907,503 „	300 „

The county of Berbice also suffers to an alarming extent from the want of labour. To such a degree has the system of squatting in comparative idleness prevailed in this division of the colony, that your commissioners find that out of the 18,000 people comprising the rural population of the county, upwards of 12,000 are scattered over small freeholds and bush settlements far up the creeks and rivers, enjoying a state of savage freedom, and contributing in no way to the general welfare of the colony.

On the east coast of Berbice, from the Corentyne River westward to the Devil's Creek, were formerly situate six sugar and many cotton estates. Of these four still remain in sugar cultivation, all the cotton plantations having some time since been entirely abandoned. One of them, namely, plantation "Albion," was subsequently turned into sugar, and was considered a fine property, but is now languishing for want of labour. *In this district is situated plantation "Mary's Hope," which formerly produced 900 hhds. of sugar, but is now quite given up.* The buildings are crumbling into dust, and, save by a few squatters, the estate is totally uninhabited. The abandoned plantations on this coast, which if capital and labour could be procured might easily be made very productive, are either wholly deserted or else appropriated by hordes of squatters, who of course are unable to keep up at their own expense the public roads and bridges, and consequently all communication by land between the Corentyne and New Amsterdam is nearly at an end. *The roads are impassable for horses or carriages, while for foot passengers they are extremely dangerous.* The number of villages in this deserted region must be upwards of 2,500, and as the country abounds with fish and game, they have no difficulty in making a subsistence: in fact, the Corentyne coast is fast relapsing into a state of nature. *Owing to the want of roads, the magistrates' and sheriffs' courts are very irregularly held, the churches and schools are neglected, and a regular trade in smuggled spirits is carried on with the port of Nicarie, there being no sufficient coast guard stationed to prevent this illicit traffic. There is no police station or stipendiary*

Neglect of
Schools.

magistrate resident in the district, and the people are living, as nearly as possible, in a state of lawless independence.

In the district between the Devil's Creek and Canje Creek were formerly situated twenty cotton estates. "The whole of the above district is now a wilderness," while, as may be expected, the roads are perfectly impassable.

Canje Creek was formerly considered a flourishing district of the county, and numbered on its east bank seven sugar and three coffee estates, and on its west bank eight estates, of which two were in sugar and six in coffee, making a total of eighteen plantations. The coffee cultivation has long since been entirely abandoned, and of the sugar estates but eight still now remain. They are suffering severely for want of labour, and being supported principally by African and Coolie immigrants, it is much to be feared that if the latter leave and claim their return passages to India, a great part of the district will become abandoned. There are an immense number of people living in villages up this Creek, and a small trade in fire-wood and timber is carried on by them; but their services as field labourers upon the neighbouring plantations are extremely difficult to be obtained, and never for an instant to be depended upon.

On the east bank of the river Berbice were formerly twenty-two coffee and four sugar estates in full cultivation. The district for many years produced very large crops of coffee, but of this species of produce four plantations alone remain, and they are only nominally kept up. The chief cause of this wholesale abandonment of property, which has entirely taken place since the year 1838, was the want of labour produced by the withdrawal of the Creoles from the field. The six sugar estates now existing on this bank of the river are naturally very fine properties, and capable of making the largest crops; but owing to the scarcity of people to till the ground, they are now in a languishing condition. The intervening spaces between them are occupied by the abandoned fields of once beautiful coffee plantations, whose splendid works in most instances are still remaining as monuments of their former magnificence; but the

want of labour and scarcity of means, so severely felt at the present moment, effectually preclude any attempt being made to restore their cultivation.

The plantations on this bank of the river are carried on principally by the African immigrants, and without them, in the opinion of Mr. Henery, "the six sugar estates in this district would have been abandoned long ago." While they are suffering to a ruinous extent from the want of labour, there are upwards of 4,000 people living in villages within the district, a number more than sufficient amply to work the few estates which yet remain in cultivation; *but under present circumstances, so gloomy is the condition of affairs here, that the two gentlemen whom your commissioners have examined with respect to this district, both concur in predicting "its slow but sure approximation to the condition in which civilized man first found it."* Crossing over to the west bank, your commissioners find that the work of abandonment has been equally extensive on this side of the river.

Abandonment.

Here were formerly twenty-nine coffee and plantain estates, besides three in sugar. At the present day there remain three sugar estates in full cultivation and two partially abandoned; while *of the once magnificent coffee cultivation there scarcely remains a trace. The returns of this species of produce, once amounting to several million pounds, are now only nominal, and the whole county of Berbice hardly returns a tithe of what many a single plantation formerly produced.* This district, in 1829, gave employment to 3,635 registered slaves, but at the present moment there are not more than 600 labourers at work on the few estates still in cultivation, although it is estimated there are upwards of 2,000 people idling in villages of their own. *The roads are in many parts several feet under water, and perfect swamps; while in some places the bridges are wanting altogether. In fact, the whole district is fast becoming a total wilderness, with the exception of the one or two estates which yet continue to struggle on, and which are hardly accessible now but by water.*

Coffee Cultivation gone.

The west coast of Berbice was formerly a great cotton country, and included besides six fine sugar estates. The whole of the cotton

Cotton Cultivation gone.

cultivation has been long since abandoned, and of the sugar estates which still remain, three may be said to be partially given up. The want of labour is felt to an extent which it is hardly possible to estimate correctly, and although the estates working in this quarter have plenty of accommodation for workmen, the people obstinately refuse to tenant the vacant negro-yards, and seek in preference the settlements which swarm along this coast, where they cultivate a few ground provisions, and “spend their time,” to use the language of Mr. Grant, “either in idleness and rioting, or in fishing and shooting.” *These people seem fast retrograding into a savage state, consistent with the wilderness, which is growing up around them.* Except in some of the best villages, they care not for back or front dams to keep off the water; their side-lines are disregarded, and consequently the drainage is gone; while in many instances the public road is so completely flooded that canoes have to be used as a means of transit. The Africans are unhappily following the example of the Creoles in this district, and buying land on which they settle in contented idleness; and your Commissioners cannot view instances like these without the deepest alarm, for if this pernicious habit of squatting is allowed to extend to the immigrants also, there is no hope for the colony.

From the foregoing it will be seen that the county of Berbice was formerly a great cotton and coffee producing district. What cultivation now remains is almost entirely sugar, but *of the manner in which the crops have retrograded since the Sugar Act of 1846 the following return will show an example:—*

Act of
1846.

COUNTY OF BERBICE.

	Sugar.	Coffee.
1847.....	16,091,655 lbs.....	2,975 lbs.
1848.....	14,867,133 „	105,387 „
1849.....	12,546,657 „	37,527 „

Your Commissioners having now reported upon the present condition of the agricultural districts of the colony, and shewn

the misery and distress everywhere apparent upon the face of the country, will in the next place address themselves to—

SECONDLY.—*The Social and Industrial Condition of the Labouring Classes in British Guiana.*

Social
condi-
tion of
labouring
classes,
&c.

