

GEORGE COCKBURN MILES

b. 3 September 1898.

Military Service.

B.A., Oxon.

C.C.S. 1921 - 1935

13 May	1921	Cadet C.C.S.
17 June	1921	attached Jaffna Kachcheri.
18 Aug.	1922	P.M., Puttalam.
28 April	1924	G.A., Galle Kachcheri.
11 June	1925	on leave.
11 Feb.	1926	G.A., Anuradhapura.
23 May	1927	Fourth Asst. Col. Sec.
13 May	1928	Third Asst. Col. Sec.
27 June	1930	on leave.
4 Sept.	1930	
to		
9 March	1931	temporarily attached to Colonial Office while on leave.
31 March	1931	Asst. Col. Sec.
7 July	1931	Asst. Chief Sec. (same post as above; new designation)
	1935	retired.

Comments on Interview with Mr. G.C.Miles, 8.12.1965

I found Mr. Miles a homely, genial and simple man with few pretensions; he was candid in his views on several points and made it a point to reveal his 'bias' as he called it, at the outset - a fact which I greatly appreciated. He was not greatly interested in political questions and was not very perceptive in this line. His reasoning did not seem always analytical, logical or sound; he tended to go off on an irrelevant tangent at points. This may well have been only a feature in Mr. Miles in his 67 th year (1965) and he might have been much more quick-witted in his younger days.

In those days he was obviously governed by an intense distaste for politicians in general and Ceylonese politicians in particular; his was a very conservative, rigidly anti-democratic viewpoint; there is much of the old school of Stubbs, Wedderburn and Tyrrell in him, though I personally, found him quite willing to listen to other ideas. i.e. he was not a huffing and puffing Colonel Blimp. There was little of racial arrogance or snobbishness in him and he was able to stand away and consider whether this existed among the British in Ceylon. It is of some significance that though officer-class he served among the N.C.O. ranks in the First World War. His views on Rhodesia, nevertheless, definitely put him within the old school of thought - narrow regarding political progress.

It is clear that he must have been an efficient officer. I was not able to decide whether he was a Secretariat-wallah and a writer of clever minutes of the type Newnham describes. (vide P.S.) He did not support much of what Newnham said of the obstructionist attitude in the Secretariat, etc., etc., so perhaps he was; perhaps he did not have the perceptiveness of Newnham on this point. (he certainly does not in general) Though efficient I think Miles would have tended to work on staid lines.

With regard to administrative and other questions I don't think Mr. Miles held his comments in check in the least bit because of the presence of the tape. Where he definitely did so was with regard to detrimental remarks on brother-officers; but even here, he did make some useful comments which were by no means complementary to some. e.g. Fletcher. At any rate, I did not push the line of personal assessments of personnel very far - I could not. This was a bit unfortunate because of his long experience at the Secretariat.

N.B.

M.W.Roberts 8.12.65

He was considerably influenced by material conditions. He considered the terms of retirement offered by the Donoughmore Commission 'ungenerous', when, indeed they were more than generous, if anything. Like many in the C.C.S. (and I suppose like most British civil servants) he was typical of the upper-crust of British society on this sphere - very much a product of an affluent society.

P.S.

Mr. Miles and Mr. Frank Leach were compatriots and friends. From what Leach, an initiator, said, it is possible that Mr. Miles was not all that staid. He certainly does not seem to have a Secretariat-wallah.

INTERVIEW WITH MR. G.C. MILES

8 DECEMBER 1965

M. Its simply a sort of - my general outlook, I think.

I. Yes.

M. I served in the First War of course. And I was, at 19, a lance-sergeant in the infantry. And I had a pretty bad time and was quite severely wounded. When I came out - when we finished the war we were told that the war had been fought to make the world safe for democracy. This, I think, came from Lloyd George. It came from some politician. Well, its a damn lie. The soldiers didn't fight the war for that purpose at all. But its been trotted out ever since, and its been made - not only is it to make the world safe for democracy but quite honestly its also to make the world unsafe for any other form of government. Now, I've never been able to swallow that. I've nothing against democracy. I'm not a fascist or anything of that sort. But when you look round Europe, for instance, you see Portugal, you see Spain; most of the places we've walked out of are having trouble. It seems to me a pity that we - that's where, I think, a lot of the trouble started from - that very doctrinary acceptance of that by the Colonial Office in particular - that - I mean, I don't want to keep any place under British rule that doesn't want to stay under British rule - but why we should really endeavour to have the sort of parliamentary form of government which - really it works here up to a point but it works mainly because the people are not interested in politics; they're more interested in football, and, you know, the ...; the Civil Servant - the Public Servant in this country is less important than the business man. You know its a different background altogether. I mean, you've probably heard this point of view before but that's one of the reasons I stayed under the Donoughmore Constitution for some time, and I was Secretary of the Public Services Commission. And we, of course, were trying to keep appointments clean. And it was pretty obvious they wouldn't remain clean very much longer. That and the

sort of general - I was Secretary of a Select Committee of the State Council on hydro-electric schemes and of all these people, Senanayake and Jayatilaka and - I've forgotten the names - but they were all - I didn't trust any of them. I didn't like any of them, except old Macan Markar - who was the jeweller - who was, of course, in quite a minority community. And I personally didn't feel that - I felt that this ...

I. Changed state of ...

M. Well, it was going to be just a lot of talk. They were all lawyers to start with. And the same sort of - well, I did set out my views at that time. This was only a draft.¹ It was never used. But somebody must have asked me to make some notes on ...

I. Yes.

M. ... the terms. You can have a look at that when we've finished talking and return it to me. Well, because I did - I mean, in leaving Ceylon I threw away a pretty good future, because I'd been in the Secretariat several years and I had my foot on the promotion ladder. And nearly all the chaps who went through the Secretariat - you've got the names of some of them - there was Mark Young, Murphy, Gimson, Woolley, Maybin, Battershill, all future - all Governors or Colonial Secretaries. It was a very fine office and a very fine lot of people went through it. So I was foolish in many ways to walk out. I mean, from the point of view of self-interest I was foolish to walk out of the Service. But I really felt I couldn't take any more, you know.

I. Of the politicians?

M. I thought we would slip into inefficiency and corruption and persecution; all the evil things that we - you know, persecution, religious persecution, persecution of minority communities. I don't - those have all come back. And I didn't feel that - I mean, our relationship with the people was that we faced the people and we were responsible personally, you know, to them. I didn't feel I could go on. I felt, you know, that there'd be inefficiency and corruption. Anyhow all this, as I say, goes back to the wretched politicians after the First War, which seemed to preach their policy very I mean, the question whether a country should be independent of British colonial rule, that's the question. The question whether it should be independent and compelled to adopt a form(?) of

1. He gave me a typed draft. I have a Xerox copy in my possession.

government that really has as many failures as successes - in fact or more I would say. And, of course, its very topical now because that's really the problem in Rhodesia, isn't it? I mean, the - we're so doctrinaire we can't contemplate any form of government except the majority rule, democracy, with a parliament and all the rest of it. And these rebels of course - I don't - I think the colour thing is exaggerated a great deal. I think the rebels think it just wouldn't work. It would make a mess. Well having said - having got that off my chest: That is, you know, my bias.

I. Your ...

M. My bias. Yes - and, well, yes, my prejudices. I don't think I've got any colour prejudice, race prejudice, or anything of that sort. In fact my secretary in the L.C.C., curiously enough, for the last five years has been a coloured woman.

I. Well, if I may say so, I heard that you - you have undermined the L.C.C. with Ceylonese. Ha-ha-ha.

M. Well, I did have a weakness for Ceylonese, I must say. And I remember when Sir Roger(?) Martin, who's now the Professor of Architecture at Cambridge and - he used to be the architect - after he went to Cambridge he sent me a personal note saying, 'This is to introduce Mr. So-and-So. I know you've got a sort of kind heart for Ceylonese. Will you see whether you could fit him in', you see. And we did employ a number. Curiously enough mainly engineers rather than architects. I don't remember a Ceylonese architect but several Ceylonese engineers. They usually left us to get more money. So they were good chaps. Oh, but Ceylon has nothing to fear, you know, the training that these fellows have had is good. But a great embarrassment to us has been people from other places, particularly from West Africa, who've come to London hoping that with - you know, find a job and have really nothing to offer. They haven't been trained properly, you know. The L.C.C. - I was very proud indeed of the quality of the people we recruited. And we've got quite a name for architecture; and, you know, for design and quality and everything. By the way - that was my job in the L.C.C. I don't suggest you should have to read all these things but that's what I was doing finally with the L.C.C.

I. I'm glad you told me this about your attitude because that is of obvious relevance, and I think its very fair of you to

present your outlook on this point. If I may ask, what made you join the Colonial Service?

M. Originally?

I. Yes.

M. Well, I'd always been aimed by my father, with my consent, at going to university and going to the Civil Service. We had in mind the Home Civil Service. I took the Home Civil Service administrative grade examination, the post-war reconstruction. And I said I was not willing to go abroad. I wanted a job in the Home Civil. I was approached before the end of the proceedings and they said, 'Well, if you'd like to change your mind we could offer an Eastern Cadetship'. I refused to go to India by the way.

I. Yes, why?

M. Because they had got into a nice sort of mess, where politics was everything that mattered. And I was just not interested, and just didn't want to go. And incidentally I think you'll find if you check this that there were four of us went together. There was Sir Charles Woolley - I mean, he's now Sir Charles - Lucette, Leach and myself - you should meet them.

I. I've already fixed interviews with - arranged for interviews with Lucette and Leach.

M. Well, I don't know if I'm giving anything away - I may be wrong about this - but I think none of us were willing to go to India.

I. Oh, I - that's very interesting.

M. I'm not sure - I'm not sure. You might check this. I certainly wasn't anyhow. Anyhow I was offered - I had put down Ceylon as my first preference and obviously its a lovely place and I'd read books about it. And its a fa - the people are fascinating. I mean, gay and lively and pleasant. And I thought a most attractive place. So I put down Ceylon and Hong Kong and I was offered Ceylon. I worked - there was another factor by the way that made me change my mind. This was one of the first things after the war and jobs were very hard to get. So I mean - I was quite ready to go abroad but my main purpose - I was disappointed at not getting into the Home Civil. That was the year I took the thing, you see. The Indian Civil then was very much better paid and was - came up - was sort of put first. In the Home Civil there, then Eastern Cadetships. There was Woolley who was top of

that lot. Lucette, myself, Leach, Sudbury went to ... Bassett too.

I. He came to Ceylon, yes.

M. G.H. Bassett? Yes, I think it was. Hopper(?) went to Ceylon and died there. And of course a lot of people - there was an immense field. There were about two or three hundred candidates. It was very difficult to get employment at that particular time. What intrigued me, if you notice, I was about the only non-commissioned one. I think the point about that was that I had the choice of training for a commission and going to ? and missing the war altogether or going out to the hot war and remaining an N.C.O. And I insisted on - well, I mean, I'm not claiming to be a hero but after all I'm not the person that I was at nineteen. But at nineteen I had my ideas and I landed in France on the 1st of April 1918, which was about the lowest point when the March retreat - when the Germans had actually hit us for six and the outlook was pretty gloomy. Well, I don't know whether that answers your question about that but ...

I. Yes, it helps. Did you find that military service helped you in your colonial service?

M. Yes, I think so. I was in the ranks the whole time. I had seen, you know, the height to which the human being can rise. Its absolutely staggering really the way the infantryman suffered and was cheerful and put up with it. And of course casualties were enormous. That was one thing. The other thing is mixing altogether, of course, with the ranks I had quite a sympathy for the underdog. I don't think I've ever had any snob trouble or I certainly didn't - I think that's true of the whole Civil Service. I mean, compared with what one's heard of other services. If you put on dog or tried to throw your weight about you were very unpopular with the other parts of the Civil Service.

