

Sir Hilary was very conscious of the tape recorder and one felt that he was aware that he was speaking to an audience. I suspect that he was glad to go on record and leave a historical mark, so to speak. On the other hand, at times the questions held his interest in such a way as to minimise his awareness of the tape-recorder.

I felt that he consciously sought to present the C.C.S., many of the individuals we spoke about and British policy and practice in the best possible light - though he was not wholly indiscriminatory. This detracts from the value of some of his views.

Quite confident and cocksure about his ability. Expansive and talkative in a very pleasant way. Some degree of self-importance. Quite candid about himself - said that his ambition always was to be a Governor and seemed to be proud of his forwardness in pushing himself career-wise (towards the 'room at the top'). He also, and I think consciously, presented himself as a man of decided opinions who was yet adaptable, tolerant, calm and able to take the barbs of politicians in his stride. But it is quite possible that he was just such a man.

He certainly had a grasp of many of the problems posed - I did not have to explain or elaborate on some of the subtler yet crucial questions; obviously these were not new to him. (They should not have been since he was a Governor of some colonies).

On the whole I paid a great deal of attention to his appraisal of various personalities, largely because his Secretariat-experience brought him into contact with the leading officials. He said he was not familiar with Government policy on the Ceylonisation issue so I did not delve deep here. But was he steering clear of a hot issue?

Not unnaturally he shows strong signs of taking a more liberal line on such matters and on political issues than he might have in the 1920's. More liberal, mellowed views resulting from a changing environment and hindsight, however, are an inherent danger in these interviews.

M.W.Roberts

10.11.65

P.S.

The more I meet the other Civil Servants the more careful I am in accepting Blood's views or his appraisal of men. Quite a livewire in many fields today (in the 1960's) he has also had considerable experience in broadcasting. This explains his attitude towards the tape-recorder. But it would also suggest considerable assurance as well as an ability to pull the wool over people's eyes. I only hope the occasions when he is shooting a line are pretty obvious to the listener.

One civil servant, while respecting Blood for his activities in the 1960's, considered him a typical Secretariat-wallah, 'a writer of clever essays'; another was suprised that he rose to be a Governor.

M.W.Roberts

22.12.65

INTERVIEW WITH SIR HILARY BLOOD, K.C.M.G., G.B.E.

10 November, 1965.

SIR HILARY BLOOD

b. 1893.

Military service

C.C.S. 1920 - 1930.

January 1920.	Cadet C.C.S., Colombo Kachcheri.
March 1920.	Anuradhapura Kachcheri.
April 1921.	O.A., Kandy.
April 1922.	4th Assistant to Col. Sec.
June 1925.	3rd " " " "
October 1926.	D.J., Badulla.
April 1928.	A.G.A., Trinco.
March 1930.	P.M., Colombo.

Col. Sec., Grenada in 1930.

Subsequently served in British
Guiana, Sierra Leone and Gambia.

Was Governor of Gambia and, I think,
of British Guiana and Sierra Leone
too.

- I. What made you join the Colonial Service?
- B. Well, I was one of those people who, at the end of World War I, was looking for something to do. The War came just at the end of my University career - 1914 I graduated at Glasgow - I was at Glasgow University ...
- I. I see. Are you of Scottish birth?
- B. Yes, I was born in Ayrshire - born in Kilmarnock where they make Johnny Walker whisky, and Glasgow and South Western railway engines and ? carpets and all that sort of thing.
- I. My wife is Scottish.
- B. Oh, is she, where does she come from?
- I. Ah - Kirkcudbright. Is that it?
- B. Oh does she - yes, yes, oh yes. No, I'm an Ayrshireman. And the question was, what was I going to do, and - I don't know - there was a sort of general feeling that the Empire - it was the Empire, of course, in those days - it was very much bigger.
- I. Yes.
- B. And I thought as the Empire got very much bigger that there must be more jobs, and so I thought I'd have a shot at the reconstruction examinations it was called after the war. That covered the home service, the Indian service and the Eastern Cadetships. Now in those days the Eastern Cadetships provided the administrative staff for Ceylon, Hong Kong and Malaya, and I was - as a result of the examination I was chosen to be an Eastern Cadet and I was originally posted to Malaya.
- I. I see.
- B. But I happened to be working in the Colonial office at the time, and I remember going up to the man who was in charge of the postings and saying - look, I had a letter from you this morning posting me to Malaya. The place I would really like to go to is Hong Kong because I would like to learn Chinese, but as I married
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about six months ago, I think the best place to go to is Ceylon, which I'm told is the nicest climate. And he rubbed his nose and said - "Oh, you'd like to go to Ceylon, would you?" I don't think anybody so senior in the Colonial Office had ever been talked to like that by a potential Eastern Cadet before. And I said - "Yes, I would like to go to Ceylon." And a week later my posting to Malaya was cancelled, and I was posted to Ceylon. And that's how I came to go to Ceylon.

- I. Oh - with what feelings did you set out as such? I mean - it's a strange land you were going out to. With what feelings did you ...
- B. With what feelings? Um. Oh - I think with a general feeling of adventure that one has at that age. I was - what was I? Twenty-something - I don't remember what. In my very early twenties. And there's that wonderful feeling of adventure - going to see the world which I think affected the younger people of that time. And of course, one had been accustomed to a certain amount of adventure in the war - I was in Gallipoli in the war. And I went out looking forward to seeing the East and learning something about Ceylon and trying to do, I suppose, if one formulated it in one's mind at all, to try to do something useful and constructive after the destructive things which the war had achieved.
- I. I see. And - you - were in Anuradhapura for one year or so.
- B. Yes I went - when I got to Ceylon I found that I was posted to Colombo ...
- I. Yes ...
- B. And I spent a week - I went out by myself, I didn't take my wife with me. I thought it would be unwise to arrive with a wife because married cadets, of course, were very unusual in those days so I went out by myself. And they posted me to Colombo - I lived in the G.O.H. for a bit. And then, when I'd been there
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learnt from him?

B. I think I learnt first of all the lesson of patience, which was one of the most important things. Then I think I learnt - I hope I learnt the lesson of being absolutely straight in what one had to say if one had to say 'No', one didn't try to cover it up - one said 'No' and one gave the reasons for saying 'No'. If one could say yes, then that was so much the better. And I think I got my first lessons in being interested in the jungle and in the tanks and all that wonderful life of the North Central Province which is so absolutely fascinating.

I. Do you think your public school life helped you at all? Fitted you for Colonial service?

B. Well you must remember that I wasn't at a public school. I was educated in Scotland.

I. Oh yes ...

B. I went to a Scottish - I went to a Scottish academy, but don't you mix me up with a public school. I went to a Scottish academy, I went to ? Academy, and I went to a Scottish University. So I'm one of those curious creatures who never went to a public school. I was Scotch, you must remember that - it's very important.

I. Uh-uh. What about University life.

B. Oh yes, very much so. You see I was always terribly interested in my University days in the running of societies, committees and things ...

I. Yes - I see.

B. ... University Union ...

I. You were training -

B. ... the Tory Club and the Dramatic - the Dialectic - Society and all that sort of thing. And I had all my early training in Committees and committee work at Glasgow, and that was absolutely

invaluable experience. But it was translated into grown-up life, so to speak.

I. Yes and of course, Military service helps you in ...

B. Military service helps also, yes. But I think that the - well Military service helped in a completely different way - helped with one's knowledge of men ...

I. Yes ...

B. ... one's reactions to people and people's reactions to me. But from the point of view of the actual - what do you call it - technique, so to speak of governing very early experience, being in committees, was very useful.

I. In British Political terms, what was the prevailing shade of the time in Ceylon?

B. I'm not quite certain I understand you. In British terms of thought -

I. In English Political terms -

B. Political terms what was?

I. The prevailing shade of the time in Ceylon civil service?

B. It's hard to say now. Ceylon is really traditionally - a country where tradition counts for a very great deal. I don't know whether this is still the case - but it certainly was the case then.

I. Yes.

B. And the traditionalist party in this country is of course Conservative.

I. Yes, I see ...

B. So one's political thinking probably was of a Conservative nature. But I think it's a great mistake to - certainly to me it's a great mistake to try to find political philosophy at that stage of life. One was concerned with the problems that turned up on one's plate.

- I. Yes, day-to-day ...
- B. Day-to-day administration. I mean the number of stamps in the kachcheri, the counting of the cash, the - checking of all that sort of thing. Sitting as a magistrate. Going out for my first murder case. All those things. I mean it was really day-to-day stuff more than any overriding political philosophy.
- I. Yes, but at the higher level wouldn't this shade of thought have an influence on the attitude to such questions as the Trades Union movement and the Nationalist ...?
- B. I don't think that - I'm talking now a little bit without the book - but I don't think that the Trade Union movement at that time - remember we are talking of 1920 -
- I. Yes -
- B. I don't think that the Trade Union movement had really emerged into Colonial life so to speak, or if it had it was only in the ...
- I. Beginnings ...
- B. In the very, very embryonic state. On the Nationalist side, it was just after the war you know - and one thing that had to be done was to win the war, and politics and everything else rather took a back seat. But that was of course developing - I was ten years in Ceylon. And during those ten years the Nationalist side did develop. And when I was later on - and I was in Badulla and I was a judge in Badulla I remember having long talks with the Badulla Bar. It was a family called Pinto - a very interesting family ...
- I. Yes.
- B. And when I happened to be out doing inspections for judgements and things with them we used to talk politics - they used to talk very freely to me about it all. And it obviously was beginning to develop quite rapidly then. But that was eight to ten
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years later. There was very little of it in the early twenties. However, there was the argument about the number of unofficial members in the Council and all that sort of thing going on in Colombo, but any sort of Island-wide movement was very much in its infancy.