The labouring population of British Guiana consists of two great classes—Creoles and Immigrants. The first may be divided into resident labourers on estates, and freeholders or squatters; the second into Africans, Portuguese, and Coolies. Of all the classes of people in this country the native Creoles are by far the best adapted for raising the colonial staples, but, as has been already shown, the vicious practice of squatting, which seems at present the curse of the colony, has spread among them to such an extent that an overwhelming majority of their number have wholly withdrawn from the labour market. The entire population of the rural districts appears, from the returns of the Acting Commissary of population, to be as follows:—

COUNTY.	Creoles resident on Estates.	Creoles non- resident.	Africans.	Portuguese	Coolies.	TOTALS.
Demerary.....	9,259	25,067	2,222	3,854	3,510	43,912
Essequibo	8,432	5,432	1,191	1,164	3,843	20,062
Berbice	2,248	12,256	2,407	188	1,057	18,156
Total	19,939	42,755	5,820	5,206	8,410	82,130

Thus it will be seen that out of the 82,000 composing the rural population, upwards of 42,000 people hardly contribute in any way to raise the staples of the country; while the whole number of immigrants amounting to 19,436, is about equal to the resident labourers on plantations, making an entire total of 39,375 people as the agricultural peasantry of British Guiana. The system of freeholds (as it is called here) appears one of the crying evils of the day, and is, indeed, little better than licensed squatting. Where whole districts present but a scene of abandoned estates, it is very easy to purchase land for a trifling consideration; and thus, numbers combining, deserted plan-

tations are bought up and villages quickly formed on their sites. There are great numbers also who, strictly speaking, "*squat*" up the rivers and creeks—that is, settle themselves on Crown land without any title whatsoever. The forests teeming with game, and the rivers with fish, afford them a plentiful subsistence; and the ground, with very little tillage, yields an abundant supply of provisions. They carry on a small trade in fire-wood, charcoal, &c., but by far the greatest part of their time is spent in absolute idleness. *The accounts your commissioners have received of the demoralization going on in these negro villages is calculated to excite the deepest alarm, and riot and debauchery seem to be but too prevalent among them. In many of the most populous villages, in the most thriving parts of the country, very significant signs of actual retrogression are plainly perceptible. Formerly the Creole had a taste for luxuries in food and dress, and would willingly work to earn the means of gratifying his desires; but now he seems content to go about with the least amount of clothing consistent with decency, and to be satisfied with the coarsest fare.*

Retro-
grade Ci-
viliza-
tion.

Great numbers of them, up the rivers and creeks, seem to shun as much as possible all intercourse with their more civilized neighbours, and especially with white men. Their dwellings, which are little better than savage huts, are built at a distance from the water's brink, and carefully shrouded by trees, so as to elude the observation of passing vessels. *Thus they live in the bush, with scarcely a thought or a care for the moral or religious education of their children, who are growing up around them in a state of nature, and mostly stark naked.* Although the country districts are well supplied with churches and schools, the religious observances of the people in several districts presenting these advantages are greatly neglected. The following Table, prepared from the stipendiary magistrates' returns throughout the colony, will show the number of places of worship and of religious and general instruction in the rural districts.

Churches.	Chapels.	Sunday Schools.	Average Attend.	Day Schools.	Average Attend.
34	67	75	5,993	82	3,863

The number of children appears to be as follows :—

Resident Creoles.	Non-resident.	Africans.	Portuguese.	Coolies.
5,372	16,780	1,742	1,331	880

making a total of 26,105 children of all classes, of whom only 5,993 receive any religious, and 3,863 any secular education whatever. *With the progressive retrogression of the African race in this country the Heathen superstitions of their ancestors seem to be gaining ground, and “Obeah” is practised to a much greater extent than is generally supposed.* All the gentlemen connected with the landed interest whom your Commissioners have examined concur in representing the idle and vicious mode of life pursued by the villagers, even in the most flourishing (comparatively speaking) parts of the colony. The depredations committed by them in the neighbouring plaintain walks and cane pieces, and upon each other’s lands are almost inconceivable; nor is it possible in the present state of things to put a stop to the practice. The rate of wages, moreover, is so exorbitant, considering the small number of their wants, that in the words of Mr. McKenzie, of Amsterdam, “the agricultural labourer can support himself in ease and plenty on the produce of two day’s labour, or the performance of two tasks of four or five hours duration per week—the other portion of his time being zealously devoted to his amusements.”

Super-
stition.

The labouring population of British Guiana residing on estates number, as has been said, 39,375 souls. Of these, 20,334 are women and children, leaving a balance of 19,041 strong able bodied men. The average time required to perform a task, or day’s work, ranges from five to six hours. For this the labourer exacts one guilder, equal to 1s. 4d. sterling; and so completely is he destitute of all ambition to better his condition by his own industry, that he is content to work two or three days in the week, and idle away the rest upon the wages he has thereby acquired. The number of tasks performed upon the various estates throughout the colony, as far as your Commissioners have been able to ascertain, hardly averages ten per

month, thus showing that more than two-thirds of the labourer's time are spent in perfect indolence.

These observations must be understood to apply principally to the native population; for the immigrants work much more continuously and steadily, although physically inferior to the Creoles.

At the present moment there are many estates carried on almost entirely by immigrant labour; and, as far as regards the Coolies, your commissioners have to report in a very favourable manner. 11,437 people from Calcutta and Madras have been introduced into this country since May 1845; and although at first the Madras immigrants seemed a sickly, weak, and lazy race, and the mortality among them was very great, subsequent importations have replenished our fields with a fine body of labourers. Your Commissioners look forward to the expected immigration from India as destined to save the country from approaching ruin; and unless the native of this country can in some way be induced to work, there is every prospect of the Coolie and Portuguese races supplanting the African in the labour market. The immigrants from Madeira, of whom there are upwards of 5,000 in the country, are a very useful class of people. Excellent field labourers themselves, they also exercise an indirect influence upon the price of labour, by cheapening the commodities in use among the working classes, for a great number of them are hucksters—petty shopkeepers and traders. The Portuguese seem for the most part to prefer these occupations to field labour; and their ambition is generally to save enough money to buy a license, stock a pack, and turn pedlars. The fortunes made by some of these people are perfectly incredible; and your Commissioners could particularise various instances of parties coming from Madeira without a penny in the world, realising, after a few years' residence here several thousand dollars. The Africans would, undoubtedly, be the best immigrants for this country, if under contract for a term of years, and those that have already arrived are a particularly vigorous, muscular body of men; but it cannot be disguised that they too readily

fall into the bad habits of the idle native population, who often inveigle them away from their employers even whilst under indenture, but more particularly as soon as their engagements expire. They muster about 3,820 souls, of whom 1,740 are children. This number is, of course, too small to make any serious impression; and immigration from Sierra Leone is so uncertain and precarious, that it is to be feared British Guiana will never be adequately recruited from thence.