I. Oh, I see.

M. Let me quote something - a thing that amused me. I went from the Ceylon Civil Service, where we were all supposed to be little colonial emperors strutting about, into the L.C.C., which is supposed to be the sort of most democratic and all the rest of it. One of the first things I saw was the head of one of our local offices - this was in the Welfare Department - had on his door a notice which said, 'Knock and await permission before entering'. When I was on a general inspection

- I used to kick his door open. It made me so angry to see. That's - you mentioned bureaucracy by the way. There are two meanings to the word bureaucracy. One is 'dominance by officials' which I would call 'benevolent autocracy' or 'autocracy' anyhow. And the real bureaucracy, which you get very often in a democracy is 'government by clerks and forms'.
- I. Yes, that's what I was referring to.
- M. This is typical of the sort of clacking(?) office type of junior - this chap wasn't very important, but to put this offensive notice on his door. That is - then struck me, as one of the first reactions, you know the first things I saw in London, was rather amusing.
- I. What about public school life? Do you think that helped you?
- M. I wasn't at a public school. My school is - Courtenay(?) is a public school technically. The headmaster attends the Headmasters' Conference and they call themselves now the Queen Elizabeth's School of Wakefield. But it is Wakefield Grammar School.
- I. Oh, I see.
- M. And they did have a boarding-house. And it was a very good school. And of course modelled on the public school system. I don't think - all my boys - I had four boys by the way - they all went to Ampleforth, which is a public school, and got different scholarships to Oxford. One at Merton I mentioned, two at Worcester, and one at New College.
- I. Yes, I see.
- M. The one you'll meet later on had a breakdown unfortunately. He was one of the Worcester chaps. He's a printer now. He's given up the idea of a sort of learned career of any kind.
- I. What were your first impressions of the C.C.S.?
- M. Ceylon Civil Service?
- I. Yes.
- M. I think that they were very good because they were so friendly. I mean they met the four of us on the ship. They took the trouble to bring out a Customs' launch to take us ashore which was unexpected and nice. The Principal Assistant to the Colonial Secretary, who was Southorn - Southorn, do you know him?
- I. Yes.
- M. W.T.?
- I. Southorn or Southern?
- M. Southorn that's right, Southorn. He had us all up and he laid
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on servants for us and he told us where we were going and asked us to dinner. I thought the whole thing was very friendly. And from that moment - after all this Service was only about a hundred people I'm proud to have belonged to it. I think its one of the best Services the world's ever seen. And it was - you know, everybody knew everybody by their christian name. And you'd pick up the telephone and say, 'Is that you George?' and I'd say, 'Yes, how many more bloody inefficients are you going to send me? I want somebody decent', you see.

I. Yes.

M. This sort of thing. It was quite informal and really very much a sort of family feeling.

I. I see. Would you - would you say there were any shortcomings?

M. In the Civil Service?

I. Yes.

M. Oh, of course, there must be.

I. Yes?

M. Well, I suppose, we all had a bit of prejudice in that we tended to regard the European still as a bit of a - a special ...

I. Class?

M. Class. Mind you, it worked both ways. Because you musn't let the side down.

I. Yes.

M. I mean, one European misbehaved and a thing happened which I've never seen happen anywhere else. That is the trade union, in other words the Civil Service Association, said to the Government, 'You must get rid of this chap. He's letting us down'.

I. This was a Civil Servant?

M. A Civil Servant.

I. Oh, I see.

M. He was on probation. And he went. The Association more or less said, 'Well, if you don't we shall, you know, make trouble'. So the European was expected to behave himself and expected - I mean things like transfers to malarial climates. You never argued about it. But we used to have trouble with clerks, for instance. They all wanted their turn in Jaffna; the Tamils, naturally. And if they were transferred to a malarial climate, you found all sorts of difficulties. Well, that was another - that was not - a European just did what he was told always. I mean, you'd just know, sometimes at a week's

notice, you'd been moved to some place you didn't particularly want to go to. But there was no question of querying it. I don't know - and that - some of us - I don't think any of us put on dog or behaved in a pompous way. But maybe we felt we were, perhaps, you know, a superior type of being. But that's really for other people to say, you know.

I. Yes, it is.

M. I think we kept a sense of humour anyhow. But after all, you know, the thing - I don't think our successors do - I'm not a good athlete but I got a soccer team going in Puttalam, and I got a soccer team going in Galle. It was great fun and in Puttalam I managed - some of the people in the team were some of the better known criminals. You know, it was all very healthy and ...

I. Yes, I see, yes. Yes. As an O.A. did you find that you were treated as a dogsbody?

M. No, I don't think so. All the titles, quite rightly, were understated. I mean 'Government Agent' is not a pompous title. 'Office Assistant' sounds like a dogsbody. But you were treated as - I mean, the fact that the title carried a certain amount of weight, was the fact that the people who had it did quite a job of work.

I. How did you learn your job as A.G.A.? I mean how ...?

M. I was never an A.G.A. I was only an Office Assistant.

I. No, but presumably you were being trained for that?

M. What, as Assistant you mean?

I. Yes.

M. We hadn't - we hadn't any training. As a matter of fact the people - well, that's not quite true. The people who arrived immediately after the war were pushed straight into jobs because there was lots of vacancies. And of course there had been no intake for some time. I was in the second wave. And I was pushed into Jaffna Kachcheri and I was Cadet. I was not given a job. I was very disappointed because what we all wanted was responsibility. And - but I found quite useful things to do. I mean, I sat on the bench But suddenly the order came from Government that Cadets must now be trained. They must go round with the Government Agent when he went on circuit. They must go out with the policeman on a murder enquiry. I bitterly resented this but did it. So we did get that sort of training. We were taken round and shown ...

- I. You see, for instance when you met Southorn, did he give you any ideas or any instructions?
- M. No.
- I. None whatever?
- M. Well, it was quite informal. We had dinner with him the first day. And the next day, of course, we were all moved up to our stations. So we didn't have much time with him. He - I don't remember. He probably discussed quite a few things at the dinner table quite informally. And we were given a rather pious little booklet when we arrived or before we set off. I think I've got it here. Its a bit of a curiosity really. 'Notes for the information of Cadets appointed to Ceylon'.
- I. Yes, I see.
- M. ? Southorn wrote that himself.
- I. Oh, I see.
- M. I think this is mostly about what clothing and some of its rather silly actually.
- I. What about - were you supposed to pick the brains of your G.A.? And did you? You know what I mean?
- M. How do you mean? You were supposed to keep the work under control and only send it up to the G.A., you know, when it required his personal attention. The O.A. really was - really had to run the office.
- I. No, I was wondering about, you know, about administrative duties. Whether you were supposed to get some of your ideas of what to do, or what not to do, from the G.A.?
- M. Well, all the G.A.'s I worked with - I am just trying to think. Russell was one, Wedderburn was one. There was somebody - Schrader was one. They were all people who were absolutely approachable. Much more approachable than, for instance, their opposite numbers in the L.C.C. And they treated you as a sort of trustworthy personal friend. And you trotted to them with your problems and they would - you could discuss anything with them. But you were expected, of course, to keep the traffic under control. In the Secretariat - there were five assistants in the Secretariat and each one of us worked directly with the Colonial Secretary. We didn't work through the Principal Assistant. And we were supposed to clear - the more ????
- I. Yes, I see. There is - well, it has always been so - there is this empirical British approach. Sending a chap out and letting him learn for himself.
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M. Yes.

I. Through trial and error.

M. Yes.

I. Was that so?

M. Well, in a way, yes. But remember we had to pass exams in law. What was - ? , evidence, criminal procedure, Roman-Dutch civil law, civil procedure and also in accounts. And the people who took those exams - who conducted the examinations were the Attorney-General's staff, the Solicitor-General's staff and the Colonial Auditor and his merry men. And they weren't too easy with us. We - you know, they were quite - reasonably stiff. So when you went to a Police [Court] you had some grounding in the law. And you also understudied - I mean, I sat with Bassett who was Magistrate, Jaffna. I used to take the court actually, one day or two days a week when he was on circuit. I used to postpone the difficult ones obviously. But I used to clear away the small stuff and - all that was before I had my first appointment as a magistrate. I went to Puttalam which is an easy court, with a very nice Bar and people who were very pleasant to deal with. Not a lot of crime.

I. Yes, I see. But, for instance, later on they had certain courses for Cadets in Oxford and Cambridge before they went out.

M. Yes.

I. Do you think that sort of thing would have been useful?

M. Personally I don't. I had this question throughout my life. In the L.C.C. too. And there's, you know, constant argument about bench training - that is learning the job as you go on with it - which, on the whole, I prefer and set training where you get the central people, who really are not good enough, trying to teach something they don't fully understand. It tends to get academic. For instance, as an example, in the L.C.C. one chap who was very keen on this sort of thing produced about ten pages on how to answer the telephone. Well, if an intelligent clerk can't learn how to answer the telephone in less than ten pages in a sort of lecture, well, its time it was given to somebody else, that's how I feel.

I. Yes. Isn't there one argument for this sort of academic training? That while training in the fields could - sometimes it presents - brings a very narrow outlook. You know what I mean. You're in the subject and you can't get away from it.

M. Yes. I must say that on the whole I'm all for learning on the

job, as far as possible. When you supplement that by something - for instance going to the London - the L.C.C. thing. The L.C.C. installed a computer. Well, most of - none of us had ever had anything to do with computers. Well, its quite useful to have a small particular course on a computer so that people, who may have to work with a computer of staffs(?), do have some idea what its about. That sort of specialist teaching. And I'd like to - clerks for instance, you can give them a short course on how to draw up letters, when you say 'Yours sincerely' when you say - in English 'Yours truly', 'Yours faithfully'. Some of them have no idea at all how to draft a letter. But that - its - the trouble is it gets overdone. You get a lot of people whose jobs depend on blowing up training, making a thing of it. And then it begins to degenerate.

- I. Yes, I'm also generally in favour of trial by error. But I was wondering now, in the case of the Civil Servants I would have liked to see them get some training in - in - well, especially in the earlier years, before your time - some training in irrigation work. Just simple engineering techniques.
- M. That's very difficult. That's a particularly difficult thing when you get the layman invading the professional and technical field. The engineers and the professional people don't like it. Now, in my time when I was Cadet, and when I was at Puttalam as magistrate, I had an easy court so I offered my spare time to the A.G.A. Campbell his name was at that time. First rate chap. And I did - I used to be sent out to measure earthwork. Minor road inspector and that sort of thing, about which I knew nothing at all. I mean, the way to learn it was to go and do it really. Because in those days the revenue officer, the A.G.A., was responsible for all the minor roads. And the same, of course, in Anuradhapura. All these irrigation minor tanks [were] under a superintendant minor works, who needed a good deal of supervision. You know, you had to watch them.
- I. Yes, that's just my point. Wouldn't some short training in some of these basics, like measuring, surveying - very elementary stuff but obviously you could only learn these too on the job. But if you had some sort of vague idea in preliminary training.
- M. No harm as long as it doesn't get too theoretical. But there's another point of course that's - in my day the - the administrative Civil Servant did a lot of things that he doesn't do now.
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Everything has got specialised. Well, I mean, take a simple one. All the law courts are run by mercantile lawyers and have been for many years. And even before I left that was beginning. In theory of course, there's no answer to it. In practice, it means you've got to have a lot more courts. They are very slow. There are a lot of postponements and they play into the hands of their dear brothers at the Bar. And justice takes a jolly sight longer. I mean, we wouldn't allow postponements beyond a certain point, you see. 'Either you're ready next time Mr. So-and-So or the case will go by default. We're not going to hold any more'. Well, the technique was to get the clerks to agree to postponements until you'd squeezed all the money you could get out of them and then just leave them high and dry.

I. Yes.

M. Well, now that you've got technicians doing all the technical jobs there isn't the same need for the layman to be trained in ...

I. Yes, I agree. This need gradually went out. But certainly at the turn of the century these sort of elementary instruction - capabilities would have helped A.G.A's in the field, out in the provinces.

M. Its a very knotty one this and I've met it in the L.C.C. too. We had our administrative service, our administrative grade, executive grade and clerical grade. And where in my department for instance, the architects' department, [we were] dealing almost entirely with professional and technical problems. Well, its a very difficult to organise courses. If people are keen and intelligent, they make themselves useful and they learn really as they go along. I'm afraid that still remains my view that's its the best way.

I. Did you find that, despite this empirical approach in the C.C.S. that in the end ...?

M. What do you mean by empirical approach? Exactly?

I. Well, sending ...

M. Rule of thumb, you mean?

I. Rule of thumb.

M. Yes, yes.

I. Did you find that precedence dominated? That it was more often than not a question of routine?

- M. Very difficult to remember. I would have said no. I would have said no. But obviously, well, a great deal of stuff went through chief headmen for instance. You probably - they would, probably follow, you know, tradition and you'd probably accept their recommendation.
- I. Yes.
- M. I don't know whether they have chief headmen now. They probably went long ago.
- I. Did you feel that, for instance, that there was a tendency on the part of the provincial headquarters and Secretariat to quash new ideas? To be somewhat obstructionist?
- M. No.
- I. No?
- M. No. And one very good thing while we're on that subject, of course in some colonies I believe they had their Secretariat staff separate from the rest of the service. You were selected for Secretariat and you stayed there. In Ceylon they kept changing. Its true that - it was Mr. Wait put in one of his reports on me that staff for the Secretariat were hand-picked. I think that's a little exaggeration. There was some tendency to pick people for Secretariats who were regarded as very good. But they weren't a separate service. There's always a tendency - I mean, before I went in to the Secretariat for seven years, very often I'd find myself fighting the Secretariat.
- I. Yes.
- M. Particularly as a junior magistrate. Because a magistrate's a head of department, you see.
- I. Yes.
- M. Or was in those days. And although it was my first appointment I was in the pleasant position of being able to write to Government direct. Which in my stage of development, of course, was quite silly. And I used to have frightful - used to enjoy having a turn-up with the Secretariat.
- I. On what?
- M. Well, for instance, there was a suggestion that as the British car industry was in difficulties, advances for the purchase of cars should be confined to British-made cars. That would rule out the Ford and the Chev, which in those days were the only two vehicles that were really any good for Ceylon conditions. And I remember saying something to the extent that we weren't well enough paid to subscribe charitably to inefficient British
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firms. And, you know, that sort - that sort - that's the only one I can remember. But when I went into the Secretariat I felt at least I had been a poacher for some time. And as a gamekeeper, at least, I was sort of used to the other ...