- I. Turning to your work as an Office-Assistant, did you find that you were treated as a 'dog's body'?
- B. Oh, very much. Yes. One had to do the dull things as I say one had to be responsible for the stamps. The ? of course kept them in a safe. And he had a key and I had a key.
- I. Would you have preferred greater responsibility?
- B. I don't think so. I think I knew that I had to learn it from the bottom up. And I think that it's awfully important that men should learn their jobs from the bottom up. You had to pretend to yourself that the fact that the stamps were right and the cash was right and the - what was that glorious thing - the box - the remittance between chests - which was a box full of money that used to come up with an armed guard from Colombo. You see there was no bank in Anuradhapura.
- I. Yes ...
- B. And so the money had to come up from Colombo. And this remittance - it's a lovely phrase - this remittance between chests used to come up and have to be counted and so on. However, these things had to be done, and the only thing to do was to pretend that they were desperately important. And they were desperately important. One learned one's job like that, and then went on to the higher things later on. No, I don't remember being bored. I remember being rather interested in seeing how it really worked from the - what they nowadays call grass level upwards. You see one had - one got the beginnings of one's responsibility by sitting on the bench. In those days, you
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remember, you were taught to sit on the bench quite early on and I was regional magistrate and took my first murder enquiry while I was still a cadet with less than a year's service.

- I. Yes, but if you had spent more time, say, accompanying the G.A. on circuit, wouldn't you have known more about what you were doing agriculturally?
- B. I think eventually, but I think that in the first six months or so it's a good thing to have your nose rubbed in the dust and really see it from the bottom up. It's like ...
- I. Isn't it working blind in the kachcheri ...?
- B. No, no I don't think so. One was concerned with the organisation, with the office organisation of the method in which the country's job was handled. And once you knew that, and knew that thoroughly, then you were ready to do something more. Like the fellow whose father is a - take an illustration from this country - a fellow whose father is a director of a company, let us say.
- I. Yes, I see.
- B. When his son comes down from the University he goes into the company on the ground floor and sees what its like to work with the machinery and that sort of thing. Well, I'm perfectly certain that's the right way to start.
- I. And wouldn't you say the general preference for administrative work - for general administrative work rather than judicial service - was, well, usually, the result of British contempt for the law, or their contempt for the Proctors and a dislike for the law?
- B. Um - I think that - I don't feel that I necessarily did prefer the administrative stuff. I used to find sitting on the bench - and particularly later when I was district judge in Badulla - I used to find sitting on the bench extraordinarily interesting.
- I. Did you prefer that to ...?
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- B. No, I wouldn't say I preferred it. I think that I was - my mind was very even on the two things. I think that you saw into village life sitting on the bench and listening to a case ...
- I. Case ...
- B. Matrimonial case, or a partition of land case, you saw into village life in a very remarkable way. I think that probably what is in the back of your mind is this - that the Secretariat in any Colony whether it was Ceylon or anywhere else - the Secretariat was the gateway to promotion ...
- I. Yes, I see.
- B. And people didn't like to feel that they were being sidetracked into the legal side for the whole of their service.
- I. Oh, I see.
- B. I think that's really what's working at the back of your mind.
- I. Was it a question of higher status, because G.A.s were the top dogs, so to speak?
- B. I suppose there may be people who thought about it like that. I never did. I suppose from a very early stage I wanted eventually to become a Governor. Why I had that curious ambition I don't know, but for some reason or other I did, and the Secretariat was the obvious way to get there. And when the Secretary, Sir Thomas Southorn - who was then Mr. Southorn - and was principal assistant secretary when I'd been in Ceylon two years, sent for me and said "Look ...
- I. Is he the person who was mentioned by Woolf?
- B. Yes, his wife, Lady Southorn, was Leonard Woolf's sister.
- I. I see.
- B. And my wife - ere she was a widow - and she came out again about the time I went out and she married Tom Southorn. My wife was at their wedding. Tell you a story about that in a minute but not - I think - for your records. Anyway, to get back to
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this point about the relative values of the legal side to the administrative side - there are people who definitely like one, there are people who definitely like the other, but let's be clear about that. There are some people who are good at one and not good at the other, or good at the other and not good at one, I mean ...

I. Yes.

B. But I think, looking back on it now, I enjoyed my times on the bench just as much as I enjoyed my time in the Secretariat, excepting for the feeling that it one was going to be lucky, one was going to be promoted, you would then be promoted because you had been a good Secretariat man and not because you'd been a good judge.

I. Yes, I see ...

B. Does that clear it for you?

I. Oh, yes, it does.

B. I don't want anybody to think that I hated my time on the bench. I found it absolutely fascinating. Of course, Badulla was a lovely place to live in.

I. Do you think that the British habit of rule-of-thumb, of pragmatism, of sending officers out into the bush to manage by themselves - was it pushed too far?

B. Well Ceylon and Eastern cadetships were slightly different from other places you see. In the case of the African services, quite soon after World War I, anybody who was going out did what was called the Tropical African Service Course in this country.

I. Uh-uh.

B. Spent about a year either at Oxford or Cambridge or London doing a certain amount of practical stuff, public health, surveying and so on - a certain amount of law, and very often a language.

I. Yes.

- B. Now the Ceylon rule was otherwise. You were sent out to Ceylon and you were thrown into the cabbage field and told to get on with it. But of course what you did - were supposed to have - and most of us did have - was only a half day's work in the country and you were allowed the other half of the day to read your law and accounts and - other things that you had to do.
- I. Yes.
- B. I suppose theoretically it was very much better when the Devonshire Courses were invented which were invented eventually - and people were sent out with a bit more training. On the other hand, there's an awful lot to be said for facing straight up to your problems and having to find a solution. You may find the wrong one, you may find the bad one sometimes, but it does bring you up against the realities of life very quickly.
- I. Trial and error?
- B. Indeed, and of course, you Ceylon people were the unfortunate people on whom the errors sometimes recoiled. But on the whole, looking back on it, it was a wonderful service, the Ceylon service you know. There were some awfully nice people there. I never met anybody who didn't love Ceylon and love the people of Ceylon and love the country. And really the joy of being there, whether you were sitting on the bench, or whether you were ...
- I. Strange to say, Frederick Bowes says that the only person he met who hated Ceylon was Graeme Thomson. I don't know why he says that.
- B. Well Graeme Thomson you know wasn't a Ceylon man - I mean he came in from the Admiralty. I was there when he was there.
- I. But he was an able man, wasn't he?
- B. He was a very able man, but he was supposed to be the finest naval transport officer since Noah - that was what was always said of him. He was - he became Colonial Secretary shortly
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after I went out and I remember him very well coming up to Anuradhapura as acting Governor when I was there. And he had as his secretary Henry Moore, who afterwards became Sir Henry Mason Moore and Lady Thomson had as her lady in attendance Daphne Benson and while they were there, or just after, Henry Moore got engaged to Daphne Benson and eventually married Daphne Benson, she became Lady Moore in due course and then - he died the other day - they had been great friends of ours all our lives - and I ran into him years later in Africa and served under him. But no, I think Graeme Thomson did dislike it, I think there were reasons for that. We didn't know about it at the time. In the first place Lady Thomson was nearly always ill, and in the second place the story always was that Graeme Thomson was so stupid about his health. That he would go off on enormous treks and things, and try to shoot elephants and the like over the weekend. And overdoing the physical side of it then feeling perfectly miserable when he came back to sitting in the office in Colombo. But you mustn't judge the reactions of Ceylon civil servants by Sir Graeme Thomson's, because he was a home civil servant and not a Ceylon civil servant at all.

- I. Wasn't he popular among the civil servants?
- B. I just wouldn't know. I mean, I was a very, very junior person...
- I. Yes, of course.
- B. I was a cadet, and office assistant. I just wouldn't know - he was perfectly charming to me. Whether he was equally charming to other people and how much other people really got to know him, I just wouldn't know. I don't know the answer to that one.
- I. Reverting to this point of pragmatism. Despite that, do you think that in the end precedence dominated in day-to-day administration?
- B. Do I think what dominated?
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- I. Precedence. You - did you work according to routine, and sometimes a sort of blind routine? This point has been made by Stace, in fact.
- B. Well now, let's just think. This wouldn't apply on the bench of course, would it?
- I. No, I was thinking of ad....
- B. ... you were thinking of administration.
- I. ... administration.
- B. I wouldn't call it blind routine. I wouldn't call it purely precedence. I think that it was a question of solving the problem as it turned up. I'm now jumping a bit and thinking of my days in Trinco.
- I. Yes, I see.
- B. When I was A.G.A.
- I. Yes.
- B. Not long before I left. And there one had the ordinary business of administering an area. And one went out with the - one's interpreters and so on and the Mudaliyar. You saw the chiefs, you heard their troubles, you tried to help them to solve their troubles if you could. There were certain roads that you tried to build and to extend, you were concerned with schools, to understand the schools committee and all that sort of thing. And then there were the ordinary day-to-day problems of the police. You see, in most places one was also a policeman ...
- I. Yes.
- B. ... ? and so on. I don't think so. It's so long ago now that - I certainly never formulated that view in my own mind. I think one would say ...
- I. No. That's what I wanted to know ...
- B. No, I was so interested in what was cropping up every day to do that one just got along and did it, or tried to.
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- I. At the high level- well, among the G.A.s and in Colombo, do you think there was too great a tendency to preserve the status quo?
- B. Are you thinking largely politically now?
- I. No, not necessarily.
- B. Not primarily.
- I. Not primarily.
- B. Well, I think this is where this question of Conservative thinking comes in. That you were dealing with people who probably were conservatively minded - I'm not talking about party politics now ...
- I. Yes, simple c...
- B. ... I'm talking about the type of mind.
- I. The mind, yes, that's right.
- B. You were dealing with people who were conservatively minded and who believed, rightly or wrongly, I think rightly - but rightly or wrongly, that the right way for things to develop was out of what existed. And that it was very rarely that you had to make an absolutely clean cut and start all over again. And so I think the tendency was to take the problem or the thing as it was and see how it could be improved rather than to throw it out of the window and try to invent something new.
- I. An empirical approach in other words.
- B. Yes, very much the empirical approach. I think that's been our approach everywhere, not only in Ceylon, but through the whole ...
- I. Yes, that is so. Would you say that provincial headquarters of Colombo tended to quash new ideas if it meant a lot of trouble?
- B. Er - again, I don't think that anybody consciously quashed new ideas. You must remember that there was very little money in those days. You see the whole aspect of the financial side of all this was changed with the Second World War and of course with sovereignty. And now Ceylon thinks in terms of money which was
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absolutely unheard of in my day. We were dealing with a few rupees whereas now people are dealing with hundreds of thousands of rupees. And very often the new idea was something that was going to cost money which simply wasn't there. If the new idea was a feasible one financially and looked like an idea which would be beneficial to the province or whatever it might be, then I don't think there was any idea of quashing it at all. I mean, there may have been some very old-fashioned people, but certainly not with us younger people who came in after the war. Certainly not.