Where the supply of labour is so limited, and the field for its exercise so great, it is hardly a matter of surprise that the laws respecting the monthly engagements of agricultural labourers are hardly ever enforced. Employers are naturally afraid to bring their people before a magistrate for breach of contract, lest they should lose their services altogether. An attempt to enforce the law is too often met with a refusal to work at all; and the negroes are perfectly aware that if they leave the estate on which they may be for the time, their services will be eagerly competed for by the neighbouring managers. Added to this, the delays and want of substantial justice experienced in too many of the magistrates' courts, operate in a great number of instances as an effectual bar to any recourse being had to the relief, such as it is, afforded by the local ordinances. Again, the difficulty of identifying, or even tracing, a runaway labourer is almost insurmountable. "I conceive," says Mr. Brumell, "that there can be no strict enforcement of a contract between two parties, one of whom is known and responsible, and the other unknown and possessing only a cloth round his loins. The first intimation a planter receives of a breach of contract is the absence of the labourer; and when (if ever) he hears of him again, it is that he is in another district or county." Situated as the proprietors are, therefore, they are obliged to wink at the behaviour of their people, knowing that on taking the slightest offence they will instantly leave and work elsewhere. *To enter into minute calculations for the purpose of showing that sugar cannot be grown profitably in this colony under existing circumstances would be a needless repetition; but the appended Table, furnished by the Admi-*

nistrator-General of Demerara and Essequibo, as to estates under his management, illustrates the subject through the clearest light.

Cultiva-
tion to
Profit im-
possible.

This return appears to your Commissioners to afford an unanswerable proof of the condition of the landed interest at present. The estates referred to therein were all carried on by a public officer who could command the means required for properly conducting them; their administration was regulated by law, and every transaction respecting them closely scrutinized by a court of justice. Yet with all these advantages these estates, thirty-four in number, sunk on an average \$316,125 during sequestration, without paying interest on mortgages or other incumbrances.

When the management of estates is attended with such a ruinous loss, it cannot be matter for surprise that the finest properties command only nominal prices in the market. Indeed, land at present seems to have no definite value; for those plantations which have changed hands of late years have almost invariably been bought in by the holders of mortgages or other liens upon them, and in many cases immediately abandoned, or else been purchased on speculation for trifling sums by parties who had no means to work them. Your Commissioners beg to refer to the appended returns of estates which have been sold at execution by the Provost-Marshal of British Guiana, as showing in the strongest manner the enormous depreciation which has taken place in West India property since the year 1838.

The colony of British Guiana being purely agricultural, its commercial prosperity inevitably depends upon the state of the landed interest.

Com-
merce.

The foregoing Report has already represented the misery and ruin into which the planters of this country are plunged. It remains now but to tell of the stagnation of business necessarily caused thereby to the whole mercantile body. The two seats of commerce for the colony, are the metropolis, George Town, and the town of New Amsterdam in the county of Berbice, and in both these places the leading merchants are complaining most severely of the pressure of the times. Formerly a large and

prosperous trade was carried on in estates supplies. This, owing to the wholesale abandonment of property, has dwindled away almost to nothing. The consumption of almost all kinds of imported commodities has also been greatly reduced of late years, as compared with the period immediately following freedom and the termination of apprenticeship. Your Commissioners beg to call particular attention to the remarks on this subject of Mr. Duncan McDonald, a partner in the leading firm of George Anderson and Co. "For some time after the emancipation, up to, I may say, 1845, the labouring classes purchased largely of calicoes, muslins, clothing, boots, shoes, hats, and indeed dry goods generally, as also of malt liquor, hams, low-priced wines (which were retailed very extensively by the Portuguese at $33\frac{1}{3}$ cents per bottle), glassware, furniture, &c. During the period stated they evinced an eagerness for articles of improved comfort, and a desire to appear *respectable*. In the last three or four years various circumstances have combined to reduce the demand and consumption of articles not of luxury only, but of ordinary comfort. The labourers now usually confine their purchases to the very few and indispensable articles of clothing, and to articles of necessary food. The other portion of the community have also contracted their wants into a much narrower compass than in former years." The limited business now carried on in plantation stores is almost entirely for cash instead of the liberal credit formerly given, while almost all other description of sales are for ready money only. *With the decline of the mercantile trade of George Town, the value of house property has fallen upwards of 50 per cent., and it is to be doubted whether there are any business premises in the whole place, that would sell at the present moment for one-half of what they would have realized four or five years ago.* In the present state of trade the tonnage dues and pilotage fees, on all vessels coming into port are felt to be excessive, and the amount of additional fees paid to the harbour-master is a subject which urgently demands legislative supervision. The commercial interest of New Amsterdam is, if possible, at a still lower ebb than that of George Town, for so large a portion of Berbice

Mer-
chants'
houses.

is abandoned that, comparatively speaking, few plantations remain in cultivation to be supplied from the merchant's stores. The value of house property in this town has become almost nominal, it being next to impossible to effect sales of this description, even for the most trifling sums. Hardly any shipping now frequent the port of New Amsterdam, and a great deal of the produce is sent down to George Town to be shipped from thence.

Your Commissioners have now reported, somewhat at length, upon the present state of the colony of British Guiana, both as regards its agricultural and commercial interests. They now beg to call attention to the following statements, as showing how the whole value of the products of the country is swallowed up by the labouring classes, without leaving any profit whatever to the proprietary body.

The total value of the staples of the country for	
1849 is found to be	\$3,248,686
Of these, the productions not contributed by	
sugar estates amount to	171,966

Leaving a balance of	\$3,076,720
--------------------------------	-------------

The colony last year produced in round numbers 38,000 hhds. of sugar, which being valued at 4 cents per lb., and the rum and molasses at \$30 per puncheon and \$11 per cask respectively, give the above sum of \$3,076,720.

The calculation of the money required for wages to make a crop of 500 hhds. of sugar, with rum and molasses in proportion, is ascertained to be \$2,000 per month, or \$24,000 per annum, which would require to produce a crop of 38,000 hhds \$1,824,000

The other expenses may be estimated	
at 2-3rds the wages	1,216,000
	3,040,000

Leaving a surplus of only	\$36,720
to meet interest on capital, pay off debts, &c.	

The produce of the sugar estates, making the above crop of 38,000 hhds., ought to be raised by the labour of 19,000 people, who would thus, allowing them to work on an average 274 days in the year, earn 288f. or \$96 each per annum; whereas it is calculated there are more than double the number employed on the estates in British Guiana, who therefore should earn only about 144f. each. At the same time there are upwards of 40,000 people who are residing in the rural parishes, and hardly work at all, unless it may be considered that by their occasional labour they contribute to produce the value of the other productions of the colony, which your Commissioners have shown amount to only \$171,966, say—

	Dollars.
Fire-wood	2,433
Coffee	9,105
Hard-wood	124,850
Charcoal	25,657
Cocoa-nuts	4,100
Hides	3,061
Shingles	2,760
	171,966

Our rural population of 82,000, if they chose to work, are capable of producing annually 80,000 hhds. of sugar, with rum and molasses in proportion; but, as has been before stated, less than half of their number can be induced to cultivate the sugar estates at all, and these, at the most, only do half work, so that three-fourths of the population are upheld by the labour that ought to be performed by the other one-fourth.

Again, the immigrants cannot possibly be working as they ought, for they alone, numbering as they do 19,436 souls, are sufficient to produce the whole sugar crop now made in the colony.