I. Other side?

M. To being - to being an outsider. I think this is a very important thing and it came up in my last job too, where there is still - as there always are - two schools of thought. A lot of people wanted to turn staff administration into a technical job, with all sorts of training and diplomas and degrees. I've opposed this tooth and nail all my life. And there again we had a system of changing people. A man could be the administrative officer in say the planning division and then suddenly moved into the Secretariat - well, moved into the establishment division. What he would bring would be a complete knowledge of what the planning people thought of establishments and what their particular problems were. That was extremely important.

I. Despite this interchanging in Ceylon I have a suspicion that some times in the Secretariat - at least the Ceylon Secretariat - tended to breed this - what people have called the Secretariat wallah. You know the - the ...

M. Yes. Well, I thought Gimson was a Secretariat wallah when I first met him. When I knew him better I - he received us when we arrived, four Cadets, and he was busy when we went in and he was wearing horn-rimmed spectacles. And he obviously was thinking about something else. He took them off and said, 'Sit down, sit down'. And finally Lucette, who'd been quite a senior officer in the war, got bored with this and said, 'Well, how long do you want to keep us? I mean, if you can't deal with us immediately, we've got some other things we can do', you see. Which rather pulled Gimson up with a jerk. I don't think he was deliberately discourteous when I knew him better later on. Blood, of course, was a real typical Secretariat sort of chap, I think.

I. Yes, I think ...

M. Mind you, Blood ... I think we'll leave him out of it.

I. Ha-ha-ha. Because there was a tendency - and I think you wouldn't have dealt with Stubbs, but Stubbs was very much - he was never in the provinces, he was colonial - he came from the Colonial Office ...

- M. No, no, no. Well, of course, we did get that type. Graeme Thomson I remember was ... But that's rather a different thing. That's the Governor and the Colonial Secretary. I'm not talking about them. I was talking more about the Secretariat staff. There were usually five assistants. I don't think we - I don't think there was a general feeling that we were unapproachable or difficult. But then its difficult to say when one's on the other side. People certainly used to walk into my office and without ...
- I. No, its not a question of being unapproachable. I was thinking that there was a tendency to *...
- M. (?) (?) ? [I intended to say something like 'to clamp down on novel ideas and to obstruct' I think].
- I. Yes, that's right.*
- M. I wouldn't have thought so. The Secretariat was, I think, the most efficient office I've ever worked [in]. The clerks were all sort of, you know, picked and they were a very fine lot. And the relations between the administrative grade and the clerks were excellent. You know, we really did appreciate their work and I think they appreciated the way we dealt with them. Some of them were really brilliant. One or two who were - there was a chap who used to do the Finance Committee memoranda, he could ...
- I. Ceylonese?
- M. Ceylonese, of course, he was Ceylonese.
- I. If I - this brings up two questions, with regard to the British rule as such in the 1920's. Don't you think that in the ultimate sense there was a lack of purpose in British rule? And wasn't efficiency made an end in itself?
- M. Lack of purpose in British rule? To the extent - well, its very difficult to answer that one. To the extent that most people were not fond of politics and weren't very politically-minded ...
- I. Yes.
- M. ... they - what they wanted to do was to have a happy contented district where disease was kept in check and people had enough to eat and that sort of thing. They were more interested in that than in the sort of ...
- I. Political education?
- M. Political sort of stuff. And everyone was for efficiency.
- I. Efficiency as an end in itself?
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- M. No, I don't think so. I thought the Ceylon Government were pretty good. I found this when I came home. In that they - there was a chap L.J.B. Turner who was Director of Statistics and Office Systems and was very much the sort of - what now we call Organisation and Methods. This is in every government department now. But he was really a pioneer in his way. And he studied all the correspondence systems in the kachcheries and the offices and produced the Turner system of filing and correspondence, which was first rate. It was first rate so much so that when I got to my department in London, the Social Welfare, I said to the chief there, 'The filing here is beneath contempt'. And he said, 'Well, what can we do about it?' So I said, 'If you let me have a go at it, I'll see if I can straighten it out'. And I - with Turner's consent - I more or less accepted completely what Turner had done in Ceylon. And that spread from the Welfare Department of the L.C.C. to the ? Department. Its in quite a number of departments now. And even the government filing which was pretty ruddy awful - used to have great books of stuff - had felt the impact. I don't say all this came from Turner. But Turner was given money to study the thing in Europe - not only in England but abroad - and in America.
- I. Yes, this is ...
- M. And that was a drive for efficiency. It was^a badly - the filing systems - correspondence systems were very bad. So I would say it was not so much a preoccupation with efficiency as a willingness to - to reform something that needed reforming.
- I. Yes, I agree. But while that may have been necessary, I was wondering whether this drive for efficiency which there was - and efficiency at the centre and efficiency in the provinces - whether they were so preoccupied with this that they forgot the wider ends of policy?
- M. No, I wouldn't have thought so. I was in Anuradhapura when it was introduced there. And I was in Galle, I think, just after it had been introduced there, if I remember rightly. But that didn't mean I spent much of my day on just filing and office machinery. I used to go round about once a fortnight just to see that the rules of the (?) were being carried out. But I don't know what else we could do. There wasn't much room for sort of policy forming in a (?) like this.
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- I. You didn't feel - you felt that there wasn't much scope for policy - I mean ...
- M. No, no, I don't - I don't recognise what you say about the word for efficiency. Can you put a date on that because I don't see ...
- I. No, say in the 1920's. I mean, I know the British officers and the Civil Service as a whole were very efficiency-conscious. I mean, whatever they were doing - not only the office work but the circuits and all that revenue work - they wanted to do efficiently. But I wonder whether they asked themselves why they were doing it, for what reason, and whether we're trying to - 'Are we doing this to bring - to train Ceylonese to handle matters themselves'. Or, you know, to what end all this.
- M. Well, I don't think it was regarded primarily as a training. And I don't remember any - what I would call any particular drive for efficiency, except in that one field where there was an Augean stables. I mean, the correspondence systems did need - but, I mean, they were just as bad in this country. The whole system of registration and filing and correspondence systems all needed tidying up.
- I. Turner was an efficient officer was he?
- M. Turner was very good indeed. The trouble was that he came up against the Treasury in the end because he found that they were not as perfect and then that of course caused a dreadful row. And the Treasury wouldn't listen to ...
- I. The Ceylon Treasury?
- M. The - no, it wasn't - the Ceylon Treasury, yes, yes. It was Sir Wilfred Woods was head of it at that time. And he was a very tough ...
- I. (?) ?
- M. Well, he was a brilliant chap. He was one of the best men we ever had in the Service. No question about that. So I think honours were a bit easy there. Anyhow he came across - who was the other chap, Wood's assistant¹, who was very - really very, very difficult? Anyhow I think Turner had to leave the Treasury alone but otherwise he did a great deal of good. And although he was specialised on statistics and office systems he wasn't - he was a very practical chap. And he used to go round himself. He never left any of these things to be put in - you know, to somebody else. He used to go round himself a great deal.

1. Bickmore, I think.

- I. Going on what the Donoughmore Commission said, did you feel that the Secretariat in the 1920's was too centralised? Had it become a bottleneck?
- M. Well, yes. I was in the Secretariat - I've forgotten the dates now.
- I. 1927 to - onwards you were there, I think.
- M. Yes. Well, of course, it got worse and worse because we were doing the whole of Government. It was divided into subjects and each assistant - I mean, I might have M for Medicine and A for Agriculture and I'd help the clerks, registrars on the subjects.
- I. And did you deal directly with the Governor or the Colonial Secretary?
- M. I would deal directly with the Colonial Secretary. Not the Principal Assistant. Mark Young was Principal Assistant when I first went there. And he was one of the finest chaps I've ever met. Very efficient and very modest and extremely nice. And when I got to a difficulty I'd send a paper along to him and he rang me up and said, 'Look, I'm sorry. I can't do your papers. You go direct to the Colonial Secretary. If you're out of your depth do the best you can and make a suggestion rather than - but put it straight to the Colonial Secretary.'
- I. Who was that?
- M. Mark Young. Oh, who was the Colonial Secretary? At that time ...
- I. Fletcher?
- M. No, it was before Fletcher's time. I can't remember. No, ...
- I. Clementi was there for a time.
- M. Yes, not in my time. People I remember were - there was Fletcher, there was ...
- I. Tyrrell?
- M. Tyrrell, Wedderburn. There was a chap from India - Pa ...?¹
- I. No, it doesn't matter much.
- M. The chap whose sons were in the Colonial Office and one was killed, blown-up in Palestine. I've forgotten his name.
- I. So it was realised that it was a bottleneck? Did they try to do anything to ...?
- M. Well, it was all awaiting the new Constitution, you see. Where you had seven ministers to deal with - or seven executive committees to deal with the subjects which were all dealt with
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1. Battershill, I think.

actually in the Secretariat. I don't think that system could have gone on indefinitely. I don't think - I don't think its a bad thing to have too much work and too little staff. There's a lot in the Parkinsons law, you know, that if you - well, there's a lot of truth in that. If you start - once you start increasing staff, staff makes staff.

I. If I may turn to this early 1920's - I don't know whether you really came up against this, it was before your Secretariat time - there was this Ceylonisation controversy. The question of higher employment of Ceylonese. Would you say that it was a policy at that time, at the early stage, to shunt the Ceylonese into the judicial line rather than into the administrative line? There was certainly a feeling of this.

M. I wouldn't - its difficult for me to answer that one because, you see, I had nothing to do with the administrative postings and recruitment. That was the Principal Assistant's job.

I. Oh, I see.

M. And the Colonial Secretary. The two between them. It didn't go any lower than that. Let's see. The system was - wasn't it? - that people - there was an outside examination for English people and for - your father came in on a ...

I. Outside one.

M. If I remember rightly, he was West Indian, wasn't he?

I. Yes.

M. And he came in as an outside candidate?

I. That's right.

M. In London was it?

I. Yes.

M. And several did, didn't they?

I. Yes.

M. That was a higher standard ...

I. Oh, I see.

M. ... than was required of the purely Ceylonese local candidates.

I. Yes, I see.

M. I'm speaking very much - dangerously, from memory. I mean, but - there was your father. There was another West Indian.

I. Rock.

M. Rock. I don't know whether their tours were mainly judicial. I think Rock's were.

I. They were mainly.

M. But I wouldn't know whether there was any definite policy.

- I. Well, this controversy was at the early part of the century and Arunachalam - he was a Civil Servant - brought it up. But also in the 1920's I have seen a memo by Bowes arguing against the high employment of Ceylonese.
- M. By whom?
- I. By Bowes. F. Bowes - Freddy. He was ...
- M. Oh, Freddy Bowes.
- I. Freddy Bowes.
- M. Oh, yes, yes.
- I. And one of his arguments was that the stability of Government would be undermined. Because this ...
- M. I don't think it was that. I worked under a Ceylonese in the Secretariat, you know. It was Perera, T.D. Perera I think it was. And we got along very well together. In fact this was on the reorganisation of the Secretariat, on one of the changes. And he was senior to me and I worked under him. No difficulty at all. Provided they were good I mean. I do think, mind you, on this subject that it was very much easier for a European in many ways. Its very difficult in a place like Ceylon where caste is never mentioned but its there all the time.
- I. Yes.
- M. Where if you've - if you've too many relatives and too - I mean, they're at you the whole time. Whereas an European who had no Ceylonese roots or, I mean, he was (?) ...
- I. Yes, he could take an independent line. Well, actually
- M. Same for a West Indian. I mean, the outsider, I wouldn't draw any distinction as such between a European and a West Indian.
- I. No, one of Bowes' principal arguments was that the people would not trust the orders of the Ceylonese. And he says that [quote], 'In the oriental mind there [ran]' - there runs he said, 'there ran a streak of distrust of his own brother and number'. Would you comment on this view.
- M. Well, I would say - answering straight off the cuff which is the(?) thing to do. It depended a good deal where you're talking about. I mean, there's all the difference in the world between Colombo and Anuradhapura. When you realise that Freeman, who was a retired English Government Agent, was - represented Anuradhapura in Parliament the whole time, from the time, you know, they had elected members to the time he
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died. He was opposed once I think and the chap who opposed him was a Colombo lawyer and lost his deposit. The people certainly didn't trust Ceylonese lawyers, who didn't visit - this was a malarial jungle and not at all attractive. And the truth was that the ordinary politician left it severely alone.