- I. Now would you say that sometimes efficiency was sought as an end in itself?
- B. Efficiency, as an end in itself? Now again, I must just try to think back. You mean that one said you must do this this way because this is the efficient way of doing it - is this what you have in mind?
- I. Yes, well I should really ally it to the next question I was thinking of ...
- B. Yes ...
- I. In larger political terms, wasn't there a sort of lack of purpose and drive?
- B. Towards independence?
- I. Well yes - in terms of ultimate ideals.
- B. Yes. I think very definitely. I think that, broadly speaking, what most senior people in Ceylon or anywhere else at the time thought of was of producing a state eventually in the far distant future which was very largely the equivalent politically of England. In other words, they were thinking in terms of a Parliament as we know it here, ministries as we know them here, and the efficiency which the civil service in this country does give to its ministries. Now there's no question about that. I
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mean we all agree that our civil service in this country - and I'm not a civil servant of this country so I can say this - very probably the civil service of this country is one of the most efficient of them all. And I think that, consciously or unconsciously, people who were concerned with political development - mark you, I wasn't, because I was never senior enough - people who were concerned with political development in Ceylon, were probably thinking in terms of a service which was - could serve - its masters, it's political masters eventually as efficiently as the civil service in this country did. That, of course, tended to slow everything down. It takes years and years to train a really good permanent undersecretary as you know ...

I. Yes, it does ...

B. ... a very long time. And I think that did slow things down and I don't think that at that stage this Government - after all the Government of this country was responsible for policy as regards Ceylon - I don't think the Government in this country at the end of World War I was thinking of a sovereign Ceylon in the foreseeable future. Or foreseeable, or anywhere else; India of course was very much the same.

I. Well, didn't this have a bad influence in the sense that it brought a sort of lack of drive objective ...?

B. I think there was a lack of drive, and that is where possibly your remark about fetish of efficiency comes in.

I. Yes.

B. Such drive as there was was a drive towards administering what was there as efficiently as it could possibly be. Not with training it for administering itself in the future.

I. Yes, I see.

B. Now, we're way back in the twenties ...

I. In the twenties, that's right ...

B. Yes, yes.

I. ? in fact, I'm very interested in the twenties because of your Secretariat experience.

B. Yes, yes.

I. And I was wondering whether - do you think at that stage the Secretariat had a highly bureaucratic approach to problems?

B. Well, it was a Crown Colony. And a Crown Colony is ipso facto bureaucratic, isn't it?

I. Yes, well ...

B. You can't help being bureaucratic, until you - a Crown Colony at that stage of development, it must be bureaucratic.

I. I was wondering whether it was well - exceedingly red-tapish. Too much so.

B. I don't think so. It's hard to say, because at that time I had nothing to compare it with, you see - I hadn't been - it's not as if I'd been anywhere else. It was - you er - there were certain things that had to be done - there were certain things that had to be properly done. Proposals and so on had to be examined; the country had to be administered. And it may have been - administered without a great deal of imagination - I think that is true.

I. Uh-uh.

B. It had to be administered without a great deal of money, and that is certainly very true.

I. Yes.

B. And it had to be administered following on a policy in this country which was not, as I say, thinking of political advance at a very rapid rate. There was political advance, but not at a very great pace. You see that all followed from World War II.

I. Do you think at that stage in the 1920s the Secretariat was too

centralised? Had it become a bottleneck?

- B. Yes, I think it was a bottleneck, and the result was that the Principal Assistant Colonial Secretary, who when I went there was Sir Tom Southorn and later Mark Young, those were the two under whom I worked in my Secretariat days, they were grossly overworked and they used to start work in their houses about half-past six or seven in the morning and then go to the office and finally get home about time for dinner. That happened day after day and week after week and month after month. It was a most killing job. The rest of us weren't quite so heavily worked, but we were pretty heavily worked, because there was that bottleneck. But you must have the bottleneck - you see - until you come to a Ministerial system.
- I. Yes, I see ...
- B. As long as the Governor is responsible there's got to be a bottleneck [in dealing with ??] him.
- I. And this was realised by the Governor and the local ...?
- B. I think we all knew that. We would all have been glad to find some other method.
- I. Because, I mean, I broached the subject because the Royal Commission made that point.
- B. Yes, yes. I'd forgotten that. Yes.
- I. Uh ...
- B. Interesting, you know, about the Donald Moore Commission. It was the one that this country made to break away from ...
- I. Yes ...
- B. ... it was the Westminster model and the new people in Ceylon didn't like it. They said "Let's go back".
- I. Just a brief point. Do you know of any occasion when Government destroyed embarrassing correspondence?
- B. Destroyed the ...?
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- I. Destroyed embarrassing correspondence.
- B. I can't think of any case ...
- I. Because ...
- B. Are there cases? How interesting. They certainly never showed it to me.
- I. Strong mentions one - you see - where he sort of suffered ...
- B. Really. Oh yes?
- I. And this ...
- B. John Strong, you mean? Strong ...
- I. A.N. Strong, he's a ...
- B. Yes, yes, yes. Now that's very interesting. No, I never had any of mine destroyed that I know of. I certainly never destroyed anybody else's. I wonder if he's got that right.
- I. This is what Bowes has told him.
- B. Oh. Well, that must be going back to the bad old days when Bowes was a young man. He was a very old man when he died. I wonder if there's any mix-up here with the system of destroying records which - useless records - which Mark Young developed very much. I don't say that he did do. But there was a great drive to prevent useless papers littering up the record office.
- I. He won't be very popular with historians!
- B. And he did a tremendous sorting out of stuff which was quite useless. And burning it. Not with a view to destroying anything which was embarrassing. Well, it's very interesting. I'd like to see - or hear something about this. It's a new one on me altogether.
- I. Would you say that non-European civil servants were excluded from the substantive administrative posts? This is a question on Ceylonisation.
- B. Well, there were very few non-European civil servants in my day.
- I. Because there's a feeling that they were shunted into the judicial
-

line ...

B. Yes.

I. And they were ...

B. Now - wait a minute. Let's go back. I think there was some arrangement whereby local civil servants - which, for the most part were non-European - could only - and who hadn't got the same qualifications - the same university qualifications - as a European - couldn't go higher in the grading system than certain classes. Is that right I wonder? This is so long ago that I'm beginning to forget. I mean - well there was your father, for example. And there were various other people - and there were certain European civil servants who'd gone straight into the service in Ceylon. There was some rule I think that in certain cases if they hadn't got the same academic qualifications that the Eastern Cadets had - I'm taking an Eastern Cadet point of view - that they couldn't go higher than a certain grade. It might have been Grade 3 or whatever it was. I think I'm right in this, but I would have to- oughtn't to be quoted saying it because it may be incorrect. And that, of course, would mean that they were shut out from certain jobs which were only open in the higher classes.

I. Yes, you see there was this political demand for more rapid Ceylonisation - and I know that the policy level it was argued that there shouldn't be too rapid Ceylonisation - do you know what the arguments were?

B. No. Because I don't think that that was really cropping up in my time, or if it was, it was being argued at a level that I wasn't in on at all.

I. Oh, I see.

B. My recollection was that in my young days I learnt my early jobs from the Ceylon - native Ceylon civil servants. They taught me,

I thought, extremely well.

- I. Yes. I think one of the principal arguments adopted was that they were involved in the local situation and - you know - come from certain particular castes. And it was argued that the people wouldn't trust the impartiality of their decisions.
- B. Well, I think that was a difficulty which did arise in certain places. After all, in this country, for example, it's easy. Let's think of judges, let's think of the judicial side which is an easier one, perhaps. This country's so big that it's a most unusual thing for a judge to have anybody who appears before him - who's somebody that he knows. Well, within Ceylon - much smaller country - where you've got a local judge, unless he comes from Jaffna and you post him to judge at Galle, or the other way round, it would be very unlikely that in the course of two or three weeks' work the people that he knew didn't appear before him. It happened once with me with a European divorce case when I was judge in Badulla, when I did know, of course, the people very well. And so I asked that somebody else should try it because they were both friends of mine. But if you multiply that up, you see, as you would with a Ceylon - Ceylonese born civil servant - there was that danger at the time.
- I. Yes, but...
- B. It may be that we exaggerated it, I wouldn't know.
- I. But the point is that, if you maintain that argument, self-government would never have been possible ...
- B. No.
- I. ... and you wouldn't have got an administrative cadre as such.
- B. No. It may well have been a false argument. I don't know what the feeling about ...
- I. And you see, if they were sent - it could apply to judicial cases too. And why were they sent into the judicial line and not
-

into the administrative?

- B. Mmm. Yes. But this, of course, is very much higher policy than I was concerned with in those days. I was a young man of less than thirty, remember, at that time.
- I. Could you - would you like to comment on the village headman system and the gansabhas?
- B. Well, we found that, as one went out as a young man, we found it and it was the system - it was the form of indirect rule to quote Lugard's phrase.
- I. Yes.
- B. It was the form of indirect rule which we found there. And which we worked through, which we accepted. The gansabhawas were, of course, traditional. They satisfied the villages, apparently, for many hundreds of years, perhaps more.
- I. Did you find them useful - the gansabhas?
- B. O yes, very definitely. In the North Central Province particularly where you got, of course all this ...
- I. Administratively ...?
- B. Administratively. I mean things like irrigation work and all that sort of thing. You know, the date for the ...
- I. ... would it be correct to say that on the whole they failed to maintain many of the village tanks.
- B. In the North Central Province, which is the one I really know, which of course is the great irrigation area, there were vast numbers of village tanks had been allowed to go into disrepair, and which there was no money for the gansabhawa to repair. And there wasn't enough labour. You see it was one of the hotbeds of malaria in those days.
- I. Yes.
- B. And it may well be that the reason for the tremendous decrease in the population in the North Central Province from the days
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when it was the great base of Buddhist rule and the temples, and so on, it may well be that was malaria. Well, that's a side issue. I think that within the limits which the council boroughs had in the way of calling on labour and spending money, they did their best - did it reasonably well. But they were faced in the North Central Province with a problem which could only have been solved by the expenditure of a vast amount of money and probably by some organisation which was much more technically efficient than the gansabhawas were.