In the like manner the resident Creole population, nearly 20,000 strong, could of themselves raise the same crop. From all that your Commissioners have been able to learn, it is

probable that the immigrants have hitherto by their labour contributed to produce by far the larger quantity of the sugar crops of British Guiana, and if this really be the case, the idleness prevailing amongst the native population, who still remain located on estates, is at once clearly manifest.

The result of the whole amounts to this, that the entire labour which the planters of this country can muster out of a population numbering 82,000, of whom at least 50,000 are able-bodied people, is not equal to that of 19,000 steady and continuous workmen.

With reference to the foregoing statement of exports, and of the population by whom they are produced, the amount of imports into this colony must also be taken into consideration. These appear, by the return from the custom-house for the year 1849, to be of the value of £658,140 sterling, or \$3,279,072, being a surplus of \$30,386 over the whole exports of British Guiana of every description. Hence it is evident that the total value of the produce of the country is consumed within it.

This is easily accounted for by the fact of the cost of production being so exorbitant as to enable the labourers not only to consume largely themselves, but also to maintain in complete idleness branches of their families who are located in villages and other rural settlements. A great trade in provisions is carried on with the United States of America, upon which this colony is almost entirely dependent for food, notwithstanding the villagers could with ease not only raise sufficient for home consumption, but could also supply the neighbouring islands. It might be thought that the duties imposed upon the importation of all articles of food would operate on the minds of these people as an incentive for cultivating the native roots and esculents; but so deeply seated are the habits of indolence, that no inducement can persuade them to take advantage of this field of honest industry so invitingly spread before them.

Your Commissioners cannot take leave of this branch of the subject without reporting upon the almost total failure of the Metairé system, as endeavoured to be introduced into this

country. A little coffee is indeed cultivated by the Metayers with tolerable success; but as regards sugar, the experiment may be said to have entirely failed. More than one fine property has been ruined by trusting to this method of cultivation, and in nearly every instance proprietors have been obliged to take back the fields from the farmers on account of their neglect and inattention. In theory the system is all that can be desired, and its failure, when sought to be reduced into practice, is attributable solely to the unfitness of the working classes to appreciate its advantages.

They are not yet sufficiently advanced in the social scale to feel the benefits which would result to them from the mutual relations of landlord and tenant, between employers and employed. The great cause of its want of success arises from the indolent and unsteady habits of the labouring population, with which your Commissioners have had occasion already to find so much fault—not even the prospect of reaping a lucrative harvest can induce them to bestow anything like *continuous* labour upon their fields, which consequently soon get neglected, and in process of time are either abandoned or else taken over again by the proprietor of the estate. It is a melancholy and disheartening reflection that the Creole population of this colony, after enjoying for twelve years the blessings of freedom, should have risen so little in the social scale, and that they should be at the present moment in a state of positive retrogression.

Your Commissioners have now faithfully and to the best of their ability reported upon the present state of this colony, both as regards its agricultural and commercial interests. They have endeavoured fearlessly to state the truth, and to disclose the real evils which are operating so injuriously upon the country at large. In the exercise of the grave and important trust committed to them they have felt it their duty unflinchingly to expose the unsatisfactory condition of the labouring classes; nor have they shrunk from giving an impartial account of the ruin and distress which has overtaken all classes of the community, at the risk, though it be, of sinking still lower the colonial credit with capi-

Summa
ry.

talists at home. In order to effect a cure, it is necessary first to probe the wound, and ascertain the real extent of the injuries which have been received; and it is much better that our fellow-colonists, as well as the mother country, should be openly made acquainted with the actual position of affairs rather than that our circumstances should be glossed over to suit the views of those whose interest it may be to represent the colony in a flourishing state.

Act of
1846.

THE CAUSE OF THE PRESENT DEPRESSED CONDITION OF BRITISH GUIANA IS, IN THE SOLEMN AND DELIBERATE OPINION OF YOUR COMMISSIONERS, AS ALREADY EXPRESSED, MAINLY ATTRIBUTABLE TO THE FATAL OPERATION OF THE SUGAR ACT OF 1846. *Every symptom of a change for the better was apparent until then; the cultivation had been extended and the crops increased; the labouring population were working more steadily, and evinced signs of speedy improvement. That destructive measure, coupled with the want of early and sufficient immigration, inflicted a blow from which this colony has never recovered. Everything has retrograded from that moment, a great number of estates have been abandoned, and with the decline of the agricultural interest the condition of the lower orders has very sensibly deteriorated.*

The momentous consideration next presents itself what measures can be taken to save the colony ere it be too late.

Protec-
tion.

As far as the Government of England is concerned, all that can be done is earnestly and solemnly to urge upon Her Majesty's Ministers, the gross injustice of compelling the West India colonies to maintain an unequal competition in the home market with foreign slave states. The arguments showing the injustice and grievous impolicy of the late Sugar Act, have been so often before the public, that your Commissioners find it needless to repeat them here. *They will content themselves with expressing their firm conviction that nothing but protective duties can enable the British West Indies to compete successfully with their foreign rivals. So long as slavery is permitted, and the slave trade continues, wages will never fall, in this colony at least, to that amount*

that will place the price of a free man's labour on an equal footing with the cost of the food and clothing of a slave, and the interest of the capital expended on his purchase. As to the argument that a free labourer will work better than a slave, and that therefore his services are so much more valuable, the foregoing Report on the industrial habits of the peasantry of this country will afford an abundant refutation. The African has no desire to better his condition by the sweat of his brow; he is quite content to earn sufficient to satisfy his few and simple wants, and never thinks of amassing money by the fruits of his honest industry. It is therefore idle to pretend that the labour of this man is of equal value with the involuntary toil of the Cuban slave. The difference between the two is simply this, that the free labourer will never work more than sheer necessity compels him, whereas the slave is obliged to work to the extreme Slave Work. *limit of human endurance.*

In the hope that a beneficial change of policy on the part of the Home Government towards the West Indies may soon take place, your Commissioners now proceed to suggest the remedial measures which this colony itself can adopt.

The progressive withdrawal of the Creole population from the cultivation of the staples, and the acknowledged insufficiency of the immigrant labour at present in the colony, clearly point out that a large and continuous stream of immigration is necessary to maintain British Guiana as a sugar producing country, and save the invested capital in estates here from eventual annihilation. Your Commissioners do not hesitate to offer it as their opinion, that in the course of a few years, the native population will have almost entirely seceded from working on plantations, and that consequently their place will have to be supplied by the introduction of a totally new race of labourers. It is to be hoped that these may be induced to make this colony their home, and to render their best assistance towards producing the only staple which can be successfully cultivated here, *for with the downfall of the sugar estates, there is reason to fear every other interest, and every trace even of civilization will be swept away,* It is Universal Ruin.

possible, indeed, that with a superabundant supply of labour and an advance in the price of cotton, the cultivation of that article might be resumed in this colony, to some extent; but to look forward to this description of produce as the means of regenerating the country, would be utopian in the extreme. The loss of invested capital consequent upon changing the cultivation from sugar to cotton, renders the project impracticable. If, indeed, the sugar estates of this country could *first* be well supplied with labour, the abandoned districts on the coast might again be reclaimed and cultivated with cotton by the intervention of a large immigrant population, and an investment of capital for the purpose, on the part of the merchants of the mother country; but it is to sugar alone that this colony must look for the means of ultimate prosperity. Notwithstanding the vast number of estates which have been abandoned, there are buildings and machinery, of immense value in the aggregate, still in tolerable preservation; which might easily be restored, could labourers be procured to cultivate the deserted cane pieces.