I. Yes.

M. Well, that's what happened. Freeman of course was a - a bit of a fanatic in many ways. But he was an Englishman. He was freely elected by that province and no one ever dared oppose him. I believe - I'm speaking again, doing this from memory - he was opposed once and the description of the meeting where the chap said, 'I've never seen you before'. And one of the audience said, 'Well, I have seen you once. You said you'd represent me in a case and you took the money and I never saw you again'. You know, that sort of thing. Well, those sort of stories may be synthetic but the truth of it is no one ever successfully opposed Freeman. Freeman had gained the confidence of the people as Government Agent and they trusted him. He used to walk round the villages. We had a curious system. Because although he opposed Government on many things - we used to play tennis with him almost every day - and every free weekend I used to go out with him. He used to take me out walking round the villages. And he was always saying, 'They starve in the villages'. And this is one of the subjects you've mentioned, this question of chenas. Very difficult. Wedderburn was Government Agent. Absolutely sincere, absolutely honest. He had a phobia that the whole place would go like parts of New Zealand where the dustbowls - you know, once you'd burnt off your ...

I. Wedderburn had a phobia?

M. Yes. He thought they'd simply destroy the fertility of the soil if we didn't keep chenas very closely under control. But Freeman said, 'Of course, that people weren't getting enough food by this limited amount [of chena permits]'.

I. And what did you think of the controversy?

M. I think - I think Wedderburn was right. Obviously it was the unpopular line. But I think Wedderburn was right and I think Freeman was emotional and wrong.

I. What sort of man was Freeman?

- M. Freeman was a fanatic, in the sense of devotion to the interests of the people of the North-Central Province.
- I. You thought his views were rather extreme?
- M. No, I wouldn't say so. I don't think I followed his views at all. I think in particular cases his judgment was not always detached. He was a queer chap in many ways. Simple in some ways. I mean he ...
- I. Was he naive and guileless?
- M. He was naive. Well, I mean, one of his favourite recreations was to go to the cinema. Whenever he went to Colombo...
- I. I see.
- M. ... he used to go. He loved the sort of rather sentimental cinema films. Certainly slightly out of character from the Freeman I knew in Anuradhapura. You couldn't help liking him. And you couldn't help respecting him. I mean, he never ...
- I. Was he impractical? Someone said he ...
- M. Yes, I think he was - probably.
- I. If I may - if I may ...
- M. I liked him. And so did Wedderburn for that matter. I mean, he called us all sorts of dirty names but we respected him. And I think on the whole he respected us.
- I. If I may enter this chena controversy, ...
- M. Yes.
- I. Chenaing in Anuradhapura had gone on for a long time and if it was going to become a dustbowl it would have already become one. And secondly the point was that much of the jungle was useless timber anyway, from the commercial point of view. And certainly if it was possible for them to have settled cultivation under tanks, where tanks were available - at least where water was available - all the better. But where it was not possible and where they needed food I don't see why they shouldn't chena this useless jungle. In Anuradhapura as distinct from the south-west.
- M. I think its hopeless now to try to resurrect the facts as they were at that particular time. It would depend very much on - on memory and a very subjective sort of thought about it. All I can say is that I know Wedderburn - I respected Wedderburn as one of the most - fairest minded people I've ever met. And certainly he was not a cruel or a harsh man. But he was a Scot and thrifty and he was really very worried about this whole problem. Freeman, on the other hand, would call us baby-murderers and all sorts of things and would get very
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excited about it. And again he was passionately sincere. I mean, we used to go round - we even got to the point of sometimes disagreeing as to whether a village had adequate reserves of food or not. And he used to say, 'Look at these - their', - what do you call them - 'granaries are empty'. And we would go round the back and find they weren't. You know, there was that sort of - maybe we were a little prejudiced too. But I wouldn't like to say now who was right and who was wrong. Surely the - one of those(?) things(?) we saw on television only yesterday. New Zealand - parts of New Zealand - I hadn't known New Zealand had this trouble: where the original colonists had burnt the forest and it had never returned

I. Yes, but this was something that had been done in the nineteenth century. And after all, I think New Zealand's example may relate to forests in a useful area, a fertile area, but in Hambantota, as Woolf has pointed out and in Anuradhapura which is very similar, in Nuwarakalawiya and Tamankaduwa, much of the area was useless anyway. And that's why one can't see why the peasants shouldn't be allowed to burn this useless scrub.

M. Well, they were, of course, allowed - quite a lot of permits were issued. Don't think there were none. All I would say is I wouldn't care to express an opinion on this now. Both sides were bitterly, utterly sincere. Wedderburn was not a cruel or harsh man.

I. Yes, I agree.

M. He was a very competent chap. He perhaps inclined - he'd been brought up in a - I mean, brought up and educated in Scotland and their standards are thrifty, hard working. I mean, he was a man of very good family. He wasn't just a Scots peasant or anything of that sort. Anyhow I wouldn't like to - to - one can be wise after the event ...

I. Yes.

M. ... and the whole thing was a very difficult thing, you see. The village people would let their paddy cultivation go the moment they thought ...

I. They could chena land?

M. ... that they were going to get something from the Government, you see. This wasn't entirely their fault. Malaria was a thing we couldn't cope with in those days. We hadn't got the weapons to deal with it. And a good many of them were debilitated and lacking in energy. But it was a tragic business.

If you gave a particular village reason to think that Government would rally round and feed them, they let their tank go, let the bunds go. You know, not keep it in repair.

I. I would like to return to that later. If I could come to the political aspect again. In 1924 Manning and the Secretary of State established this new constitution.

M. Yes.

I. And what strikes me about this constitution is that it was based on very similar principles to the legislatures in the first colonial empire in America, which had proved unworkable.

M. Yes.

I. And others in Jamaica, which in the nineteenth century, had also proved unworkable. And it seems rather odd that they should set up such a constitution, which, when you look at it, is based on bad constitutional principles.

M. This I wouldn't like to say anything actually. When did I first go to the Secretariat? You've got the ...

I. 1927.

M. '27.

I. May, 1927. This was ...

M. All I remember of the Secretariat at that time was part of our duties occasionally to go and sit behind a screen and listen to the debates. And they were terrible. I thought they were really ...

I. Terrible in what way?

M. Well, silly, you know.

I. Silly? They were - were they not precise? Were they going round the point?

M. Well, yes. Sort of ...

I. Amorphous?

M. They were - I don't know. Just seemed to me a lot of hot air. A lot of (?) ...

I. (?) ?

M. But I do rather agree that at that time the situation really was a sort of Governor's Government. And the elected members were merely in opposition. And, of course, a lot of time was wasted really in attacking the Government on one thing or another. However I'm really not competent to express much of an opinion. I'm not interested in politics anyhow. All I can say is that some of the most tiresome hours of my life have been spent sitting behind that screen listening to the Legislative Council. We all hated it. We all hated having to go there. At least ...

- I. (?)
- M. Well, no, Battershill used to rather enjoy it actually.
- I. This was part of your duty was it?
- M. At particular times it was part of our job to keep in touch with what was going on.
- I. You see, Sir Hugh Clifford called it 'an unworkable constitution' But Sir Herbert Stanley later said that - he said that under this constitution 'cooperation outweighed opposition'. Do you think that was so?
- M. What's that?
- I. Cooperation outweighed opposition.
- M. I don't know quite what that means actually. Who said this?
- I. Stanley.
- M. Stanley. You mean that ...
- I. Well ...
- M. Not bother about the machinery but to - set up to make it work, you mean?
- I. Well, whereas Clifford said that it had in practice proved unworkable, Stanley said that, in practice, these politicians had cooperated more than they opposed. In effect he said that.
- M. That I really wouldn't know. I ...
- I. And what did you think of Sir Herbert Stanley? As a Governor? He seems to - as far as I can picture him - he seems to be rather a colourless sort.
- M. Well, you see, I never had much contact with the Governor. The only contact I had with him was something blew up on the hydro-electric scheme, I think. And we had hastily to go to the - to Queen's House rather late in the evening, when we were all thinking about going home. And the first thing he did was to hand us a good stiff whisky and soda all the way round. So naturally I thought he was rather a good Governor. But I didn't have - you see, our papers went to the Colonial Secretary. The Colonial Secretary addressed the Governor. We had no direct - Hugh Clifford used to break the rules I believe in - Battershill told me it was quite common in his time for the telephone to go and you picked it up and a voice would boom in your ear and say, 'Is that Battershill? Its the Governor speaking. I want you to do so-and-so and so-and-so. And I want it done immediately', you see. Ringing up the actual assistant concerned direct. But I don't think - if I was there in Clifford's time it was only for a short time. No, I
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think Stanley - he was a very diplomatic sort of ...

I. Quiet?

M. Yes, yes, a bit - a bit pompous I think. A bit worthy too.

I. Oh. Well, I'm trying to get a picture of him. I haven't really established what sort of Governor he was like. What about these Councils, these political attacks in Council. What did you - did you find yourself attacked personally? In Council?

M. No. No, I was never attacked in Council. When I was Secretary of the Select Committee on the hydro-electric scheme and the Government electrical undertakings, they used to spend the best part of every meeting squabbling over the minutes of the last one. And as I looked after the minutes, of course, I was for it. Senanayake particularly used to bash about and, you know - they all wanted written in the minutes what they'd said. And there were various ...

I. They were concentrating on trivial points were they?

M. Well, partly trivial and partly there was a good deal of ...

I. Pompous?

M. ... feuding about chap who was supposed to have invented a hydro-electric scheme. A Ceylonese called Wimalasurendra. And, well, [there was] a good deal of evidence that somebody else had originally thought of it. Anyhow it wasn't a matter of any great importance. But they were more concerned with that sort of thing than whether we should have another power station here, there or - and so on. And I - that's the only time I ever had trouble (?) with the members at all. They did once or twice criticise me for the form of the minutes but they would have criticised whoever ... And I said, 'If there's any criticism you'll have to take it to the Colonial Secretary and find out what he thinks, and if charges can be framed they should be framed'. But it all blew over. In the end to justify myself, as we found nothing would satisfy them, we said, 'Alright we'll have a shorthand writer'. And we had a verbatim record of the proceedings. We won't write minutes at all. And even then they challenged - well, no, it was the Chairman who first challenged what the shorthand writer had put down.