I. Yes, I see.

B. On the question of headmen. You got good headmen, you got bad headmen. Some of them were very good and some of them were very bad. But it was the system of local government at the time. It was again traditional, and it carried it through those years until whatever the system is now - are there still village headmen?

I. Oh yes, they still have them - but on a different basis.

B. If you found them useful, no doubt we did.

I. Yes. Did you have to rely on them a lot?

B. A good deal, yes. It depended on your knowledge of the language. I was - my Sinhalese was quite reasonably good. My Tamil wasn't. I had passed in Tamil, I wouldn't have liked to try to carry on a conversation in Tamil, but I'd carry on a conversation in Sinhalese quite easily.

I. Did you trust them really? I mean, did you ...?

B. I was always suspicious. I always checked and re-checked.

I. Especially on land questions.

B. Especially on land questions. Very much on land questions.

I. Was corruption rife? I mean, among the headmen?

B. Well, I never came across very bad examples of it. There's a nice story, you know, of the Kandyan - chief Kandyan headman who

was said to be the most honest headman in the whole Kandyan province. Do you know that story?

I. No, I don't.

B. I was told about this - I was O.A., Kandy at the time. They said to me that so-and-so - I've forgotten who it was now - was the really honest Kandyan headman. And I said, well, what do you mean by honest? And they said, well, when he's got a job to be filled, everybody who wants it sends a bribe to him, and he sends them all back except the one he gets from the man who fills the job! Well, I think that's very reasonable.

I. Yes.

B. Like payment for a specific service, like putting a stamp on a letter. No, I've no doubt that there was a certain amount of corruption. I've no doubt a certain amount of it that we foreigners could never have found out. But for all accounts and purposes, I think nothing like as bad as it has been since.

I. Was there a lot of government by clique, among the headmen, their families and relations?

B. I think there was a certain amount. Of course a certain - some of these jobs were almost hereditary - not quite.

I. Yes, yes.

B. But very nearly. But the idea was ...

I. Do you think that was good? Heredity?

B. Well, I don't think you need exclude a man because he happens to be the son of somebody. After all there is the 14th earl and the 14th Mr. Smith.

I. Yes, I see.

B. I think its a thing you've got to use - to use in the proper way. I don't think a man should be - get a job because he's somebody's son, but equally, I don't think he should be debarred from the job because he's somebody's son.

I. Well, if I may switch to the political field. What sort of Governor was Brigadier-General Manning?

B. He - well, now you've gone again back to my very early days.

I. Yes.

B. Of course, I wasn't in a really very good position to judge. He was a soldier, of course. He'd been a soldier, been quite a good soldier. The sort of general view I think was that he was extraordinarily lucky to have become Governor of Ceylon. He was an honest man, I would say, a very straight man. I wouldn't say that he had a great brain. I wouldn't say that he was of a super intelligence. But I would have said, from what little I know of him, and I knew him very little, as I say, I was very young, I should say that he was a straightforward, honest, hard-working man, who was primarily interested in Ceylon. And in nothing else.

I. I was wondering, do you know whether it was he who was responsible for the constitutional reforms as such - 1920 and 1924?

B. Yes, very well. Very largely, I mean, he and the Secretariat - after all, Governors don't invent these things.

I. No. I ask this because it is well known that Clifford wrote MacCullum's despatch, the reforms despatch.

B. No, you mean, when Sir Hugh was Colonial Secretary. Yes, well, that may well be, but after all, all these things are largely ...

I. ... work of a team.

B. It's the work of a team, not the work of an individual. I was never lucky enough when I was governing to find a colonial Secretary who wrote as good despatches as I did, so I used to write my own.

I. I see.

B. But Sir Hugh, of course, was a man with tremendous brains.

I. Oh, yes.

- B. He was a very, very great man indeed.
- I. But is it true that he was a bit off his head in Ceylon?
- B. Well, it was just heading that way. Again this is - you must deal with this delicately.
- I. Rather, yes.
- B. Of course, he was beginning to be odd from time to time. He got very much worse, of course, when he went to Malaya. But, I mean, he was quite charming and there was nothing odd about him to meet and so on. When I was in Badulla, he came up and said - when Festing was the Government Agent - we played a lot of bridge with him, my wife and I, he was perfectly charming. And I remember when I'd been in Colombo for something and I'd gone to hear him lecture on Joseph Conrad - you know the stories about Conrad and Clifford ...
- I. No. I know that he had a very Conrad-like life in ...
- B. Ah well now, there's a lot of stuff here that you should pursue with someone who knows more about it than I do. But when Clifford was - Clifford was in Ceylon twice you know - he was Colonial Secretary and then he was Governor. Well now, before I went out, when he was there as Colonial Secretary, Conrad came and stayed with him.
- I. Oh, I see.
- B. And - this is the story as I know it, but you would have to check on this. And he had with him one of his novels, one of his early books which he gave to Clifford to read. And Clifford read it and was tremendously impressed by it. And Clifford in some way - I don't quite know how - had got a pull with one of the American papers - whether it was the Saturday Evening Post or what, I don't know, but one of them. And it was through Clifford - or at least this is the story as I've always understood it - it was through Clifford that Conrad got his first novel published.
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- I. Oh, I see.
- B. That you should check on, but it's interesting and you might like to sort it out. But Clifford was a most brilliant and charming person. Well, he was lecturing on Conrad, and I was in Colombo for something - I've forgotten what - and I went to hear him. And, three or four days later, I was back in Badulla and we were dining with Mr. Festing. Clifford was there, and I quoted a sentence from his own lecture to him. And he said "Oh, that was from my lecture the other day, you must have read it". I said "No, sir, I didn't read it". And he said, "Oh, how do you know anything about it." And I said, "I went to hear you." He said, "Did you?" And I said "Yes." He said, "You were in Colombo, and you took the trouble to come and hear a lecture on Conrad." And I said, "Yes." He said, "Oh, that was very nice of you." And a week later I got a printed copy of the lecture with a message on the outside from him. Now that was the sort of charming thing that Clifford would do. There was nothing insane about that.
- I. Well was he - Bowes likes Clifford, but he says he was a vain man.
- B. He was a?
- I. Very, very vain.
- B. Vain?
- I. Yes.
- B. Proud?
- I. Yes, that's right.
- B. Might have been. I don't remember noticing it particularly. I think what one noticed - what the young people like myself noticed mostly was his enormous capacity for work.
- I. Yes, he was very industrious.
- B. Used to start at some God-forsaken hour - four or five in the
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morning. Tremendous work. And of course his stuff - a good minute by Clifford, a really well-considered minute by Clifford had got everything in the world in it. This arose from Manning. From the point of view of intellectual capabilities there was no question, there was no comparison between the two.

- I. What about Sir Cecil Clementi, because Bowes had some pretty sharp things to say about him.
- B. Yes, well Sir Cecil, I worked under, in the Secretariat. And you know, I liked him personally very much indeed. He came from Hong Kong, as you know. He'd got a good brain. He wasn't in the same class - to my mind - wasn't in the same class as Clifford, and I always felt he was a little bit at sea in Ceylon, he was never really completely happy. I don't quite know what it was. Whether it was the country, or whether it was the sort of work, or whether it was the sort of hankering for Hong Kong, which of course would be quite different. I just don't know. I liked him personally enormously.
- I. Bowes thinks highly of his intellectual capacity as such, but he says he was utterly impractical. He was one of these ...
- B. I think that's probably partly true. Probably partly true. But a very charming person all the same.
- I. Do you think, switching to another subject, do you know anything about the communal split that was coming about between the Tamil and Sinhalese leaders?
- B. No. Very little. You see, in those days in the first place the population in Ceylon was very much smaller than it was and it is now. And in the second place you've got that enormous chunk of jungle ...
- I. Yes.
- B. ... in the middle of Ceylon which very roughly kept the Sinhalese and the Tamil from being at each other's throats. And, of course,
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we held the balance in the - the expatriates held the balance and the Sinhalese and the Tamil at this time were much more concerned with joining together to fight the hated expatriates than they were in hating each other. And that of course, you'll find parallels for this all over the old Empire, all over what is now the Commonwealth. As soon as the unifying influence of having something to fight for against an outsider is over then you get the internal friction.

I. Did you read the Ceylonese-run English newspapers?

B. I read the English newspapers every day in my - I had to in my job in the Secretariat. The Sinhalese newspapers, very rarely.

I. Of course ...

B. ... I could have done so, but there wasn't time.

I. What did you think of the newspapers? Were they ultra nationalistic? The Daily News in particular?

B. I've no idea ... I can't ...

I. Well it's all right, if you can't remember.

B. I just can't remember. I remember being violently attacked by one of them in connection with some medals in the Kandyan Art Association.

I. Oh yes.

B. It was all great fun. I remember that. Oh yes, I know what it was. Somebody asked us to produce a gold medal as cheaply as possible and so we produced a gold medal with a very thin gold covering and a lead stuffing. And then somebody else got hold of one of these and cut it open and accused the Kandyan Arts Association - I was secretary of it - Kandyan Arts Association of selling as a gold medal something that wasn't a gold medal you see. Well, we had sold exactly what we had been asked for and what had been approved by the people who ordered it. But The Daily News - I think it must have been - The Daily News had

a glorious attack on the Kandyan Arts Association saying how dishonest we were. I think it referred to me by name, probably. And when I wrote the annual report, I was able to say that we'd had a certain amount of notoriety which we hadn't sought, and this brought another great outburst from The Daily News in a very fine style.