The best description of immigrants would undoubtedly be Africans; but your Commissioners despair of this country ever procuring an adequate supply from Africa under the present system, and they would therefore earnestly recommend that every exertion should be used to obtain a speedy and abundant stream of immigration from India. If Coolies can be induced to come here in sufficient numbers, and remain here, the agricultural interest might yet rally; but it is essential that no time should be lost in their immediate importation. There are many matters of internal economy, respecting which your Commissioners might respectfully suggest improvements, but as the very existence of the colony as a civilized community depends upon immigration, they will dismiss all other considerations with a few brief remarks, and content themselves with urging upon the serious attention of your Excellency and the legislature, this one all important subject, as beside it all others sink into complete insignificance.

With immigration once obtained on a suitable footing, local

improvements will attend as a matter of course the progressive prosperity of the colony. The greatest natural impediment to the colonial agriculture is defective drainage, mainly caused by an insufficient out-fall. This may be remedied by the judicious application of steam-power, and doubtless when the credit of the colony is raised with capitalists at home, funds may be procured to effect this great good ; but at present it is quite out of the question. The laws regulating roads and bridges seem also to require legislative supervision ; for the manifest injustice of requiring the proprietor of each estate to keep up the line of road running through his property, whatever may be the length of its façade, has become clearly perceptible since the number which have been abandoned of late years. Your Commissioners would respectfully suggest the establishment of parochial rates to maintain the public roads. Among the most important requirements, however, of the colony at large, are the introduction of stringent laws, tending to the encouragement of honest industry, and the suppression of idleness and vice among the lower orders. For this purpose a binding vagrant act is urgently needed, as well as a trespass law, which would prevent the people from wandering were they pleased and earning a subsistence by shooting, fishing, and stealing on the lands of their neighbours.

Your Commissioners will not touch upon the subject of education, as that great question is undergoing the consideration of an official board appointed by your Excellency for the purpose ; but it is obvious that with the advancement of religious and moral instruction among the labouring classes the better citizens will they become, and the more useful and industrious members of society.

Your Commissioners have now concluded their labours, and if in this Report they have trespassed at a greater length than is customary, they venture to hope that the grave importance of the questions submitted to them will prove a sufficient excuse. In conclusion, they beg leave to add that this Report, although, from various causes only now adopted, was drawn up in the

month of June last, which will account for the allusions contained in it to certain topics, which have since engaged the attention of the legislature.

All which is very respectfully submitted, &c.

(Signed) PETER ROSE, *Chairman*,
JAMES STUART,
RICHARD HAYNES,
SAMUEL BEAN,
GEORGE BOOKER,
WILLIAM BRAND,
ROBERT R. CRAIG,
A. D. V. GON. NETSCHER,
THOMAS NIMMO,
FREDRICK VERBEKE,
COLIN SIMPSON,
WILLIAM DAVISON.

J. LUCIE SMITH, *Secretary*

Guiana Public Buildings, George Town, Demerary,
December 28th, 1850,

VII.

To the Right Honourable Sir John Pakington, Baronet, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies.

MEMORIAL OF THE CUSTOS, MAGISTRATES, CLERGY, AND OTHER INHABITANTS OF ST. GEORGE, ADOPTED AT A PUBLIC MEETING REGULARLY CONVENED, HELD IN THE COURT HOUSE, BUFF BAY, JAMAICA, JULY, 1852.

SHEWETH,

That your Memorialists are deeply interested in the welfare of the island of Jamaica,—*an interest which painfully increases as ruin advances.* In addressing you, Right Honourable Sir, who, untrammelled by any former official duties, now hold for the first time the seals of office as Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, your Memorialists will review their case for your consideration.

Our island was the first of all the British West India Colonies that gave effect to the Imperial Act of Parliament for the Abolition of Slavery, by the Act 4 William IV., chapter 41, entitled "An Act for the Abolition of Slavery in this Island, in consideration of compensation, and for promoting the industry of the manumitted slaves, and to declare the fifty-second of George III., chapter 155, in force in this Island."

At the end of that eventful session, Lord Mulgrave, our then Governor, in his closing speech to the Legislature, said,—"*In conclusion, I must express my firm belief, that, in all your future difficulties, your ready recognition of the natural rights of your fellow men will meet its best reward in the revived diffusion of national sympathy, and the cheerfully continued extension of*

“British Protection.” We received the assurance as an act of justice. We doubt not the honour of the British nation.

On the morning of the 1st of August, 1834, all awoke free: a new era commenced. The affirmation of the nation, sanctioned by that of the Government, was, that free labour would be found more productive and more profitable than slave labour;—that, consequently, the compensation awarded with six years’ apprenticeship was ample.

But in 1838, the Government practically compelled the island to give up two years of the apprenticeship,—that is, one-third of the period, or compensation of the apprenticeship,—and suddenly to emancipate all their apprentices. On that occasion, the Assembly (at which time one of your Memorialists represented this parish) declared in their humble address to Her Majesty,—“but
“while we thus abandon the apprenticeship, we do not abandon the
“right to demand indemnity for that sacrifice of property, thus
“forced upon us, and which we pray your Majesty will be pleased
“to take into your gracious consideration.

“Our staple articles of produce must henceforth be the product
“of free labour, obtained through the intervention of money payments. We, therefore, pray an adequate reduction may be made
“in those onerous duties so long imposed on our produce, in order
“that we may be enabled to pay wages to our labourers, and to
“meet the exigences of the times.

“We pray that the manufacture, or the refining, of foreign
“slave sugar in Great Britain be prohibited.

“The eyes of Europe and America are intensely fixed on this
“great question of emancipation, the result of which will determine
“whether the British Colonial Empire of the West shall wither
“and fade away, and with it the supremacy of the British flag,
“or whether, under auspicious counsels, it shall arise to add new
“power to the British standard.

“We implore your Majesty to direct your Ministers to devise
“such measures as may be necessary, under our unexampled change
“of circumstances to secure the peace of the island, and the rights
“of property, and to afford the reasonable assurance of a continued

“profitable cultivation of our plantations. *The fate of Jamaica is in your Majesty's hands and those of your responsible advisers*”
“We pray your Majesty to take this our humble address into early
“consideration, firmly relying on your Majesty's justice to grant us
“relief and protection.”

No measures, however, were adopted by the Government to help us in our difficulties, or to promote habits of industry on the part of the Emancipated population.