I. Who was the Chairman?

M. Fletcher, Murchison Fletcher.

I. And they ...

- M. It was rather amusing really because he said, 'These minutes, they are not accurate. Have a look at this. I'm supposed to have said this'. And I said, 'Well, as a matter of fact, I'm sorry sir, you did'. Because de Glanville, who was the head of the department, and I both wrote it down at the time because we thought it was ...
- I. (?) ?
- M. ... something that ... - perhaps you'd better remove that out of your record but ...
- I. No, I was ...
- M. That indicates the sort of feeling there was about - its all very - I mean, you know, there are several ways of recording meetings. But the only practical way really is to record - discussed the future of so and so, agreed and decided and put down a decision. If you can't do that, well, there's no point in writing minutes really.
- I. Yes.
- M. And they never agreed about anything. I mean ...
- I. Regarding these politicians in the 1920's - there were lots of personal attacks in Council were there?
- M. By politicians on Government officers?
- I. On Government officers.
- M. They used to try, yes. My recollection is a bit hazy about this. But I remember one debate about a railway accident where Woods - Woods was a very fine Council man, beautiful clear speech and witty and to the point. And he used to get landed with defending the Government very often because he was the best man they had really. That's the only one I really remember. I believe there were cases where - I don't think it was a very serious - I don't think anyone was very much frightened of being attacked by the State Council.
- I. What about in the field? Was there much political interference in the field? Government Agents and A.G.A's found politicians going over their heads?
- M. Not, I don't think, in my time in the provinces. Whether later on when they had committees - I remember somebody said that whenever he did a report on anything he made seven copies because they'd always petition all the ministers and he'd save time to have the thing ready. I don't know whether that was an exaggeration. But I haven't - I really wasn't in the provinces on the - you're thinking about the Donoughmore - on the Donoughmore ...?
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- I. Well, I was wondering whether it had started even in the 1920's. You see, I was trying to establish that. How did the Civil Servants take to this sort of criticism?
- M. On the whole I think they - they rather despised and disliked the politicians. And I think most of them took their line and said, you know, 'don't like it, lump it'. I mean ...
- I. They took it in their stride?
- M. Well, they didn't - they weren't deflected from doing what they thought was right by ...
- I. But it annoyed them?
- M. I can't remember any instances at the moment. We had a great commission of enquiry into a slightly crazy chap in Anuradhapura who claimed a lot of land. And I think we were a bit annoyed because they gave him some land quite unnecessarily.
- I. Who was this?
- M. I've forgotten his name now. He was a well-known character. He used to write his petitions - they were all addressed to, 'Father, Mother, Rajah, King and God'. This was his normal address. And when he came to see me he always used to bring a bunch of flowers which he picked from my garden as he came up, you see. What was his name? He was crazy. I mean, he used to do - whenever we had the King's birthday - he used to do somersaults. Can you ...? No.
- Mrs. M. We used to see him coming up the path picking the flowers and then presenting them to me. I can't remember his name. I don't think ...
- M. Anyhow that's the only one I can remember. And the only point about that really was I think everybody thought the Government made rather a fool of themselves. They sent the Attorney-General down with a (?) (?) to make an enquiry into this chap's claims. And then more I think to pacify him, they gave him something. But that wasn't quite the sort of thing that you're thinking of?
- I. No. Also I was going to come to the Donoughmore Constitution. But can you remember this man Goonesinha?
- M. He was a labour leader wasn't he?
- I. Yes.
- M. Yes.
- I. Did you have any dealings with him at all?
- M. I had no personal contact with him at all. But I seem to remember seeing him - or at least I know he came crawling into the Secretariat. He'd been running a strike, a ten day strike.
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It was - and then finally - this wasn't anti-European or even anti-manager. It was anti some Ceylonese policemen, I think finally.

I. Yes.

M. All I remember is that they burnt the fire engine, which was a brand new one - cost about £3,000. The police were confined to barracks and finally somebody opened fire and five people - one or two innocent bystanders were killed, as always happens. And Goonesinha had started this and couldn't stop it. And he came crawling to the Secretariat with, I think, with his tail between his legs. That's what I was told. But I didn't see him. We always regarded him as - I mean, all this is frightfully libellous - but we all regarded him as a complete crook. I mean, a man who ...

I. Opportunist?

M. He had a bodyguard of redshirts. He had two or three quite expensive cars. All this had come out of the subscriptions of the wretched labourers. I - the impression I had of the chap was that he was a complete crook. Who was just exploiting the general tendency to encourage trade unionism under proper and reasonable control in all the colonies. And he sort of cashed in on that I think.

I. Oh, I see. That was Government policy in the 1920's was it?

M. I don't know what date it was but there was a great move from the Colonial Office to have sort of trade unions and ...

I. Oh, that must have been in the 1930's. Because the opinion I get was that Goonesinha - at least trade union activities in the 1920's were considered rather seditious. I was wondering why? In Ceylon?

M. I don't know that anyone took him as seriously as that. This - I think there was a point raised about his redshirt bodyguards. To whether anyone was allowed to have almost troops in a uniform. Whether this broke any particular law or anything I don't know. I don't think anyone took him very seriously. I don't know what happened to him in the end.

I. Yes, in 1923 or '26 he led a strike and I know he was looked on in horror by the European officials. But in 1920 - in the late 20's when you were there someone in the Secretariat wrote a minute saying, 'I don't think Mr. Goonesinha is as black as he is painted out to be'. This was over some other strike in 1929. So there seems to be a change.

- M. I don't think he was a man of great weight(?) or any harm. I don't think anyone took him very seriously. I'm afraid I regarded him simply as a man who exploited the possibilities of trade unions among a lot of innocents. And took money off them.
- I. Took money off them?
- M. For himself. But whether I had any evidence on which ...
- I. Yes, mostly an, an impression was it?
- M. I remember the impression but I don't remember, you know, the detail that it was based on. He used to dress up in a sort of silly way.
- I. In 1929 when the Ceylon Government passed this labour law - can you remember that?
- M. No.
- I. It was refused - it was sent back by the Colonial Office but that was a Labour Government then in charge. You can't remember?
- M. I can't remember this, no. Was this 1929?
- I. 1929, when Sydney Webb was ...
- M. Yes.
- I. ... Secretary of State.
- M. I was in the Colonial Office with Sydney Webb.
- I. Oh, were you? September 1930 that was.
- M. Yes, but I, of course, had nothing to do with Ceylon. They don't give you your own country.
- I. Country.
- M. I was concerned with the Perak hydro-electric scheme in Malaya, and Hong Kong.
- I. Another aspect of this political field is this - yes, events in India. Did you keep these in mind? Did you reflect on them?
- M. I don't know what the answer to that is. I suppose ...
- I. Gandhi ...
- M. ... we read about them. When Gandhi came to Colombo, I remember that particularly because a friend of mine, who was half Polish and was an artist employed in the Education Department, went along out of curiosity to see what he could see. And came back saying the whole thing was scandalous and it was an absolute stunt. This chap was sort of being exhibited and exploited like a sort of popular show. I don't think I personally took the same view of Gandhi that, you know, the world at large seems to have taken: you know, "he's a great
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spiritual leader" and all the rest of it. But India was a very remote - I always felt India was very remote. Nothing to do with

I. With Ceylon?

M. I met one or two Indian officers who came over. Forest officers in particular. But I felt that, you know, they weren't as good as we were.

I. No, didn't you feel - I was wondering whether any Civil Servants felt that Indian events might take place in Ceylon? Whether this mass move could also arise in Ceylon? And terrorist activities as there were a few in India or whether ...?

M. Yes. That's one thing I - we - so far as I'm concerned I never heard of or never thought of, never gave a - that one's own life might ever be in danger. I never carried a firearm except in Anuradhapura - out on circuit I used to have a shotgun for bears. Because bears were nasty. I never carried it myself. I think the muhandiram there was a rather keen shot and he used to carry the gun and use it occasionally. But the idea that anyone - I mean, I've been out on land sales and carried thousands of rupees on my - and never thought of security. My own property I would leave all over the place. I had a camera and a bicycle and when I went on the jungle path I'd leave it on the main road. In this country it would have been pinched in five minutes but one trusted everybody. There was never any suggestion that - whether we should follow the Indian track - obviously I felt that in the end all - I mean - the stage that all these colonies were going to determine their own futures. I don't think I've ever opposed or quarrelled with that. My original opposition was not to their leaving the empire or undermining British position in the world(?)

I. But to having a democratic base?

M. But [that] there were limits [i.e. that Government's thinking was limited] to one form of constitution whether they [the people] wanted it or not and that was the only possibility.

I. Yes, I see.

M. The trouble in Rhodesia, I think, is that what this Government has said is that they must progress as quickly as possible to majority rule. There is one form of constitution, [viz] counting heads and that is that. What happens after we've handed them over is nobody's business. I mean, I've been shocked at the things I've seen from Ceylon. Well, even this week, there were about ten well-known names from Ceylon - de Saram was one of them - where the Privy Council set aside

sentences of ten years and confiscation of all property for rebelling and treason against the Crown. Well, if I've seen any news of this anywhere it must have been tucked around a corner because I couldn't remember. Yet all these people had their - well, that's ...

I. There was a coup definitely.

M. This was unthinkable under the rules [as] I remember it [sic]. I mean, the idea that anyone would use violence against any particular officers. Something we wouldn't ...

I. Yes, I see. So would you say that when you were in the Secretariat for instance there was never any fear that Indian type - the Indian type of political movement would spread to Ceylon?

M. No.

I. You never thought that ...?

M. As far as I remember it was never contemplated as a possibility.

I. You didn't discuss it socially over dinner?

M. No. That's just unthinkable. India I always regarded - speaking after a long interval - it was thirty years or more - my memory's terrible - but India always seemed to me a very remote place. And entirely different from Ceylon, where communications were good, where the people were educated - I mean, the illiterate percentage was, compared with India, something quite different - where the people had a sense of humour and where there was a generally - a generally happy state of affairs. I remember once I was out with my court clerk at Puttalam and we'd just done a sort of investigation on the spot into a murder. And I arrested the village bully and took him - the clerk and I just took him along. He'd - it just occurred to me as we were going along, 'this is a queer thing. If this chap's gang' - the gang were all standing round looking rather - 'suddenly decided to rescue him we should look pretty silly'. But it hadn't occurred to me until that moment and I'm not particularly brave. But it was just unthinkable. Law and order was law and order and people didn't - if they - it shocked me when I first went out there. I went from Oxford where of course you believe in nothing and you were very clever and witty and all the rest of it. I went to Jaffna where some of the bar were pretty awful rogues, but they were all clever chaps. And what suddenly shook me was that when they talked about British justice they really were sincere - that it did mean something to them. It wasn't just, you know, trying to be popular or sort of ...

- I. Yes. If I may turn to a side aspect, can you remember this Suriya Mal movement?
- M. No.
- I. This anti-Poppy Day?...?
- M. No, I don't know. I saw that in your list and it doesn't strike any chord at all.
- I. No, that in itself is a useful fact because you see it was a ...
- M. Was it supposed to be island ...?
- I. Yes. Symbolic one, yes.
- M. Were they putting up some alternative - some Buddhist emblem or something?
- I. Yes. Suriya mal is a type of flower, you see.
- M. Oh, yes, Suriya, yes, yes.
- I. And ...
- M. No, I don't remember anything about this at all.
- I. ... some of the nationalists, and especially the Marxists in the 1930's, took this up. I think more as a symbolic gesture. But the fact that you didn't take it seriously is of significance in itself.
- M. I don't remember. You know, its the first time I've seen any - anything about it.
- I. What - one thing - a feeling I got about Sir Murchison Fletcher was that he was unpopular with the Civil Servants because he didn't defend them from these political attacks?
- M. Well, its a question of how far one should talk about this sort of thing. He wasn't popular with the Civil Service - they didn't trust him. But they weren't the only people who didn't trust him.
- I. Oh, even the politicians ...?
- M. Well, he was - I think he was over promoted really. He came from ...
- I. He came from outside?
- M. He came from Hong Kong, from a career largely concerned, I think, with committee work. And what we didn't - what nobody liked about him was that he would say something and then say the opposite. You know.
- I. I see.
- M. We used to have jokes about it actually.
- I. Service stories?
- M. Mmm? Yes, yes.
- I. When the Donoughmore Commission came did they consult individual G.A's and ...?
- M. That I can't remember. I believe so but you'll get that in
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the Donoughmore Report of course. There's a report of evidence isn't there? I think senior - I think the - anyone who asked to see them was allowed to be interviewed. I don't know. I didn't ask myself and probably my level didn't come into it. It may have been just the higher grades.