- I. Weren't there many personal attacks in the council too, on the civil servants?
- B. There were a good many. But you see, of course, in the council at that stage you get it, because of course your civil servant and your minister are one and the same, and the convention in this country whereby no civil servant is ever attacked in the House - only the Ministers are attacked - that convention can only apply when you get the ministerial system set up. I think it's a great pity that there were these attacks, but there they were. I don't think any of us worried about them ...
- I. You didn't resent them as ...?
- B. No, well, I mean, they were annoying. Sometimes of course, they went over the odds altogether. But the sort of average attack - one just ...
- I. ... because ...
- B. If one read it in the paper or in the Hansard one said "Hallo, Snoops has been at me again", and you threw it in the dip.
- I. Yes.
- B. It never worried me. I mean, I was attacked very much more than that in other places when I went on from Ceylon. I was saying that in the West Indies I was accused of every crime excepting incest - but that's not quite true. But they didn't worry me. I don't think they worried any of us.
- I. Because the Donoughmore Commission say that the Civil Service was a demoralizer ...
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- B. I don't think that's true.
- I. Yes, I think that's ...
- B. I don't think that's true. Or if - there may have been certain people who were demoralized by it, but I wouldn't say that it was true as a whole.
- I. But didn't you feel that the Government could have protected you to a greater extent?
- B. Well, the question was how they were going to do it, you could only do it in three ways, I suppose. One would be to bring some sort of action in the courts, if the thing was actionable, I suppose one could do that. Well that only drew attention to it all the more. I don't think it helped very much. Or you could have put some penalty on the paper. And of course the freedom of the press is one of the - almost like the doctrine of the Trinity, isn't it? - It's absolutely sacred. Or what - I mean, what were you going to do? What could Government do? I don't think - it certainly never worried me. Mind you, you can say, well, you can say it didn't matter in my case because I was a junior person in Ceylon, but it equally didn't worry me when it happened elsewhere.
- I. Yes, I see. Turning to the constitutional aspect ...
- B. Yes.
- I. This 1924 constitution was very much like the Jamaica Constitution in the early 19th century, and the legislatures of the first colonial empire - all of which came to grief.
- B. Now the '24 one was a majority - was an unofficial majority in council, wasn't it ...?
- I. Yes.
- B. ... with a Governor with overriding powers.
- I. Which he rarely resorted to.
- B. ... practically never used. Yes. Well, I had the same thing,
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of course, in Gambia, when I was Governor of Gambia, and I had the same thing in Mauritius. But ...

- I. But I was wondering why they set that thing up, because past experience should have taught them that it was rather difficult to work.
- B. Well, what are you going to do? I mean, it's a question of how is, how is the Crown Colony going to develop. You get to the stage - you start, you see, with the Governor, almost by himself. You then have a Governor with a small council which is chosen by himself of his own officials. You then go on to the stage when you've got some people nominated by the governor - you know all these stages as well as I do. Well - what was the other thing - I mean, is this a suggestion that there ought to be a quicker jump to a ministerial status, or what?
- I. Purely from the pragmatic point of view, this seemed - I mean, seems rather on unconstitutional principles, it seems rather obviously unworkable.
- B. Well, I don't know ...
- I. That's what Clifford himself said ...
- B. Yes.
- I. Do you agree with that?
- B. I don't know whether it was unworkable in Ceylon or not. I don't know enough about Ceylon to say, I'm afraid. I worked it without any great difficulty in other places.
- I. Oh, I see.
- B. There are various ways of doing it, and one can do it. What made it unworkable in Ceylon I wouldn't know, I think probably possibly the slump of 1923-24, there was a slump somewhere in the middle 20s - when money was very short and problems arose over that. How far Tamil Sinhalese difficulties worked into it, I don't know, I just don't know. I think this is a thing
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that I'm not competent to talk about.

- I. Would it be correct to say that after this, after 1924 the centre of gravity shifted from the executive council to the Finance Committee of the Legislative [Council] ...?
- B. A good deal of - to a very large extent I think it did. I think that the Finance Committee was magnified in a way that it shouldn't have been.
- I. And would you say - this again, has been put forward by someone - that the Governor rarely defied this Committee though he had the constitutional power to do so?
- B. Very rarely I think. You see, if the - although the local Governor has got overriding powers, obviously he doesn't want to use them if it can be avoided for a great number of reasons, but the most important one is that if you start using them there's no end to it. And in the second place, if you start using them you are taking the responsibility that the people of the country ought to be taking.
- I. It was considered policy then?
- B. It was considered most undesirable to use the paramount powers unless they could - unless there was [no alternative??]. I used - as a Governor I used them twice, over a number of years. Once was to sort out the mess that the Council got itself into and they asked me to do it.
- I. Mmm. Apart from a desire to prevent the constitution from being brought to a standstill, was there a - in Ceylon was there a desire to placate the politicians and to prevent them from adopting Indian extremes.
- B. Again, I simply don't think I can answer that, because it was - as I say, I was a very junior person. I wasn't a member of the Executive Council or anything of that sort. I wasn't in the inner workings of Government at all. People like Freddy Bowes
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of course, and some of them were, I wasn't.

- I. Would you say that, for instance, the turn of events in India was kept in mind constantly?
- B. No, not - certainly not in my mind.
- I. You didn't have occasion to discuss it socially ...?
- B. No.
- I. ... round dinner ...?
- B. No, no, someone may have mentioned it, but it wasn't the sort of overriding influence.
- I. It didn't dominate ...?
- B. In the circles in which I was moving, certainly not, how far it was ...
- I. It's important because, I think if it was not - [if] you didn't discuss it in the Secretariat ...
- B. No.
- I. It was ...
- B. No, no, it was never discussed in the Secretariat, that I recollect. We were too busy getting on with Ceylon.
- I. India is so close and it had, you know, it has implications.
- B. Of course, India really became really, really, really difficult in the 30s, wasn't it?
- I. Yes.
- B. You see.
- I. But the mass movement was beginning and ...
- B. Yes, was beginning, but it was only beginning; and again, just as with Ceylon, the idea of sovereignty was there, but it was not in the immediately foreseeable future. And so it was, I think, with India until the thirties. But I speak subject to correction because I've never served in India.
- I. Would you agree with Clifford's view that the constitution was unworkable, or with Stanley's view? He said that in the past,
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co-operation had outweighed opposition, in the 1924 constitution.

B. Well, I simply don't remember. Now, let's get these dates right. I was on leave from '24 - '25. '24 I was in the Secretariat. '26 - '27, I was in Badulla, '28 I was in Trinco.

I. The same Constitutions for that period, '24 onwards ...

B. Now, I don't remember any particular difficulties in working them, but of course, I wasn't working ... [in the centre]. I was out in the country. You want somebody who spent those years in the Secretariat, really, for that. Sort of thing that Mark Young can do.

I. Yes, I think I'll ask him that. Do you think that civil servants went too far in their political attacks, especially, say, in trying to force Ceylonisation - did they go very far?

B. Do I think that the civil servants ...?

I. The politicians.

B. The politicians went too far?

I. In their attacks on government and on the civil servants.

B. Yes, I think so. I think it's a pity. I think that of course the - it's very easy to gain popularity by making fiery speeches. It's very easy to get - to sell your newspaper by attacking Government. Oh, it's done in this country. I think it's a pity, but I don't think ...

I. Was there a - I suspect - well, was there any question of an inferiority complex which brought about a certain degree of aggressiveness? This is ...

B. Inferiority complex on the part of the civil servants, or what?

I. No, the politicians.

B. Politicians.

I. Ceylonese politicians.

B. Well, the politician's always on the make whether he's a politi-

cian in England or a politician in Ceylon. And I suppose there was the irritation of seeing your country run by people whose way of life was quite different from yours. I think that's a very reasonable irritation. I don't blame anybody for being irritated over that. The trouble arises when the irritation is taken to a stage when it hinders the Government and makes the Government more inefficient than it otherwise would be. That is the danger.

- I. In Bowes sometimes I see a tendency to expect civilians who had come out to England and received a University education, and so on and so forth, to show their gratitude. He uses the word in fact - "to show their gratitude" by working smoothly with Government. Would you say that - I mean - what would you say about this sort of view?
- B. Well I wouldn't - I never expect anybody to be grateful. I learnt that bitter lesson long ago. I don't think it's a good view, I, it's ...
- I. It is after all the very essence of a liberal education.
- B. Setting about it the wrong way. It's the wrong angle on the whole thing. If a man has been over here and sees how things are run in this country, and so on, when he goes back to Ceylon or anywhere else, he ought to be able to see that the people who are running it there - I'm talking now of Crown Colony days - are trying to run it along principles and so on which are the principles of this country, and to that extent one would expect him to have a certain sympathy - if you like to use the word sympathy - or a certain appreciation of what Government's trying to do. But to suggest that because someone has come over here that they therefore must take government side, I mean, it's nonsense.
- I. Yes, it seemed rather an extreme point of view.
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- B. Oh, I think it's a ridiculous point of view.
- I. And well, the Donoughmore commission was in Ceylon in your time.
- B. The Donoughmore Commission had come, yes, and the report was just out when I left. I remember dining with Fletcher, Sir Murchiston Fletcher, who was the Colonial Secretary, either the night, or two nights, before I left Ceylon, and the report had just come out then. And one was sort of busy trying to find time to read it. But I wasn't there long enough to know anything about the reactions ...
- I. No, er well, were individual civil servants consulted by the Commission?
- B. I would have said they were, but I just don't remember. When it came - it came out in '28?
- I. '28 I think.
- B. '28.
- I. Late '28.
- B. Well, late '28. Well, I don't remember whether they came to Trinco or not. I imagine if they'd consulted anybody it would be G.A. of Eastern Province who would be in Bathcaloa.
- I. Yes.
- B. ... I wouldn't swear to it, but I don't remember talking to any of them. Now, after all, they'd do most of their discussion in Colombo, wouldn't they?
- I. Would you say that the common official approach to their recommendations was to view them as a madness? The official approach in Ceylon.
- B. You mean the Government approach?
- I. Well, the individual officer ...
- B. The individual civil servant?
- I. Yes. Of course, you weren't out there ...
- B. I don't think so, because I don't think an opinion had time to
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form before I left, you see. I know Sir Murchiston Fletcher was very agitated, of course, at a certain amount of what the Donoughmore Report had to say about him.