On the contrary, in 1844, a sudden alteration was made in the coffee duties, whereby the former protection was broken down, by the *favourable admission given to slave coffee into home consumption*. The effects were immediately felt by the coffee planters in this parish, and throughout the island. In 1846, the still more *fatal measure respecting the sugar duties was enacted*, whereby foreign slave sugar was not only permitted, but encouraged to be brought into the British market for home consumption; so that *our just interests were not only disregarded, but positively sacrificed for party purposes, by a leading statesman, whose arguments went to show both the injustice and the impolicy of the measure, but who nevertheless did not scruple in avowing that he should vote against his arguments, for the purpose of keeping his quondam supporters out of power*.

The fatal effects of these acts of 1844 and 1846 soon began to exhibit themselves, and which have now so fully and so fearfully developed themselves by that frightful destruction of property, which has not only taken place in this parish but has prevailed generally throughout the island, as will more clearly appear from the subjoined tables, which have been compiled with great research by William Hosack, Esquire, and are in possession of Lord Stanley, and are hereto annexed.

In the year 1841, an act for the purpose of taxing hereditaments was for the first time brought into operation, under which all properties were valued by assessors officially appointed. By that time the value of property had so diminished, that *an estate in this parish, belonging to one of your memorialists, valued during slavery at one hundred and eighteen thousand pounds*

sterling, was only valued at twenty thousand pounds, a valuation which subsequently, on appeal, was reduced to sixteen thousand pounds.

The above valuations are supposed to establish an income or profit of six per cent. on the amount, which accordingly is made the subject of public and parochial assessment; and, although it frequently happens that the properties have yielded no such income, or, on the contrary, have involved the proprietors in fresh debt, payment of the tax is nevertheless required. These are the valuations referred to in the tables.

A portion of our parish was taken by legislative enactments in the year 1842 for the formation of the new parish of Metcalfe, but the number of properties mentioned in this Memorial are such only, as were in that part of the parish which now constitutes the whole. Thus Saint George now contains according to the Land Tax Rolls 66,854 acres. Its total population, previous to the cholera, was estimated at about nine thousand persons, but it became nearly decimated by that terrible pestilence. The decrease of its white population is remarkably exhibited in the militia. The Saint George's regiment of militia in 1834 consisted in a total number of 432 officers and men, two companies of which consisted of blacks and men of colour, the rest white—with a troop of horsemen all white—chiefly overseers of respectability. The strength of the regiment under the present militia law is reduced to one hundred privates; but among whom there is only one white man. The reason is, that young men from the mother country have for many years ceased to come out annually as formerly, to seek situations as book-keepers, overseers, planting tradesmen, &c.; so that at this moment the total white population of males in Saint George, above the age of fourteen, does not exceed twenty-nine out of a population of eight or nine thousand. We have good reason to believe that the white population in the adjoining parish of Portland scarcely exceeds thirty-nine, including the white officers of the black garrison. In the neighbouring parish of Metcalfe the number scarcely exceeds our own. Nor is there now the smallest prospect of any

increase taking place here, or in the Island; on the contrary, the desperate state of agricultural affairs has made many resolve to quit the place, after years of toil, of their blighted fortunes, and like the Irish to seek retrieval in America, or now in Australia. Thus the great connecting link in the chain, which heretofore bound Jamaica and the mother country together, is disappearing.

But, although population is decreasing, the public and parochial taxes in this parish for the current year are double the amount assessed in the year 1850, notwithstanding our diminished means of discharging them. This remark applies equally to every parish in the island. Thus, although taxes are on the increase, one-third of the taxable property in the Island has been swept away in the last seven years, as appears by the journals of the Assembly; and on the same authority the appalling fact is seen, that in the last year, viz., 1850-51, the assessed value of hereditaments throughout the island has decreased no less than £2,056,579 in amount.

The decrease of the paper circulation of Jamaica, taken from official returns to the Stamp office, viz.—

	Total circulation.
1844	£258,816
1851	145,060
1852	127,194

affords another sad proof of the rapid decay of the island. *The value of the whole export of sugar from Jamaica this year will not, in all probability, equal in amount the public expenditure for the same period: a state of finance fearful to contemplate, and which cannot be continued without disruption. Public institutions must give way and be reduced, unless relief be afforded.*

The labouring population increase in idleness. So far from seeking labour or employment, or being stimulated by the desire of obtaining wages, they become daily more indifferent, more unwilling and more idle, preferring squatting on their own, or clandestinely occupying the lands of other persons, particularly those of abandoned estates,—*i. e.* abandoned as to cultivation, but

not abandoned as to ownership. *They attend less to the instruction of their religious pastors and ministers: they pay less attention to the education of their children, if it is attended with any contribution from themselves. Vice and immorality are on the increase; and, shortly, if the island does not revive from its present prostration, it will revert into semi-barbarism.*

Your Memorialists consider themselves entitled to claim that the portion of the title of the Imperial Act for the Abolition of Slavery, viz. "and for promoting the industry of the manumitted "Slaves"—should now be enforced. Your Memorialists are of opinion, that no method better adopted for the accomplishment of that purpose can be devised, than to break down that monopoly in the labour market which the negroes have for so many years enjoyed, and to force them into competition with more willing labourers, introduced into this island in sufficient numbers:—the cost naturally to fall on the nation, for the national purpose of promoting the intention of the Imperial Act.

The difficulties which would inevitably overtake us in competing with foreign Colonial produce, were long foreseen; but it was only apprehended to occur through the increased production of foreign Colonial produce introduced into the general markets of the world, more particularly into the continental market. *The dishonest suspicion was never entertained, that the British nation could become so hypocritical as to sanction the use of slave-grown sugar for the sake of cheapness; thus sacrificing honour and justice at the shrine of mammon.*

So far back as the year 1837, the Assembly memorialised our Sovereign on the increase of the foreign slave trade, particularly as regarded Cuba and the Brazils. In which they declared—
"The great and fertile countries of Cuba and Brazils, as well as
"other parts, are adding to their productive powers in a manner
"in which it is impossible for your Majesty's Colonies to partici-
"pate. Those countries have abundance of fertile land, and only
"require labourers to make it productive, even to an extent suffi-
"cient to supply cheaply all Europe with Colonial produce. We,
"respectfully, but at the same time most earnestly call the atten-

“tion of your Gracious Majesty to the condition to which this
“island, and all the West Indian Colonies of Great Britain, are
“likely to be by this course reduced. It is only by the continued
“cultivation of the staples of Jamaica, and more particularly of
“sugar, that the well-being and advancement in civilization of the
“freed labourers of the Colony can be secured. If once those large
“industrial establishments, which now employ such a great pro-
“portion of the labouring population, be broken up, we state con-
“fidently that the prosperity of all classes will be seriously, if not
“irretrievably, injured; capital will leave the island, and combina-
“tion of labour being at an end, the peasantry may indeed cultivate,
“each individually, whatever is necessary for subsistence, and
“perhaps a small quantity of the less important exportable pro-
“duction of the soil; but for anything further their labour must
“be unavailing, *all inducement for persons to bring here their*
“*capital and industry will be at an end, and commerce with our*
“*shores in a great measure annihilated*, leaving this now valuable
“island comparatively unprofitable to its inhabitants, and quite
“useless as a Colony to Great Britain.”