- I. What is your personal view of their grant of universal franchise?
- M. Well, this is where I end really because I have no remedy. I'm not clever enough to tell you how to find the answers to these things. All I feel is that the universal type of suffrage type of constitution meant that power would go into the hands of one community only. And that the minority communities would be persecuted. And that has, I think, happened.
- I. Yes, I see.
- M. Seeing this I think - I was very fond of the Tamils. Jaffna was my first station. Tamil - and the way they've been treated I think is absolutely scandalous. Mind you, I'm not fully apprised of what goes on in Ceylon because it doesn't get into the papers.
- I. Yes. Did you have - feel - come to this, what I might call, communal implication - as soon as it was granted. I mean, as universal franchise was suggested did you feel that this communal trouble was bound to arise?
- M. Yes, I think so. I think so, yes.
- I. I'm wondering whether it is a retrospective thought rather than ...?
- M. No, I don't think so. I did at the time. Mind you, again perhaps I didn't take enough interest in constitutions and parties and I'm not really very interested in them, you see. Mind you at the end of the war - I worked in the Colonial Office at the end of the war - at the end of the war I was invited to stay on. But I couldn't agree with the establishment officer about the terms of staying on because he said I couldn't rate permanent pension immediately. I'd have to wait. And I said nothing doing, I'm going back to the L.C.C. But it also was - this was the point - although that was a very - I was gatecrashing a closed service and was very pleased at getting in. The idea of spending the rest of my working life dealing with constitutions was appalling. I mean, frankly they bored me to tears. Its not my ...
- I. Not your line?
- M. Not my work at all, no. I hate politics. I think they're a disease.
- I. And what about the Constitution as a whole, what did you think of it?
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- M. The Donoughmore?
- I. Yes.
- M. Well, at the time I thought it was not practical. I mean, they had no ministers. They had committees, and, as far as I remember, they had enormous agendas and the committees spent about three hours squabbling over the first two items. And then would get tired and pass on the rest. I mean, that's not unknown of committees in this country. I mean, there's a technique of presenting an agenda to a committee so that your difficult item comes at the moment when you've more or less drawn their fire.
- I. Yes.
- M. And, I mean, the L.C.C. - this constitution is modelled on the L.C.C.
- I. That's why I'm very interested in your views.
- M. Well, I used to have the lowest possible opinion of Ceylon politicians. And listening to the twaddle they talked. But I must in all honesty say I found just the same twaddle talked in the L.C.C. I didn't - I didn't have a lot to do with the Council side. I didn't attend Council debates, except once or twice when some particular subject interested me. But I had to attend the Establishment Committee regularly. And I had to present departmental affairs to the Establishment Committee. And honestly - I think they were straighter than the Ceylonese people - but they were certainly not as clever, I don't think.
- I. Do you think that these Committees were rather cumbersome and very slow?
- M. Well, that was the trouble. They had an enormous agenda. Long - you know, forty items and it was impossible to give them full time.
- I. Any other shortcomings in the Committee system?
- M. Well, I was pretty - I was in the Secretariat dealing only with the Public Services Commission. I didn't have to attend the Committees. And the people - naturally the Secretaries talked about them.
- I. Yes.
- M. The Secretaries tended to ... I mean, the Speaker was supposed to have rung up his Secretary and said, 'Here's a reference on the subject of so-and-so, Just tell them what my views are will you'. And the Secretary had to invent views. I mean, he didn't give him any lead at all.
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- I. I see. And ...
- M. No, it wasn't the Speaker. It was one of the ministers, the Minister of Local Government it was.
- I. Oh, I see.
- M. That's not necessarily true but that's what - no - well, it was the Secretary himself who told me. Newnham could tell you more about this, I think.
- I. Yes. And how - obviously this change called for a lot of adaptation on the part of the Colonial Secretary in particular, and even perhaps the Principal Assistant. Do you know how Sir Francis Tyrrell took to the change?
- M. I think his main concern was to see that the Public Service remained clean, as regards appointments and promotions. And that the Public Service was not victimised or badly treated. For instance there was a move by Senanayake to reduce the percentage on the W. and O.P. fund, or something of that sort, Tyrrell was worried about I know. As a matter of fact I've a couple of letters, personal letters, from Tyrrell - I won't show you because they're really personal. I wrote to him sort of apologising for retiring and saying, you know, that he might think that somebody else was dodging his duty and so forth; but I really couldn't stick it any longer and I'm off. And I had a couple of very nice letters. And he does mention one or two Public Service matters where he was worried. Of course, the people who stayed behind - the Colonial Office worked the situation out by pinching a good many of them and sending them to other colonies, giving them promotion.
- I. I was wondering if there was much friction between Tyrrell and the ministers?
- M. I wouldn't have thought so. I wouldn't have necessarily known.
- I. When you were Assistant Chief Secretary, weren't you under him?
- M. Yes. But he would attend the Council meetings and the Committee meetings but I wouldn't be there. And I wouldn't know what happened. I don't know. I was called into the Finance Committee one day, where the three officers, the Financial Secretary, the Chief Secretary, were sitting and all the rest of them were having what seemed to be a free fight.
- I. This is the ministers?
- M. Well, yes, the members of the Finance Committee.
- I. Finance Committee. And - no, I was wondering whether you ever had occasion to sort of meet one of these Officers-of-state after they had attended some meeting and hear some of their comments?
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- M. Well, naturally they blew off steam occasionally.
- I. Over what in particular? The squabbling?
- M. Yes. I mean this sort of - this distasteful business of having to sit through hours of argument. But not all - in this case the argument wasn't directed against the three Officers-of-state at all.
- I. Yes.
- M. As far as I remember. That's the only time I've ever been to the Finance Committee. The Chief Secretary wanted some paper in a hurry and I had to run in with it.
- I. Did the three Officers-of-state find themselves in a rather difficult position?
- M. Well, they were, of course, the Public Services Commission. And we didn't have an executive council did we in those days?
- I. No.
- M. Well, the idea was that the Public Services Commission would keep the recruitment and promotion clean. And so they did as far - and deal with punishment.
- INTERRUPTION
- M. As you realised at the beginning, its so long ago that one's in danger of being inaccurate because of difficulty in remembering.
- I. Certainly as far as historical opinion goes, the feeling seems to be that the early Officers-of-state - well, inevitably there was some friction and - between them and the ministers and - would you say that the ministers were rather difficult to deal with? I mean, were they rather objectionable in their attitudes?
- M. I think the system was largely to blame. I'm speaking again from memory but as far as I remember the - of course the last word was with the Public Services Commission. And I don't think the ministers ever liked that. They wanted - well, after all, they all wanted power patronage really.
- I. Yes, I see.
- M. That's really why the Public Services Commission was set-up.
- I. Set-up.
- M. Where I'm not able to help you - I don't know how far it succeeded elsewhere. Mulhall who succeeded me in a number of jobs in Ceylon, and was secretary to the Public Services Commission, was later chairman of the Public Services Commission in - in the Gold Coast I think it was. Ghana, before it became ... Certainly in West Africa in at least one place.
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I don't know how far we were successful. In keeping appointments and promotions clean and in dealing properly with discipline cases. So that people got a fair hearing and there was no question of - I don't know how that goes. Curiously enough I was up against an example of this not very long ago. Sitting on a selection board for the Civil Service Commission which I do from time to time. And a Ceylonese applied for one of the jobs. And he was a Burgher. And he had been sacked for misconduct from his Ceylon appointment. And he said, 'Well, its simply because I'm a Burgher'. He was in the Excise Department. He said, 'I took the lid off a whole lot of scandals and they decided to get rid of me. That's all there is to it'. I don't know whether he was appointed or not in the end. Because we reported on this to the Civil Service Commission. I mean, a man having been in a Commonwealth country and having been dismissed, whether he was eligible really to be considered again. But I wouldn't have been at all surprised if it had been true.

- I. Now, regarding the Officers-of-state in the 1930's. Now, the Financial Secretary, for instance, had power over other matters too, in that he could say that this is financially - the scheme was bad. And in that way he could ...
- M. Yes, well, the Finance Officer I think the moment they - this was the Donoughmore Commission, wasn't it?
- I. Yes.
- M. The moment the Donoughmore Constitution came in, my impression was that the Finance Officer tried to get as much power as possible. Because - this was Sir Wilfred Woods - because otherwise the country would be in a mess.
- I. Yes, I see. He tried to keep a check, did he?
- M. Yes. I think both he and his assistant. Bickmore was his assistant.
- I. Yes.
- M. Very able chap. And both of them, of course, as straight as a dye. I mean ...
- I. This would have ...
- M. ... the good of Ceylon weighed with them more than anything else. But I think Woods was terrified of the country being landed into a complete financial mess.
- I. So was there some friction because of this? Between the ...?
- M. I wouldn't be surprised but I don't know. I really don't know.
- I. What about the politicians of the time? Did you have any
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dealings with - personal dealings at all with any?

- M. Only as secretary of this commission on the hydro-electric scheme, where nearly all the leading politicians were members. And I remember I had a bit of a tiff with the Speaker, who came and tried to influence the transfer of a relation. And I hadn't realised what he wanted to see me about. He just came in to see me. And when he finished I stood up and said, 'I understand that you want to influence the posting of a public servant. I'm very sorry. I just can't hear you on the subject'. He went and complained to the Governor and the Governor backed me up, and said that's not ...
- I. Oh, I see. This is the Speaker of the State Council?
- M. Yes.
- I. So there was a lot of this type of ...?
- M. No, not a lot. Very - surprisingly little in fact, I think. You mean, in attempts to ...?
- I. Yes.
- M. ... get people into a job? I think surprisingly little actually.
- I. Oh, I see. I'm glad.
- M. In my recollection.
- I. Later on in 1938, after you, when Sir Andrew Caldecott came to Ceylon he said that, 'Public statements in Ceylon were invariably in superlatives and rather overpainted'. Would you agree?
- M. What sort of statements?
- I. Public statements by politicians and the like. That they were always overpainted.
- M. Oh, yes, I would agree. Of course politicians are like that all over the world.
- I. All over the world.
- M. I remember there was one chap, one of the Corea's, ...
- I. Yes.
- M. ... who used to weep and get impassioned about land-grabbers. And he was notoriously the worst land-grabber in the Province.
- I. Oh, that's the thing I've been trying to establish myself. Because there's certainly a suspicion that he was a speculator himself. This
- M. Well, I don't know this but it was common talk.
- I. Among the officials?
- M. Which was this - Victor Corea?
- I. C.E.? Victor Corea?
- M. C.E. - it was C.E.¹

1. He is referring to Victor Corea, I am certain. See footnote in Interview with Mr. T.W. Roberts for information on the Corea's.

- I. C.E. - there were two brothers.
- M. Anyhow he had this dramatic gift of - when he had - he - I'm sure he believed what he was saying when he was on a platform ...
- I. Yes.
- M. Whether it was true or not. And he would weep and, you know, be overcome. In attacking precisely the sort of chap he was himself.
- I. Yes, I see. I was coming to that later.
- M. But I hadn't ...
- I. No, this is - I know this is hearsay but it all adds up, you see.
- M. Yes, yes. And of course one of the things one's up against all the time. I think a great deal of the feeling in Ceylon for a change came from students. In Colombo and a good deal from London. London School of Economics and that sort of thing. But there were certain chaps who used to get on the platform and the students used to say, 'Give us some hot stuff'. You know, sort of - I mean they were there for the emotional enjoyment of getting frightfully indignant about something, you know.
- I. And did you come across S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike at all?
- M. No. He was - he was the one who was Prime Minister later on?
- I. Yes.
- M. Yes. No, I never met him. He really came out after I left I think.¹
- I. Yes. What about this communal split. Did you notice it among the educated classes? The communal split between the Tamils and Sinhalese. Was it obvious to you?
- M. No, I think - one always - we didn't look at everything perhaps sufficiently critically. One always accepted that there were certain conventions. That normally the Tamils and Sinhalese didn't intermarry and therefore they didn't - you know, their visiting was limited. And the same with the Europeans and the Sinhalese and the Tamils. It - the conditions varied very much. In Colombo of course we all tended to belong to our national clubs just as people do all over the world.
- I. Yes.
- M. An innocent and normal thing. In the provinces we tended to have one club where everybody played tennis and played bridge. But we didn't go into each others' houses a lot. Mainly I thought because at that stage of the world's opinion I don't think the Sinhalese and the Tamils - I think they regretted
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1. Incorrect. He was there in the late 1920's.

intermarriage. Unless the people intermarrying were very intelligent people who knew exactly all the implications of it. It was a thing that unless - it was - I don't know - didn't like. I don't know a lot about that.

I. Do you think the attitude of the Sinhalese politicians gave the Tamils a ground to fear power passing into the hands ...?

M. What - at that time?

I. At that time.

M. No, I don't think they did. I was surprised when I heard what was going on in Ceylon. I was - I heard it sort of in the office. You see, we've quite a lot of Ceylonese doing jobs for us. And some of them used to bring me copies of newspapers showing things at the time. It was a surprise to me that it went as far as it did. I mean that they should try and ban Tamil as a language. And there was a good deal of murder went on too, wasn't there?

I. That was 1958.

INTERRUPTION

I. If I may go back and really take up a topic ... I was interested in this headman system and the gansabha.

M. Yes.

I. Which you would have dealt with in - well, perhaps in Galle?

M. I didn't myself deal with the gansabha at all. I don't quite know why.

I. On what

M. I remember in Puttalam I'd been brought in by Campbell to some - these questions of appointments and so on. The gansabha - the great thing, as I remember it there, was lawyers were not allowed.

I. Yes.

M. So that if they didn't - they weren't fleeced. One of the things that I didn't like about Ceylon were ...

I. The lawyers?

M. Owing to lack of other openings probably. You see, all the best people in this country are absorbed in business and commerce. But you have a lot of intelligent people there [in Ceylon] and the only choice really was medicine or the law. There were too many lawyers. And they had a disgraceful business of touts waiting outside the court. Any time a peasant, who was smacked over the face by a friend - they persuaded him to go to court about it. Well, the gansabhas wouldn't allow lawyers so that was ...