I. Oh, I see.

B. But that was - reference to Sir Murchiston himself. But I don't think that there had been time for the Civil Service as a body, or anything of that sort, to form a very definite opinion on it. Up to the time I left.

I. What is your personal view of their suggestions ...?

B. Well, I think it was a very bold attempt to try to get away from this problem of the Westminster model. Now this has been argued about as you know day in, day out, month in, month out, and we're always blamed, the people of this country, and all the civil servants, who've gone abroad, we're always blamed of trying to impose on a tropical country, a system of government which is admirable in England, or more or less admirable, but not so successful elsewhere. Well now, there are various things about that. And first of all, we didn't always try to do it, we tried the Donoughmore Report instead, the the Donoughmore scheme and that was found to be most unsatisfactory by the people it was intended to develop. On the other hand, what is happening in most cases is that people have asked for the Westminster model. In fact, I know of an interesting case that was so, that had a look at three other things and then decided to go for the Westminster model, and then went for it so whole-heartedly that they copied the embroidery on the Speaker's gown, to make quite certain they had it exactly. Well, I think it was a very fine attempt to try to find - to try to get out of the rut, to try to find some other method. Whether it could have worked if it had been introduced years earlier, whether it could have worked, I don't know. But there had grown up this sort of mystique of

the Court with the Governor as the Sovereign, and the sort of people who like being seen about at Court and so on and all the rest of it. This sort of mystique had grown up, and when anything else which was not quite so - hadn't got this mystique attached to it, it was considered to be inferior. And of course, there was always the argument that was brought about you know when we did try to do this sort of thing - the Westminster model is what we want, you're trying to fob us off with something that's not so good.

- I. Yes, I see. It's become a sort of talisman.
- B. It has been really, yes. It's all right in Ceylon, because Ceylon's big enough, but it's absolute nonsense to have the Westminster model in places like the size of some of these small places - like Gambia, but don't say I said so. Because I'm an ex-Governor of Gambia.
- I. Don't you think the Donoughmore Constitution was as good a half-way house as could be devised?
- B. I think it probably was. I never discovered, I've never known because I was busy doing my other things, I've never known why you people did dislike it so much. You tell me that.
- I. Well ...
- B. I'd be very interested to hear.
- I. From the practical point of view the Executive Council, the Committee System ...
- B. Yes ...
- I. ... was found - there was a lack of co-ordination.
- B. Mmm.
- I. And they worked in compartments, you see. And, that was one of the reasons, and well, I think they - I think it rather hindered the growth of a party system, and I think people would seem to think that was a good point, though I don't quite agree.
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- B. But I suppose the lack of co-ordination could have been put right inside the constitution, couldn't it?
- I. It would have been rather difficult because there was no collective responsibility in administering.
- B. No. Well, one wonders whether with some means of working it couldn't have been put right. Anyway, I don't know. I have always wondered why it was so unpopular.
- I. Would you have found it rather difficult to adapt yourself to Ministerial rule with Sinhalese Ministers over you, if you had been there?
- B. I don't think so. I don't see why - I mean - granted that Minister was at all a reasonable person. I tell you, I was taught my job by a Ceylonese office-assistant. I don't think I would have done. I think I'd have been terribly interested in it. Tried to ...
- I. It was a very interesting experiment.
- B. ... tried to use the knowledge that I had to help the Minister; if I'd been his permanent Secretary or something of that sort, I think I would have been awfully interested.
- I. Would you say that it was ...?
- B. I've never had a passion for power. I've had a lot of power, I've had to use power, but it's never been a thing that I looked for.
- I. Would you say that it was Sir Drummond Shiels who was responsible for the more radical aspects?
- B. Of the Donoughmore Report?
- I. Yes. The more radical ...
- B. I just don't know. I don't know. I did know him, but I just don't know.
- I. Again, a rather hypothetical question: do you think a Conservative Ministry in England would have treated the Donoughmore
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Report - well, given it colder and less sympathetic treatment?

B. I'd forgotten it was a Labour Government that was in ...

I. Sir Sidney Webb was Secretary and Sir Drummond Shiels was Parliamentary Under Secretary ...

B. He was Parliamentary Under Secretary. But were they there when it was actually brought into force?

I. Well, they had to - when it came out, I think they approved it...

B. I should very much doubt it. After all, Colonial Politics, using the phrase for convenience, Colonial Politics are very much non-party affairs in this country.

I. Yes, that's true.

B. And what - and particularly if you've got a very high-powered Commission like that - after all it was a very high-powered Commission indeed - I think it's very unlikely that any other party wouldn't have done the same about it. But as you say, it's very hypothetical, that one.

I. Yes, it is. I would like to switch to a different sphere, agriculture and land. And - did your Secretariat experience well - teach you something about Government land policy?

B. I think the overriding consideration as regards land in the Secretariat, apart from ownership questions and things of that sort - I think the overriding consideration was the food problem. You see there was an acute shortage of rice in twenty-something, and then Sir Edward Denham was made some sort of an overlord to try to increase rice production and the greater use of land, and I think that any real thought about land - I'm drawing on a memory which is a bit faint - I would have thought that any real thought about land at that time was much more concerned with increasing food production - making Ceylon more independent of India or whatever it might be - Burma - for rice than anything else. On the more technical side, with regard to land ownership

and all that sort of thing there was that remarkable Land Settlement Department.

I. Yes.

B. Which did the most superb work, I think.

I. Yes.

B. And then there was our District Judge's Court which did the partition stuff. Was that what you had in mind, or am I really ... ?

I. Yes. That's what I wanted to know. As one aspect of it - do you know what the official policy was to the question of Sinhalese working on the plantations? I mean, did they prefer them to be a resident labour force, or would they have preferred them to be a part-time force?

B. But surely, the people who worked on the tea ...

I. They were Tamils.

B. ... they were Tamils, weren't they?

I. Yes. No, I was wondering - when there was a shortage sometimes the planters - well certainly before your period - sometimes wanted to organise Sinhalese labour. This is more or less a hypothetical question, because Sinhalese did not work ... But I would like to know - well say, what your personal attitude would be if you found that many Sinhalese were going into the plantations and divorcing themselves from the soil. You see, leaving their plots or - and becoming resident ...

B. Being paid labour on a tea estate, you mean?

I. Yes.

B. I should have disliked it, I think. As you say, it is very hypothetical. I was concerned with an attempt - going back to the use of land - I was concerned with an attempt which I think the Planters' Association was largely concerned with, to make a new settlement - a new village - down in the Tamankaduwa part

of the world. Or somewhere down that way, I remember; looking at the site and so on. And this was a very definite attempt on the part of the Government to open up new land in rice - in food, food crops. And the - I should have thought that - I don't remember formulating this definitely for myself - but I should have thought that their idea was that the Sinhalese villagers - Sinhalese villager should have his own land and develop his - cultivate his own land and increase the food crops available in the country, leaving Tamil labour for use on the tea estates.

I. On the tea estates.

B. But, as I say, I don't think I ever formulated this in my mind at the time.

I. What were the objectives of British land policy? Sale of land to planters and capitalists, of whatever nationality, or (b) conservation of a native peasantry?

B. Well, once again, I'm not sure whether I ever saw - or if I did I've forgotten now what this statement of policy was. I should imagine it was two-fold. Again on the one hand the fact - one wanted food crops grown for subsistence purposes, on the other hand the wealth of Ceylon at that time came almost entirely from tea and rubber and coconuts, for which you wanted paid labour. And you had to make the best of a balance between the two.

I. Balance, yes ...

B. But again, I don't remember formulating this at the time. This is hindsight on the matter.

I. Was Government policy that of trying to place the capitalists "near enough to the native to influence him but not so near as to dispossess him"?

B. I wouldn't know what the policy was in practice.

I. Would you have tended to favour such a policy personally?

B. Say it again - to ...?

- I. "Near enough to the native to influence him, but not so near as to dispossess him," of the land.
- B. Certainly not so near as to disposses him ...
- I. Yes.
- B. That's the last thing I should have wanted to do. Whether you could really influence a native by putting a capitalist near him - that I don't know. Does a capitalist in this country influence the non-capitalist?
- I. I mean influence him by giving him opportunities for part-time labour.
- B. That's all fringe stuff, isn't it?
- I. Well, in certain areas there was this question of peasants selling their lands ...
- B. To the estates?
- I. Yes. Selling crown land - high lands - which they had on dubious title - some of which they needed for their village. Selling to - well, not necessarily to European planters only. In the lowlands it was to Sinhalese coconut and rubber planters - sometimes to the detriment of the village.
- B. Yes. Well, I can only tell you this - from the point of view of my own feelings in the matter that when I eventually went to Granada, I was a very strong supporter there of local land settlement schemes. And we did settle a very large number of people on the land there and not on the coco estates.
- I. Do you know if the Land Settlement Department, as a matter of policy and in the course of their day-to-day work, whether the L.S.O's tried to deter this sort of sale by the peasants?
- B. I should have thought they did, but I can't tell you from my own knowledge. I know that the peasant had no greater friend than the land settlement officer and nobody had a greater knowledge of the peasant than the land settlement officer - they had the
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most remarkable knowledge of them. And I am sure that their sympathies would all be with the peasant, or with the peasant holding his own plot of land.

I. What were the real tasks of the land settlement department?

B. The start of it?

I. What were the tasks?

B. Oh. The tasks, as far as I recollect, were to - on the basis of a survey which went on at the same time over the whole of the island, was to establish whether the people who were occupying certain areas of land did in fact own them with a clear title, and giving them a clear title if they did in fact so own them. Or, if there wasn't a clear title, then on various bases of calculation which they were able to make, making that land available to these people with clear title for a relatively small payment. Plus, of course, the reservation of areas of forest which ...