Nevertheless the Cubans persevered in adding to their slave population, *when suddenly the British Act of 1846 gave such stimulus to the foreign slave trade, particularly to the introduction of slaves into Cuba, that the produce of that island has been quadrupled.* And now the Cuban planters, having had such large accession of slaves, are wisely seeking to augment their labouring population by the introduction of 80,000 Chinese, a superior and more intelligent race, to act as an antidote to the negro character and temperament.

Thus the results prospectively set forth by the Assembly, together with those of the fatal act of 1846, are now in full operation—destruction of property is daily occurring—and unless it be promptly arrested in the new Parliament by measures of effectual relief, based on adequate protection, this island in the course of another year will sink into desolation.

We claim protection, not merely on the general principle, *but also on the exceptional principle which rules exclusively in our*

free labour question, as against the produce of slave labour thus taking it out of the same category.

We claim that our fellow subjects in the mother country be relieved from the degradation of eating slave sugar and drinking slave coffee, by the prohibition of its use.

We claim that the labour of our free negroes should not be forced into competition with the labour of foreign slaves and of countries who have violated the slave-trade treaties.

We claim a large introduction of industrious labourers into the island at the national cost.

Lastly, your Memorialists pray that you, Right Honourable Sir, will take this, their Memorial, into serious consideration, with a view of relieving them from their unprecedented distress by Legislative enactments in the new Parliament.

Your Memorialists have the honour of signing
themselves with respect,

Signed on behalf of the Memorialists,

J. R. GROSETT,
Custos and Chairman.

ABSTRACT.

JAMAICA SUGAR ESTATES, &c., ABANDONED.

NAMES OF PARISHES.	No. of Estates abandoned since 1846.	No. of Estates partially abandoned since 1846.	Assessed Value in 1841.	Public and Parish Taxes in 1841.	Public and Parish Taxes in 1850.	REMARKS.
St. Ann's.....	11	...	£ 68,871 0 0	£ 802 14 4	£ 190 5 6	This comparative reduction of taxation arises chiefly from the reduced value of Property on the Rolls. * in 1843.
St. Mary	13	7	198,652 0 0	2,973 8 6	453 13 8	
Trelawny	13	10	180,874 18 2	2,006 5 11	673 11 6	
St. Catherine.....	2	...	930 0 0	294 6 2	77 19 4	
St. Dorothy	11	...	136,410 10 0	1,709 3 1	222 18 1	
Metcalfe.....	6	...	*39,379 0 0	335 0 6	39 10 10	
St. David	7	2	40,504 0 0	1,009 13 6	203 11 7	
St. Thomas in the Vale.....	8	1	67,949 0 0	1,340 0 0	180 0 0	
St. George	8	3	68,600 0 0	652 8 11	115 12 0	
Clarendon.....	6	...	38,810 0 0	523 17 10	36 12 10	
Vere	4	...	22,776 0 0	138 14 7	52 16 0	{ See total value under head of Pens.
Hanover.....	20	8	165,242 10 0	2,164 19 2 $\frac{3}{4}$	375 9 7	
St. Elizabeth.....	5	...				
St. John	4	...	64,900 0 0	778 13 6	113 16 10	
Westmoreland.....	6	2	82,200 0 0	1,408 1 6	348 4 10	
Portland	5	10	108,786 0 0	1,853 8 0	263 14 7	
Port Royal	2	...	9,700 0 0	95 19 6	17 17 2	
St. James	10	11	152,105 0 0	1,758 4 6	569 11 10	
St. Andrew.....	8	...	45,247 0 0	515 8 9	95 18 10	
St. Thomas in the East	19	9	163,202 7 6	1,620 12 8	461 0 8	
Manchester	...	...				{ See total value under head of Pens, &c.
Total.....	168	63	1,655,139 5 8	21,981 0 11 $\frac{3}{4}$	4,592 5 8	

COFFEE PLANTATIONS ABANDONED SINCE 1844.

NAMES OF PARISHES.	No. of Estates abandoned since 1846.	No. of Estates partially abandoned since 1846.	Assessed Value in 1841.	Public and Parish Taxes in 1841.	Public and Parish Taxes in 1850.	REMARKS.
			£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
St. Ann's.....	20	1	56,491 0 0	816 1 10	221 8 9	
St. Dorothy	9	...	5,152 15 0	89 11 7	19 6 6	
Metcalfe	18	...	53,224 0 0	419 1 2	186 5 6	
St. David.....	17	2	28,074 0 10	648 4 9	160 17 1	
St. Thomas in the Vale.....	23	...	36,816 0 0	739 0 0	95 0 0	
St. George.....	18	7	66,260 0 0	719 8 0	163 14 1	
Clarendon	11	...	45,860 0 0	686 11 6	116 8 6	
St. Elizabeth.....	11	...				{ See total value, &c., under head of Pens. Pens and Coffee Properties included in this return.
St. John	33	...	61,150 0 0	769 15 9	88 15 3½	
Port Royal	8	4	25,480 0 0	221 12 5	57 2 1	
St. Andrew.....	41	...	67,728 0 0	580 2 3	160 11 4	
St. Thomas in the East.....	14	6	47,852 15 8	449 10 2	71 16 8	
Total	223	20	494,088 11 6	6,138 19 5	1,341 5 9½	

GRASS PENS ABANDONED SINCE 1844 AND 1846.

NAMES OF PARISHES.	No. of Estates abandoned since 1846.	No. of Estates partially abandoned since 1846.	Assessed Value in 1841.	Public and Parish Taxes in 1841.	Public and Parish Taxes in 1850.	REMARKS.
St. Dorothy.....	23	10	£ 24,489 0 0	£ 438 15 3	£ 90 18 4	{ The figures in this line includes the value of Sugar, Coffee and Pens. This includes all abandoned Plantations since 1844.
St. David.....	8	...	8,640 14 4	258 17 9	75 8 9	
Clarendon	2	...	3,120 0 0	42 2 1	9 10 0	
St. Elizabeth	24	...	115,967 0 0	2,131 18 0	349 12 9	
Manchester	65	...	139,698 0 0	1,193 19 3	194 19 1	
	122	10	291,914 14 4	4,065 12 4	720 8 11	

RECAPITULATION OF ABANDONED ESTATES.

Total 231 Sugar Estates	Total Value £1,655,139 5 8
243 Coffee Plantations, &c.,	494,088 11 6
132 Pens, &c.....	291,914 14 4
	<u>£2,441,142 11 6</u>

VIII.*

APPENDIX TO THE MEMORIAL TO THE QUEEN FROM THE
INHABITANTS OF THE ISLAND OF ST. LUCIA, OF AUGUST
14TH, 1852, GIVEN IN PAGES 22-26.