- I. Don't you think that one of the failings of British rule was to bring law and justice in the British sense at the same time it brought too much law?
- M. Yes, I think that's true. Whether its due to the - I mean the British introduced British justice with the best intentions. And tried to administer it - and personally I think it was better done with lay magistrates than it was with lawyer magistrates but then I'm a bit prejudiced there. But the essential thing was that people should be - that there should be British justice. People should get a fair hearing and fair treatment. The fact that it got into the hands of lawyers rather and the whole place - I mean - well, you'll find it in that memoranda¹ - that draft ... That sort of litigation became almost a sort of national sport.
- I. Yes.
- M. My point, I was making there, was that as they got the worst out of law they'll probably get the worst out of politics. We shall see politics now becoming a sort of national sport. And a lot of that effort, you know, we wasted. I think probably you're right. But there's this great respect of course for the professional status that you found in Ceylon.
- I. Yes.
- M. And you hear people you knew were awful rogues sort of addressing each other in terms of great respect and ...
- I. Lots of blah?
- M. Mmm, mmm.
- I. What about the ...?
- M. Mind you it was partly because of lack of - lack of ...
- I. Other avenues?
- M. I mean you can't put everyone in the Public Service however much you Ceylonise it. And when you think that clerks for instance - for temporary clerks they were insisting on Cambridge Senior and Lower Matric as a qualifying standard for people applying for jobs which were paid about the same wage as a cook. This problem of what to do with an educated population is (?)
- I. Returning to the gansabha do you think that they were - not the gansabha as tribunals but the gansabha as administrative bodies - were they useful?
- M. For some reason I don't seem to remember having experience, contact with the gansabha. I know Campbell took a great interest in them and tried very hard to get good presidents,

1. A rough draft written by Miles around 1935. Copy in my possession.

and kept a very close eye on them.

I. What about in Anuradhapura?

M. This was - oh, no, sorry, this was Puttalam, yes. In Anuradhapura I don't remember having anything to do with them.

I. What about - can you remember the term vel vidane? These ...

M. Yes.

I. ... irrigation headmen.

M. Irrigation headmen. Irrigation - there were 14,000, I think, minor tanks in the - and they were all looked after by - not by the Irrigation Department but by superintendants - a sort of minor works manager.

I. Oh, I see.

M. And there was always room for corruption and inefficiency there. We had to keep a very close eye on it. Tanks - and I think when I left I'd been pressing for a long time that the Irrigation Department should take over all this work. And try and see that (?) standards were got. And I believe it was done. Certainly before I left there was a lot of cooperation. There were some very good chaps in the Irrigation Department. They - even unofficially - they were quite ready to work with us and have a look. You see, as a layman I would find I had to look at some ...

I. Tanks.

M. Perhaps sluices - tanks, sluices, and I really wasn't competent. I mean ...

I. Yes. You felt that you couldn't ...?

M. Well, I did the best I could with common sense but, I mean, it was primarily an engineer's job.

I. So did you feel that these irrigation headmen were not up to the mark in keeping - maintaining these little tanks?

M. I should say, probably, yes.

I. They weren't?

M. They wanted to give everybody everything in the N.C.P. because of malaria. Everybody was debilitated. They - you know, they - whole villages used to get wiped out with malaria at times.

I. What about the headmen as such, in administrative work. Did you trust them?

M. Well, you know, we all used to say that an honest headman would take a deposit of 200 rupees from all the candidates for a minor headmanship. And he'd then select the best man and then return the deposits to the others and keep the deposit of the successful. I don't know whether that's true but that

was a man of integrity. Both in money and in things like religious toleration themselves. I met a good many. They were also very paternal to their people, to an extent that isn't fashionable, I suppose, in Government. I mean they used to refuse things. I remember, for instance, a manigar in Jaffna. Some of them applied for a theatre licence and he just refused it. And we saw this and said, 'Why - why shouldn't they have a theatre?' And he said, 'Well, they had one last week and the week before'. And he said, 'If I give theatre licences people will stop working'. I wondered what would happen if you did that in London where you knew people were going five times a week to the pictures. You know, five different shows in (?) weeks. And their work couldn't have been improved. But the manigar's attitude was that it was his job to see that the work was ...

- I. What about this charge of corruption that is so often levelled at the headmen?
- M. I've no evidence on which - I would say that there was a good deal of corruption among minor officials. Its the main difference I think between an Oriental country and ... One of the surprising things in this country is that the minor official - as a rule its very rare that you get any case of corruption, I mean, I used to get that in welfare work. For instance, the relief(?) officers were paying out large sums of money to lots and lots of people and fraud wouldn't have been very difficult. But it was almost unknown for anyone to help himself.
- I. What about the villager and yourself? Did you find it difficult to establish a rapport with the villager?
- M. With the village people?
- I. Mmm.
- M. Well, most of my village work was in the L.C.C.[sic] and they're certainly not - I mean ...
- I. N.C.P.?
- M. In Anuradhapura. I used to walk round the villages and this without Freeman. The convention is whenever you arrive in a village they give you a drink - a coconut. And they - its part of their obligation to give you a guide to the next village and you don't spend the night there. But they were always friendly, always glad to see you. And we went to their houses. You know.
- I. No, did you find it difficult to understand their thought
-

patterns and their ...?

- M. Oh, not specially difficult, I wouldn't have thought. We used to joke with them a good deal.
- I. How was your vernacular, if I may ask?
- M. Well, I took both languages obviously. And Tamil was my first language so I had a higher standard in Tamil than in Sinhalese. I wouldn't say I was ever completely fluent but I could understand. I could always understand in court what was said before the interpreter interpreted it. And I was able to check him.
- I. Yes, I see.
- M. I always, myself, found that it wasn't a bad thing to work through interpreters. It gave you time to think. You know, it has its advantages.
- I. Yes. But it is much slower, isn't it?
- M. Not really, with a competent interpreter. What is slow is, of course, writing it all down. That's the slow part of a magistrate's hearing. I don't know whether they still do it. Or whether they have any sort of mechanical recordings.
- I. Was there a department of agriculture in the 1920's?
- M. Stockdale was the head of the Agriculture Department and Peradeniya Gardens. Stockdale later went to take charge of the School of Agriculture in the West Indies. He was a very able chap.
- I. Do you think it should have been - was it given sufficient priority?
- M. I would have thought so. I really wouldn't know. I wouldn't be in a position to know the answer to that. They did a lot of work I think in - well, for instance, in creating strains of grapefruit and so on, which were more in accordance with market standards. And, I mean, a good deal of fruit was grown in Ceylon that was very, very poor.
- I. When you were in Anuradhapura, did the land settlement people - department ever work in the district while you were there? Or had they come before?
- M. I can't remember. I don't think so. I was never in Land Settlement. And - Leach - I don't know whether he's on your list?
- I. Yes.
- M. He was in Land Settlement.
- I. No, I will be getting something of - well, they will be able to tell me more. But have you any idea what the policy of this department was?
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- M. Land Settlement Department? No, its too far away now. I may have heard it discussed. They had some very good people in it and I should have thought it was a very efficient show. It was dange - it was bad from the health point of view. Archibald, head of the show, died of malaria, one of the best men we had.
- I. Yes, I see. He died of malaria? I was ...
- M. That's another thing, you see. That was one of the things that was in my mind when I retired. I didn't mind risking my life for something I really believed in. But once the belief is gone and once you feel that you could do the same job in a healthy country ... You see, the Civil Service had very few healthy stations. Although the tea-planting side of Ceylon is healthy and Galle is healthy and quite a lot of the coast the bulk of our jobs were in very unhealthy places.
- I. Yes.
- M. Two of my greatest friends died. One was Archibald and the other was Hopper, both of cerebral malaria. I was seven years in malarial districts before I went to Colombo. But I was one of those people who seemed to be immune. I just didn't get it. But a lot of people did.
- I. Yes.
- M. I don't think that drove people to leave but the point was ...
- I. It was ...
- M. When I believed in the job and was sort of - felt I was working for something really worthwhile, that was the risk one just took and just didn't bother.
- I. Regarding this Land Settlement Department. You see, as you said, Corea and other people were attacking this department. There's what I would call a political attack on this department.
- M. When was that? Do you know?
- I. Well, from the 1900's to the 1920's.
- M. Yes, yes.
- I. When you were there in the 1920's too. And the British land policy in general[i.e. they criticised this too]. Do you know if many of these politicians were land speculators themselves?
- M. No, I've only heard it said of - mind you this is not my field much.
- I. Yes.
- M. I've only heard it said of Corea. I think it was - I've forgotten whether it was Victor Corea. Victor Corea was the sort of really unpleasant one. The sort of really vicious
-

chap who really, you know, used very exaggerated language all the time. And - but whether it was he or C.E. Corea - they were brothers, weren't they?

I. Yes.

M. Yes. Can't remember.

I. Oh, you only heard it said of him? What about - were there any such speculators or land-buyers or big Ceylonese planters in Puttalam district?

M. Coreas were actually there of course. Chilaw, Puttalam. I don't know of any others, no.

I. Anuradhapura?

M. No, I don't know anyone there. We had a thing in Galle which was rather unpleasant. That is a ring of planters, including European planters, who bought some land at a price far below its value.

I. From the peasants?

M. From the Government.

I. From the Government?

M. From a Government land sale. I was in charge of it. And we had a great ...

I. Oh, I see. Official ...

M. And we had a great row about this. Yes, the upset price had been fixed too low. We didn't know whether the chief headman had done it, you know, deliberately or whether he'd just slipped up. I think he only slipped up. Anyhow it was sold to this ring and we were furious about it. And I immediately reported to the Government Agent, who I think was out on circuit at the time. He came back and got in touch with the - with the Controller of Revenue in Colombo and they got it set aside by some principle of law. Enormous licence (?) I think it was - damage done by lack of something or other. Anyhow managed set it aside.

I. Oh, I see.

M. There were Europeans involved in that as well as Ceylonese. And I took that pretty badly because I thought it was a pretty bad show.

I. Yes. Also, apart from these Crown land sales, did you find - in any of your districts - did you find that the peasants were selling some of the land which they needed for the lure of money?

M. No. I do know that one of the greatest difficulties in designing land settlement schemes where, you know, you sort

of rebuilt a tank and irrigated a lot of land was to find some way of letting the peasants have the land so that they - in a way that they couldn't sell it.

I. Couldn't sell it?

M. They couldn't - you know, [so] that it wasn't there for the speculator to just come round and buy them all.

I. You see, because ...

M. I've no direct experience of this at all.

I. Because a great feature - even of the twentieth century - was the activities of these speculators, and European planters, Ceylonese planters and land brokers, who were dispossessing of - the improvident villager of some of the land he needed. Sometimes the villager sold Crown land, you know, which he did not hold - have a clear title to anyway. But do you know if Government - for instance, when you were in the Secretariat, weren't you ...?

M. I didn't deal with it actually. It was never one of my subjects, as far as I remember. Perhaps we did get rather tied up with our own subjects and we were ...

I. Yes.

M. Well, really, one thing in the Secretariat - which was a very good thing - all of us from the Governor and the Colonial Secretary went through all the assistants on the way down, so you had no excuse for not knowing that some momentous decision was being made on a subject, which wasn't your subject but might affect one of your subjects.

I. What was your - what were your fields?

I. I can't - my subjects?

I. Yes.

M. Well, they varied from time to time. I can't - I remember doing medicine and education but I'm very vague as to ...

I. Mmm. Would you comment on the cooperative credit movement?

M. Well, yes. All I know about that is that - I'd never heard of it myself at all. But Campbell started it up.¹ Campbell was an absolutely first rate officer. He had only one failing. He was a bit blunt in his speech and he didn't like humbugs. And he didn't like politicians. But he was a very able chap. And he persuaded the Government - or they agreed anyhow - to send him to countries where the cooperative credit movement was successful, and to study the whole thing. And he came back and laid the foundations of it. And it was very successful. Lucette worked with him. Maybin is dead. Lucette, I don't know whether you've seen him yet. I gather he's not -

1. It started earlier in the 1900's and 1910's but Campbell gave it a great fillip in the 1920's.

well, he's pretty old now. Maybin was his sort of second in command - Maybin was promoted to Colonial Secretary or Governor's job. He was a very able chap. And between them - of course the difficulty of that system is that you mustn't keep them on a leading string, you see. You've got to be self - they've [the Cooperative Societies] got to be independent and run themselves. And that means you've got to build up a - you've got to make them strong enough to recover from ...

I. What were the obstacles in Ceylon?

M. I think simply - probably, simply that. It took some time to get them really independent. And I've no idea how they're doing now. Whether they survived. I think they - it struck me at the time that it was the drive of Campbell and Maybin that, you know, made them so successful. And once that was missing they might go back.