I. They had the power both on paper and in practise to decide well, that certain land was crown and also to delimit certain land for the village. And, could they delimit land for individuals?

B. They could. They could say that - Appuhamy, who lives on that area, has lived on that area for so long that he has a clear title to it, or that Appuhamy has a pretty good title to that area, it's not quite good enough, on the payment of x rupees per acre, we will give him a title.

I. Yes. That is the impression I got. You see, there is a thesis on this in Cambridge, and he has used the diaries, which is first hand. But also speaking to my father - of course he was not in this Department - but he gave me a contrary impression.

B. Oh did he. Well, I wouldn't like to set up as an authority in Land Settlement.

I. No, but you were in the Secretariat and ...

- B. Of course, the people who knew this were Wedderburn, and Wait and people are dead now. They would be experts on it.
- I. I hope to meet Mr. Basset and Mr. Sandys.
- B. Well, they would know a great deal more about it than I do, because I've never worked in the Department. The Land Settlement Department were certainly not there to grab land back for the Crown, but of course, in Ceylon it was Crown land anyway, unless you could prove it against the Crown.
- I. Yes, well, I think for the nineteenth century especially that was rather a stiff test, because they had no ...
- B. No, well that was the point of the Department, to do the enquiries for them, and sort it out.
- I. Do you think that, apart from deterring the - did they consciously set out to deter speculators and land brokers. If say, and I know this happened, a planter had bought land from a peasant on dubious title, to the detriment of the village, did they deprive the planter of a portion of this land?
- B. There, I can't tell you because I don't know. There I would imagine that they would, but I can't ...
- I. No, I would just like your opinion that, though I know you put it as a feeling, you're not certain, but that's what I want to ...
- B. That's what I would imagine. The Land Settlement Department was there primarily to protect Appuhamy and his plot, and give him a clear title to it by one means or another if it was at all possible.
- I. Yes. Would you say that the Ceylonese land speculators, and buyers, and the like, and the capitalists, planters, were rather unscrupulous in the way they purchased land?
- B. I don't remember anything particularly connected with the purchase of land for estate purposes, for tea estate purposes and so on. I don't think it ever.... You see in the North Central
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Province, this didn't arise. When I was in Trinco it didn't arise. So that I was never an administrative officer in an area where - I was a judge, but never an administrative officer - in an area where it arose, and so I just don't know.

I. I was aware of that, but I was wondering whether ...

B. I just don't know.

I. ... your Secretariat work had brought ...

B. No, no. Secretariat work - this hardly ever came my way in the Secretariat at all.

I. Oh, I see.

B. If, indeed, it came there at all. After all, there were rules laid down, very definite rules, about the acquisition of land by estates - what those rules were I don't remember now - but they were laid down, and I've no doubt they were adhered to in land purchase.

I. Do you personally know or suspect ...?

B. Mark you, I've bought land, not for me, but for town purposes. I remember buying land for the main road in Trincomalee in the days when that was being done, and I discovered a great dodge about that, and that was that you offered cash, of course, and you used to have a nice packet of [notes]. I remember Sir John Fraser saying to me "Look, when you have to buy land for the Government, remember my old tip. Have a bag of rupees, and just chink it as you are making the offer." Of course, silver rupees had gone out by my time. It was all paper, and my trick used to be to take out the bundles of treasury notes, nice new treasury notes, and let them slip through my fingers while I argued with the man, and tried to get the land for the Government as cheaply as I reasonably could so that I could ...

I. Psychological.

B. Psychological.

- I. Do you think, or do you suspect that some of the politicians who are leading this attack on the Land Settlement Department and on Government regarding land policy are also interested in land buying themselves?
- B. I think you've got me very much out of my depth now, because a) I had very little first-hand experience of this and b) I wouldn't like to trust my memory back on it. All I could give you would be simply impressions, and as I say, I think that the Land Settlement's main job, and I know it from the men I worked with and knew, and other ways, that their heart was with the peasant, and not with the estate.
- I. Er - Sir Maxwell Wedderburn was in the Department.
- B. He was, and there was Wait, of course.
- I. They were capable men, were they?
- B. Both very fine people, who knew, really knew, Ceylon. I reckon the Land Settlement people knew Ceylon better than any other Englishman out there, and of course they talked the language with absolute fluency.
- I. Didn't they have to take interpreters with them; I mean, did they take interpreters with them?
- B. Oh, I suppose their chief clerks and people could interpret if required, but they were working on their own, and conducted all their affairs on their own, just as Kenneth Hunter Campbell, who was the man who ran the Co-operative Societies, he always took his meetings in either Sinhalese or Tamil and had no interpreter at all.
- I. Do you know anything about the policy towards the Co-operative Societies?
- B. Yes, I was there when - it was really Stockdale you know, Sir Frank Stockdale, who was the leading light in developing that -
- I. When was it begun? Before your time?
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B. It was begun before my time, but it was very much in its infancy, and grew very much during my time, and then they set up the - at one time the Record Clerk (?) was also the Registrar of Co-operative Society, and they then set up a separate Co-operatives department, somewhere about the middle '20s, I think, and Kenneth Hunter Campbell was the Registrar, and his assistant was Maybin, afterwards Sir John Maybin in Nigeria, and when Campbell came to Trinco to look at the Co-operative Societies there, when I was A.G.A., I said to him "Look, can I come to one of your meetings?" And he said "Yes, come with pleasure." I went with him to a whole meeting and listened to it, and he took the whole thing entirely in Tamil. Beginning to end. Again, there was somebody who could have interpreted if wanted, but he was talking in Tamil and did not ...

I. What were the basic aims?

B. At that time, I think the basic aims were very largely Co-operative Credit Societies for money, for assistance ...

I. Agricultural credit?

B. Agricultural credit. Then of course it began to develop out into all sorts of things, and you had a Co-operative midwife, and a Co-operative this, that and the other, but it began on agricultural credit.

I. What would you say were the obstacles?

B. Lack of trust in a village between one person and another, a new thing which had never been done before, and probably funds to help finance it.

I. What sort of success did it have?

B. Great success. It's an interesting thing that the Asiatic is a good co-operative man. I've noticed it in other countries where they have had both Asiatic and Negro, and the Asiatic Societies are always a success, and the Negro ...

- I. Oh well the Indians.... But, of course, maybe you are generalising from your experience with Indians in the West Indies.
- B. I am thinking of Indians in the West Indies, and also in Mauritius.
- I. Indians seem to be particularly good at that sort of thing ...
- B. They are.
- I. ... Chetty blood in them.
- B. I don't know what it is, but they're very good at it. But you Sinhalese weren't too bad at it yourselves.
- I. Did they try to improve marketing facilities, too?
- B. There was a certain amount of that, but that I saw a great deal more of in other places later on.
- I. Do you think more could have been done on these lines?
- B. Well, I think it was a thing that had to grow, you see. I've forgotten, was it the Chinese who started it? I've forgotten who first started Co-operative Societies. Some very odd race. I don't remember. Anyway, it was a new thing, and it had to be developed, and people had to get accustomed to it to work it, and of course again it was a question of money. There were only a certain number of people, and it was a very skilled job, being a Registrar. There were only a certain number of people available for it and you had to make do with what you'd got. It's awfully important, I think, to keep before you this point that Ceylon was not in those days the rich country that it has been in the past. I won't say that it is at the moment, but that it has been.
- I. Regarding land, do you think a more liberalised land sales policy would have helped the peasant?
- B. Liberalised in what way? Do you mean letting them have the land cheaper, or what?
- I. Yes, cheaper, and - er - well, obviously, it would mean some sort
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of discrimination in favour of the peasant. Was there instalment paying?

- B. I thought there were payments by instalments, but again I just wouldn't remember. You see, I didn't work in the Land Settlement Department myself, and the Secretariat wasn't all that centralised. You let the Land Settlement Department get on with its job in accordance with its own rules.
- I. Branching into another line, wouldn't you say that the laws where land sales regulations, and other administrative regulations, and especially the judicial procedure and so on and so forth, were far too sophisticated for the peasantry?
- B. You're thinking now of partition of land? Cases I used to hear in the District Court and that sort of thing?
- I. Yes, that sort of thing.
- B. Well, I suppose they could have been made simpler, but you've got to remember that you had all through Ceylon very efficient collection of lawyers, members of the Bar, in all the various headquarters, and cases of that sort were nearly always argued by lawyers before you, so that they were being argued by people who were themselves sophisticated. Whether you should have cut all that out, and not had them dealt with at the Courts at all is another matter.
- I. Yes. What would you say about that sort of viewpoint, that you shouldn't have had the lawyers? Where it was such an expense for the peasant, and they ...
- B. There again, it's a question of what we found, what we met, and I suppose we accepted it, you see, because there it was when we got to it. There were these local Bars; some were very good. Colombo Bar, of course, was a superb Bar, and we accepted that as being the case. Now you would never have been able to cut the lawyers out of that ...
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- I. No, not in the towns, but I was thinking, especially in Anuradhapura and some of that area whether, in your opinion, it would have been better to have simpler and more summary ...
- B. It might have been originally if it could have been brought in originally, but we had reached the stage, I would say, by the time I went down there in '20, where you couldn't have turned it back. There would have been a frightful howl if Government was going back on an established arrangement.
- I. How useful were the Gansabhas as judicial tribunals? They were used sometimes ...
- B. Well - in the North Central Province, which is the only one I know of at first hand, they were nearly almost entirely concerned with irrigation.
- I. Oh, I see. There was no judicial work there?
- B. Well, there was judicial work if a fellow didn't obey the village rules about irrigation, you see. They settled the date on which the fields were to be flooded; they settled the date on which the flood was to be turned off; they settled the date on which buffaloes were to go in; they settled the date when the squeegee things were to go in; they settled the date when the rice was to be planted; they settled the date when the water was to be turned on to the rice that had been planted. The Gansabhawas were concerned with the sanctions to be applied if those rules were not carried out. I'm talking of the N.C.P. only, because it's the only one I know of first-hand. That they did very well.
- I. That was Freeman's area, wasn't it. What sort of man was he?
- B. Oh, a most remarkable person. Now if anybody had the welfare of Appuhamy at heart, it was Freeman. He was the most unpractical person in certain ways. As he got older, he got more and more unpractical, but he had been a very great man in his
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day, and he was dearly loved, of course, by the peasants.