STATEMENT of the quantity of Sugar exported annually for the last
twenty years, viz., from 1832 to 1851; and of the annual amount
of Taxes levied upon the inhabitants of the Island of St. Lucia
during the same period :—

YEARS.	Pounds of Sugar annually exported.	Amount of Taxes annually levied.
	lbs.	£ s. d.
1832... ..	4,767,700	8,813 13 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
1833	5,630,500	10,038 17 11 $\frac{1}{4}$
1834... ..	6,011,950	13,391 11 3 $\frac{1}{4}$
1835	5,189,800	13,090 1 9 $\frac{1}{4}$
1836... ..	3,683,300	12,454 10 7
1837	4,783,350	11,672 3 9 $\frac{3}{4}$
1838... ..	5,531,300	11,619 6 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
1839	4,531,950	11,596 4 3 $\frac{3}{4}$
1840... ..	3,474,450	12,691 16 5 $\frac{1}{2}$
1841	4,766,850	11,603 2 2 $\frac{1}{4}$
1842... ..	6,773,900	11,451 3 0
1843	5,263,450	10,274 12 11
1844... ..	6,704,300	14,834 9 7 $\frac{1}{4}$
1845	6,800,700	15,187 16 0 $\frac{1}{2}$
1846... ..	5,521,300	14,518 1 3
1847	8,586,450	12,684 5 7
1848... ..	5,238,050	13,541 11 7
1849	6,207,000	11,815 1 5
1850... ..	5,175,500	12,670 19 9
1851	7,041,900	13,325 0 11 $\frac{1}{2}$
Total	111,684,700	247,344 10 2 $\frac{1}{2}$

Which gives

5,584,185 lbs., }
or, } an annual average of £12,367 4s. 6d.
2,493 tons }

Observations.

1st.—Attention is invited to the fact, that, although the Tax
Ordinance for the year 1845 professes to provide only for a sum

* Referred to in page 24 as Appendix IX.

of £12,643 2s. 8d. sterling for the expenditure of that year, yet the published accounts of the Colonial Treasurer shew that there was actually levied upon the inhabitants of the colony, that year, this amount..... £15,187 16 0½

Whilst a balance remained in the hands of
the Colonial Treasurer from the previous
year's taxation, of } 1,196 3 9½

Leaving, therefore, at the disposal of the }
Executive, the total sum of } £16,363 19 10

To provide for an expenditure of £12,643 2 8

2nd.—That, although the Tax Ordinance for the year 1846 professes to provide only for a sum of £13,893 18s. 5d. sterling, for the expenditure of that year, yet the published accounts of the Colonial Treasurer shew that there was actually levied upon the inhabitants of the colony, that year, this amount £14,588 1 3

Whilst a balance remained in the hands of
the Colonial Treasurer from the previous
year's taxation, of..... } 2,716 16 11

Leaving, therefore, at the disposal of the }
Executive, the total sum of..... } £17,304 18 2

To provide for an expenditure of £13,893 18 5

IX.

PROTEST ENTERED ON THE JOURNALS OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS, ON THE 13TH OF AUGUST, 1846, AGAINST THE SECOND READING OF THE SUGAR DUTIES' BILL:—

DISSENTIENT—

1. Because, after the Legislature had nearly half a century, and the country above half a century ago, condemned the African Slave Trade as the worst of human crimes, comprising almost all others, and as the greatest practical evil that ever afflicted the world, *we cover ourselves with a disgrace never to be effaced by adopting a measure whose avowed object is immediately and largely to increase the mass of sugar grown in the slave-trading countries, and which can only be grown by an immediate and large importation of Africans.* Consequently, the avowed object of the measure is the encouragement of the African Slave Trade, as much as murder, and not robbery alone, is the avowed object of the felon who destroys his neighbour in order that he may possess his property, by removing him out of his way.

2. Because it is in vain to disguise from ourselves and cover over the guilt of slave-trading thus incurred, by pretending that we do not directly offer any premium for its encouragement. We as directly partake of that enormous crime by knowingly and wilfully augmenting the amount of the traffic which lays waste the villages of Africa, and desolates her coasts, as those do whom we brand with the name of felons, and visit with the pains of felony,

for only letting to hire the ships employed in the traffic, although they have no more direct participation in the African voyage.

3. Because nothing can be more futile than the defence of our conduct drawn from a reference to the importation which is allowed of cotton and other articles, the growth of slave-dealing countries. If that importation be an encouragement of slave-trading, it was criminal to permit it, and the fact of our having once been guilty is no excuse for extending and multiplying our offences. But the great bulk of such commerce is notoriously carried on with countries in which slave-trading has long ceased to be practised. Moreover, the chief branch of the importation, that of cotton, was established nearly a quarter of a century before we ourselves abolished the slave-trade; and there is the greatest possible difference between refusing to give up a trade or a practice of any kind already adopted, and entering for the first time into a novel career of crimes not yet begun to be perpetrated.

4. Because the question now under the consideration of Parliament differs from every other part of the discussions so long carried on respecting the slave-trade and slavery. In all former cases our offence was, that we delayed to abolish a criminal system already, and for ages established; we only refused to do that which was clearly right. But now we are doing that which is clearly wrong; and are for the first time beginning, not continuing, a slave trade. We are actively creating a slave-trade which does not now exist, and not passively suffering an existing traffic to go on.

5. *Because it is in vain to expect that other nations will shut their eyes to the garb of hypocrisy in which this conduct of ours clothes all our professions of zeal for the abolition. When we urge them to join in putting down the execrable traffic, they will point to our Act encouraging it; and, required by us to abandon the gains which they derive from conniving at the traffic, they will marvel at*

our boldness in expecting such sacrifices from them, when we all the while are encouraging it ourselves for the avowed purposes of cheapening a luxury that we relish, and adding a small sum to the mass of our revenue.

6. *Because it is altogether preposterous to cite in such a debate the principles of political philosophy, and to call this a sacrifice to the doctrine of Free-trade.* The highest authorities have long ago proclaimed *that in this measure there are involved no considerations of commercial or financial policy*; but, as one of the late ministers said, “*the honour of this country,*” as another asserted, “*the credit and reputation of this country,*” and as all impartial men who considered the subject have said, the creating or the preventing an amount of suffering among peaceful and unoffending nations, so frightful to contemplate, that no calculator of profit and loss can be hard-hearted enough to weigh against it the largest amount of gain, whether commercial or financial, which could be conceived to result from our legislation.

7. Because, finally, the hurrying through Parliament at the close of a very long and laborious Session, and in the absence of nearly all its Members, a measure of so *desperate a character*, and which is connected with other measures seriously affecting our whole colonial policy, as well as the trading interests of the mother country, betokens on the part of its authors *an impatience of delay and of full discussion*, only to be explained by the supposition that the extraordinary state of parties at the present moment *offers them the only chance* of carrying their measures, which would assuredly have been rejected, *as they were five years ago*, as soon as those parties had resumed their wonted position.

BROUGHAM.

DISSENTIENT—

Because, beside all the other reasons of justice, humanity, and sound policy, which prohibit a measure so directly, so inevitably

tending to the encouragement of the slave-trade, it is wholly intolerable, as it is altogether unprecedented, to hurry through Parliament, at the very close of the Session, and after almost all its Members have left town, such important measures, *without the possibility of full discussion*, and without giving the mother country, or the Colonies, any notice of them—measures which at one blow alter the whole commercial system of the country, and affect in the most serious manner, and to the greatest extent, the manufacturing and trading community of the Empire.

ASHBURTON.

BROUGHAM.

DENMAN.

S. OXON. (Wilberforce.)