I. What happened in the 1930's? Do you know if they were ...?

M. I think they were successful.

I. What do you mean by successful?

M. Well, I mean, as I understand it the farmers, like farmers in so many places in history, object to moneylenders. And they were growing crops simply for other people all the time. This bought up their indebtedness.

I. Oh, I see.

M. And cooperative credit which means everybody sort of is bearing some of the liability.

I. So it reduced indebtedness?

M. It paid off the moneylender. And made it possible for the farmers to develop their farms, to farm their farms and enjoy the profits themselves.

I. What about - you didn't try any - undertake anything in the marketing line?

M. Well, I think after my time, Bassett did develop marketing a great deal. Of course Bassett was Food Controller during the war.

END OF INTERVIEW

He seems to have considered Newnham rather flamboyant, though I don't think he was using this word in a very detrimental sense. He liked Wedderburn and considered him a nice man and very able. I don't think he thought very highly of Sir Hilary Blood and seemed surprised that Blood got where he was. Mr. Miles was also very friendly and intimate with Sir Graeme Thomson because he and Mrs. Miles used to play bridge with the Thomsons. He made no comments on Graeme Thomson but said that his knowledge of the Governor was a personal and intimate one. Thomson did not like the climate much and preferred Nigeria in this respect. One Civil Servant who disliked Ceylon in Miles' opinion was Bourdillon; he disliked the politicians greatly. That is to say, Bourdillon did not care much for the Ceylonese politicians. Mr. Miles himself obviously was of a rather similar frame of mind. He did not like D.S. Senanayake and considered him to be rather like 'a bull in a china shop'. He thought very highly of W.K.H. Campbell but felt that Campbell would never have progressed to a higher post because he was very blunt in his statements and because he would have nothing to do with Secretariat posts. That is to say, Campbell disliked working in the centre and preferred to be in the provinces. C.V. Brayne he considered able. But Brayne was regarded with some sort of amusement. Apparently people felt he was conceited because he claimed that his province was the best administered province.¹ Apparently Civil Servants made quite a joke about Brayne's claims. Regarding Campbell's bluntness Mr. Miles also added that on one occasion he greeted some politician who entered his room with the comment, 'Oh, good morning. What lies have you come to tell me now?'

M.W. Roberts

8/12/65.

1. One wonders how general this view was. One or two Civil Servants firmly contradicted this and I recall that someone said that Brayne was, on the contrary, simple in his ways. Everything I have heard of Brayne goes against Miles' point.

12 August 1966.

1. Was Wedderburn's policy in restricting chenas to the narrowest possible limits an outcome of directives from the centre or from precedents in the administrative history of Anuradhapura or due to his own ideas? Was the idea re the creation of dust-bowls something postulated in Colombo (i.e. the Secretariat) or something which Wedderburn had gathered on his own?

Answer:

I have no direct knowledge but I don't think there is any doubt that the chena policy was fully discussed between the G.A., the Col. Sec. and the Governor. I don't think "restricting chenas to the narrowest possible limits" is quite fair. I can't say that Wedderburn actually used the term "dust bowls" but he was very much alive to what had happened in other countries in the way of soil erosion. I have an idea that Wedderburn relaxed control a little when he took over and that the rows with Freeman were mostly with the G.A. before Wedderburn.

2. It would seem that policy re chenas varied with G.A's and A.G.A's. Apart from Freeman can you recall any others who were very lenient - even notoriously lenient?

Answer:

No I can't recall any very lenient cases. I think policy was controlled by the Governor but you must remember that conditions changed very much from district to district.

3. Was there some heartburning regarding the lenient policy in this field which was begun by the State Council, Senanayake etc. in the 1930's?

Answer:

I don't know. In my time in the N.C.P. politicians did not go there - too much malarial jungle.

4. Champion's report on forest administration in 1935 was highly critical of post Governments (i.e. including those of the 1900's - 1920's) for its haphazard measures in forest conservation. He refers to "the lack of a settled land policy and forest policy, lack of suitable staff and neglect of maintenance" as well as to an absence of finality in the demarcation of forests besides "phenomenal delay" in doing so. Any comments?

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1. M.T. Archibald was Acting Settlement Officer and as such, ex-officer member of the Land Commission till he died in December 1928.
 2. "Some Relections on the Ceylon Land Question", originally read at an Agricultural Conference in Peradeniya and subsequently printed, March 1927.

Answer:

I don't know this report. Sounds like a technical forester's report, finding reasons for a bigger forest dept. and a reduction of the Civil Service influence. The District Officer put the people first. But the day of the technical man was arriving and the production of reports was prodigious everywhere. The important thing is what final action did they result in.

5. Can you recall the Land Commission which sat through the late 1920's, reporting finally in 1929? (It included Elphinstone, Brayne, Archibald but had a majority of unofficials). What was your own and the general European official opinion on their recommendations re land tenure and re the land settlement process

Answer:

Not really. I remember some amusing comments by Archibald,¹ but I won't quote them. I was not specially interested and don't remember reading it.

6. Can you recall Sir Hugh Clifford's paper on land matters?² Was it brought to the notice of officials and discussed? If not, why not? One thing that has struck me is that many of the top-brass seem to have indulged in discussions or essays on important subjects without an attempt to convey these ideas to those in the field or draw opinion unless a specific problem was being attacked. Was this so?

Answer:

No. I don't know how far it was discussed - in fact I don't think I have heard of this paper before. I would not have thought that there was a great lack of discussion with officials. There was perhaps less discussion than the world has become used to since that time. "Never in the whole history of the world were so many words used about so little".

7. Sometime ago a Ceylonese publisher and writer, introducing Woolf's diaries, wrote of the sense of mission under which most Civil Servants worked and their concept of the white man's burden etc. Somehow I cannot think this was so. I would say that the average administrator was conscientious and all that but considered it just another job without indulging in high fancies. Can you recall your approach in the 1920's? Any other comments?

Answer:

I had fought in the infantry, expected to be killed and was

[fn. see opp.]

severely wounded in 1918. I was a Sergeant at 19. I went to Ceylon as a servant of the King. At Oxford I had a cynical outlook, which was fashionable. At Jaffna the Bar pulled my leg in a nice way and I discovered to my surprise that they really believed in British Justice. I felt that as a Civil Servant and also as a European my integrity must be flawless and my standards up to those of the finest service in the world - which is what I thought the C.C.S. was. I was very ill in Puttalam and when I crawled out the Tamil Doctor said I should have a time up country and that he would recommend special leave. I was quite shocked and said I could not leave my work (P.M. in a fairly quiet court). I'm not boasting - today I am not the man I was then and would take a recommendation for convalescent leave without question. I have served in the Home Civil and in the L.C.C. Admin. - both great services - but I am proudest of my service in the C.C.S. I liked the Ceylonese (apart from politicians) and hoped to use such powers as I was given to spread British justice. I think most Civil Servants had a sense of mission.

8. Again, I wonder whether you can recall whether (in the early and mid 1920's) you realised that self-government was on its way in Ceylon. If so, did you think that it was likely to come within your period of colonial service (say by the 1950's) or whether you felt that it would take longer.

Answer:

I had not applied for India when I took the combined C.S. Admin. grade Exam. I thought it would be a mess. I thought that there was a sensible measure of self Govt. in Ceylon and that it might last my time. I did not believe that the war was fought "To make the world safe for democracy", still less to make it unsafe for any other form of Govt. I did not think a lot about these things in the early 20's. So far as I did I thought that a benevolent autocracy was the best for Ceylon for some time. I think I always felt that if full democracy came in I would not want to stay as my personal integrity would be involved.

9. Did you feel that Fletcher, Elphinstone and, later, Stanley were playing the political game and trying to work the Constitution - even perhaps seeking popularity - by giving in to the politicians? Have you any idea how Fletcher went down with the politicians? What motivated Stanley? Was he genuinely sympathetic to the aspirations of the Ceylonese and doing his best to smoothen relations?

Answer:

I would prefer not to comment. I was Assist. C.S. to Fletcher and knew Stanley fairly well. I did not know Elphinstone.

10. Have you any idea what the chief points made before the Donoughmore Commission by the C.C.S. delegation (under Newnham) were? As far as I know, this sitting was in camera.

Answer:

I just can't remember.

11. When Goonesinha led a big strike - the tramway strike - in 1929 have you any idea what the attitude of Boustead Bros. and other employers to his unions were?

Answer:

No but the facts were that the strike got out of hand and was in the end aimed at a Ceylonese police inspector. The police were withdrawn to barracks while European Officers tried to reason with the crowd. The Municipal Fire engine was burnt and about 6 people killed. Goonesinghe[sic] was in the Secretariat the next morning asking for help.

12. How was it that the Police department came to be placed under the Minister of Home Affairs in the Donoughmore Constitution? Didn't some people argue that it should remain under the Chief (i.e. Colonial) Secretary?

Answer:

I don't know.

13. Can you recall what the Chief Secretary and the secretaries of Executive Committees said about the working of the Committee system? Were there any Ministers or Committees which were notoriously bad?

Answer:

All I remember is very long agendas; lots of time spent on a few items; the rest rattled off without time to discuss; a lot left to the secretaries. But I had no first hand experience. I was secretary of a select committee of the State Council. They spent a good deal of time arguing about the minutes of the last meeting and finally we had a shorthand record as each member wanted to have his own statements recorded in full.

14. You refer to an argument in the Finance Committee when you were present on one occasion. What was it about?

Answer:

I can't remember.

15. You also refer to the Governor backing you up when you refused to entertain the Speaker's (Molamure?) effort to influence a transfer. Who was the Governor and what was the gist of his reply to Molamure?

Answer:

I think it was Samuel and I think that the reply was that appointments, promotions and transfers of the public service were subjects under the P.S.C. and the clerical service was under the Chief Secretary.

16. Much has been said against Fletcher. But didn't Tyrrell and Bourdillon also compromise and give way to political pressure even at the expense of the Civil Service? Didn't Tyrrell give way on some issues once in order to save Bourdillon from a political attack?

Answer:

I don't know the facts and would rather not comment on the persons.

18. A point that has forcibly struck me about the period of British rule - even in the twentieth century - is the paucity and the inadequacy of the statistics on numerous agrarian matters. No one seems to have directed attention to a statistical study of rural indebtedness, the extent of land alienation by peasants and the causes thereto, the extent of undivided proprietorship, the extent of sharecropping (ande) etc. One could have expected this by the 1920's surely. It is only when one knows the size of a problem that one can tackle it.

Answer:

I don't know enough on this. Of course the passion for statistical and economic research came later in this country. But have you studied the work done by W.H. Campbell on Cooperative Credit? I thought he and his small team (Maybin and Lucette) studied and got rid of rural indebtedness. Campbell, though a Civil Servant, made himself an expert in this field and after he left Ceylon was employed in China and and elsewhere by the the League of Nations. One of the most

able men we had. I believe he started this particular job in the Agricultural Dept. and later had a separate dept.

19. In this connection (re statistics) I would say that one of the chief arguments that could be used against the headman system was the unreliability of the statistics the headmen churned out.

Answer:

I don't know. Elsewhere of course administrations have had statistics by the ton but did they always produce right and rapid action? I suppose British rule was tolerant and not over impressed with O. and M., computers and the rule of science generally. I can imagine that headmen were not ideal.

20. There appears to have been a great deal of internal friction within the Irrigation Department in the 1920's (or was it the 1930's). Was this so? If so, any idea, why?

Answer:

I don't know. About '22 I think the younger engineers found the higher officers a little too strict and austere e.g. about running a car. Is this what you mean? I don't know of anything else. It was a dangerous job (malarial) and the older men were tough. Discipline was strict.

21. [I asked him for a thumbnail sketch of some Civil Servants.]

Answer:

I don't really think I ought to do this. I knew them all, many as personal friends, most of them were senior to me and it would be wrong I think to comment on their strengths and weaknesses on the basis of my personal opinion.

If you are weighing up the quality of the service don't forget the secretariat lot. The Colonial Office transferred a number when they realised that they would resign and the following were knighted and became Governors or Chief Secs. M.A. Young, Wm. Murphy, F. Gimson, W.D. Battershill, C.C. Woolley, H. Blood.

Also not secretariat:- G. Rennie, D. Maybin, S. Phillipson, Hartwell. Probably others I have forgotten.

23. How would you rate Alexander as a Controller of Revenue? Didn't Brayne show more initiative and vision? On the other hand it appears that Brayne and some of his ideas did not go down very well with some of the older G.A.'s?

Answer: I can't answer this - again it involves personal opinion of people senior to me and knowledge of their subject matter which I have not got. I would only say that Brayne tended to get people's backs up a bit.