I. Your point about his being unpractical is important, because Bowes, quite incidentally, this is related - talking about the young Freeman in the 1900s - calls him naïve and guileless.

B. Really? Yes, he was a delightful person.

I. I was wondering whether his very guilelessness helped to get him elected?

B. Well, it may have been, I wouldn't know about that one. I wasn't in on his electoral campaign.

I. Well, it's a very unusual thing for a G.A. ...

B. You get it, every now and then, you get somebody ... I suppose he was able to think in the right way, and he had this great facility, of course, for language, and he loved you dearly, and you loved him. The only place where I have been able to establish that sort of relationship was with my West Indians, whom I loved, and I think they loved me.

I. Oh, I see. Well, I'm glad you enjoyed it out there ...

INTERRUPTION.

B. We really loved them, and were fond of them. I know I was, of my people in Trinco. Very, very fond of them, and anything that one could do for them in the way of trying to improve their lot, and helping them, I was only too delighted to do. We may have taken a narrow view of what should be done, I wouldn't deny that for a moment, but it wasn't done because it was a job, it was our job, but it was done because it was a job that we loved doing. The District Officer's job was the most interesting in the world.

I. Didn't you find it rather difficult to establish a rapport with the villager?

B. I found it difficult in Trinco, because of my very poor knowledge of Tamil. If I'd gone back as G.A. in North Central Province,

or as A.G.A. in one of the Kandyan provinces, I probably wouldn't have found it so difficult. But Trinco was the first Tamil place I had ever been in, and I was very largely there, dependent on an interpreter. I did know a certain amount of Tamil, but if I was going to do any negotiations, or arguments, or that sort of thing, it had to be done through an interpreter, and that of course does create a barrier right away, you can't help it. But there it is. I didn't choose to go to Trinco, I was sent to Trinco. I wouldn't have chosen a Tamil area if I had had my choice. On the other hand, I loved Trinco. It was a delightful place, and of course we had all the fun of having the Navy in, which was great fun from the District Officer's point of view, also.

- I. In 1910, in these reforms, in this constitutional question, Clifford and MacCullum argued that the G.A., the A.G.A., and the headman, represented the people better than this new middle class. Would you comment on this?
- B. What year was this?
- I. In 1910.
- B. Ten years before me.
- I. What would you say about your time? Did you represent the people better?
- B. Well, of course, there were vast areas in Ceylon where there wasn't very much in the way of a middle class. Take Trinco. Middle class, if any, were your merchants, who were - what was the name of the big grocer, I've forgotten, in Trinco - he certainly wasn't, I doubt whether he was a Sinhalese at all, I mean, somebody from outside, and I think that probably at that stage we made a very good shot at representing them. I wouldn't say we did it better, but ...
- I. No, but he used the general argument against giving more power
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to them, to their country, in effect, to the middle class, but the point is there seems to be some sort of contradiction, because the educational policy was alive to developing this elite, you see, to bringing forth a certain ... people with some liberal education, and when they had reached the stage of being middle class, educated middle class, they were denied the right to represent their people, and also, constitutionally, when you look at it, the Magna Carta was a selfish baronial document.

- B. Entirely. All this chat about the basis of British freedom, of English freedom, well, Magna Carta was just a few people at the top, nothing else.
- I. And so looking at it from that point of view, you feel that MacCallum's argument is invalid?
- B. I think it probably is invalid, probably is.
- I. Certainly I wouldn't have liked to see an oligarchy created - you know, given them complete power - but proportionate to the extent they represented the people or represented the aspirations of the people, they could have been given more power.
- B. I think probably. We were slow on all that, I mean, there's no question about it, and looking back on it now, we were very slow. But you've got to relate that to the way in which people were thinking in this country. That's no excuse, but that is the reason. You couldn't expect your people out there to be very far ahead, I think, of what public opinion in this country was thinking and feeling, and as I said to you earlier on, at that time very much the view here was that you were, eventually, to turn the country into something which resembled England; which was all wrong. I mean, we can see it now. It's quite easy now, looking back to see that that was the wrong idea.
- I. It was still so in the 1920s, was it, still ...?
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- B. I think so, still then. I think we were just beginning to change our minds. We were just beginning to see there was something else ...
- I. The Greater Britain concept?
- B. Yes, but it takes a long time....

END

Sir Hilary Blood's Answers to Questions forwarded by M.W. Roberts,^{*}
29 December 1965.

Extract from a letter from Sir Hilary Blood - M.W. Roberts

You must remember that I left Ceylon more than 30 years ago and that I was there, for 10 years only, as a very young man who, by upbringing, tended to accept conditions, and to try to improve them rather than to question their basis and radically to change them.

1. You have mentioned (Sir) E.B. Denham's scheme for increased food production - could you elaborate on what the scheme was.
2. With what success was the scheme carried out?
3. I have a feeling that this scheme was raised with an air of originality and much fanfare whereas, in fact, it was a resuscitation of an old and rather obvious idea - and more significantly, a resuscitation coloured by great sanguineness. Would you comment on this?
4. What sort of man was Denham?

Answer:

Denham was a man of fertile imagination and great energy. He liked the limelight and caught it. He was therefore an ideal person to organize a scheme which called for public support and required for its successful operation the creation of favourable public opinion.

I do not now remember details of the scheme except that it involved bringing new areas under paddy cultivation, and the main aim was to be independent of imported rice. No doubt this was not a new idea but in 1920 it was much in people's minds because of a shortage of rice.

5. You have also mentioned an attempt to form a rice-cultivating settlement by planters (??) in Badulla, when you were there. Could you provide more information as to aims and extent of success. Were Government involved? Who were the planters? Were the settlers to be Sinhalese or Tamils?

Answer:

The scheme I referred to was fathered by the Ceylon Planters Assn. and involved opening new lands and creating a new

* This is a retyped version. It was originally typed in elite and copies in London and Oxford are in that form.

village in the Tamenkadua part of the world in the N.C.P. The settlers were to be Sinhalese and I think the scheme was to be financed by the P.A.[Planters Association]. The G.A., N.C.P.[North-Central Province] was concerned with running the scheme, advised of course by the Irrigation, Forest, and other departments.

6. Could you provide your own appraisal of men like Sir M. Fletcher (Sir) T. Southorn, (Sir) M.M. Wedderburn and Sir F. Tyrrell.
7. I am particularly interested in finding out whether Sir F. Tyrrell and Sir M.M. Wedderburn possessed or lacked qualities which would enable them to adapt themselves (admittedly a difficult transition) to the Donoughmore Constitution. This is of some historical relevance.
8. Did Sir M. Fletcher allow politicians to come over the heads of the G.A's, etc. and make complaints? Did he, in your opinion, make no attempt or a very weak attempt to protect Civil Servants?

Answer:

Southorn, Wedderburn and Tyrrell were Ceylon Civil Servants: All had the greatest affection for the country and its people. Wedderburn, because of his Land Settlement experience, had probably the most intimate knowledge of the villager. I do not remember any European officer whose knowledge approached that of Wedderburn. Also he spoke the most fluent Sinhalese. Tyrrell and Southorn were primarily administrators: both were fully capable of working the Donoughmore Constitution. Whether they believed it was the appropriate set up for Ceylon I do not know. I left Ceylon just as the Donoughmore Report came out.

Fletcher came to Ceylon from H.[Hong] Kong where he had been for all his official life. I think he found the adjustment to Ceylon conditions somewhat difficult. I think on the whole he tended to take the politicians' views rather than the civil servants' views as the ideas by which he should be guided. He was certainly unpopular with the Civil Service. He was exceedingly able - possibly he had more brains than balance.

9. Regarding your point that the empirical approach is the best approach I would not quarrel, but (a) in the judicial sphere did it not lead young magistrates to make a terrible mess of some cases (though appeal was there, it was an expensive business) and (b) on the administrative side could not trial

by error lead to grievous results - hypothetically I/^{can}think of several instances when matters of life and death could be affected by the fact that a young officer had not been given much instruction (whether jungle lore or otherwise) by his superior?

10. Would you have found some technical training of a basic nature in practical matters like irrigation, bridge construction, surveying and agriculture a useful aid in your revenue administrative work? Admittedly the new departments made some of this unnecessary but it would have been useful even in your time - and a great blessing around the turn of the century and before.

Answer:

I don't remember any case in which a young magistrate, or district judge, made a terrible mess. Magistrate's work was carried out with the help of very able members of the bar and was generally supervised by G.A.A.¹ As regards jungle lore cadets went on circuit with their G.A.A. and learned first hand in that way. Mistakes were no doubt made on the bench and in the jungle but the Civil Service provided a framework within which the young officer found support and help, and no P.M. sat in the bench without having first a period of instruction on the bench with an experienced magistrate. I sat as a learner with the P.M., [Police Magistrate] Colombo in 1920 and learned my early lessons from him. 'Life and death' was a matter for the Supreme Court - or the Medical Dept! For practical work in the jungle stations we had Supts. of Minor Roads for road, bridge and survey work and of course the Ag. [Agricultural] Dept., Irrigation Dept. and Survey Dept. to do the highly skilled work which the A.G.A. or G.A. correlated to the ends in view.

11. Did you consider that share-cropping prevailed to an excessive extent in Trincomalee District? Would you say that the peasants were more indebted and worse off than those in Anuradhapura District or other districts in the South-West?

Answer:

I am afraid I don't remember the extent of share cropping in the Trinco District. I think the peasants' health was

1. Probably a mistake. Read as A.G.A.

better in the E.P. than in N.C.P. They were mostly Tamils and perhaps worked harder than Sinhalese.

12. Did the cooperative credit movement have any influence in reducing peasant indebtedness?

Answer:

Yes certainly - but to what extent I could not now remember, if indeed I ever saw any actual statistics.