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P A P E R S

RELATING TO THE

MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE LEGISLATURES

OF

BARBADOS, MONTSERRAT, NEVIS, VIRGIN ISLANDS,

ST. CHRISTOPHER, AND ST. VINCENT,

FOR THE

A B O L I T I O N

OF THE

SYSTEM OF APPRENTICESHIP

ON THE

1st AUGUST 1838.

[PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT BY HER MAJESTY'S COMMAND.]

Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
26 June 1838.

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B A R B A D O S.

— No. 1. —

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. Murray MacGregor* to
Lord *Glenelg*.

Government House, Barbados,
1 January 1838.

My Lord,

BARBADOS.

HAVING forwarded by the present opportunity reports from the Lieutenant-governors in the Windward Islands, relating to the probable effects, in their respective colonies, upon the apprenticed population, of the liberation, in August next, of the non-prædial class, it is no less necessary that the bearings of this question, in immediate reference to Barbados, should be submitted likewise to your Lordship.

—
No. 1.

The special magistrates entertain various impressions in regard to it.

One apprehends “no difficulty when the change takes place, where the prædial apprentices are quite satisfied they are placed in their proper class.”

Another states, “in my opinion the manumission of the non-prædial apprentices in the ensuing year will cause great discontent among those of the prædial class termed tradesmen; many expressed their dissatisfaction at the distinction made between themselves and a certain portion of their brethren in trade, not belonging to lands and classed non-prædial”.—“Desertion will, in my opinion, be occasioned by the great facilities which will be afforded the prædials among their numerous liberated relations and friends for that purpose.”—“The prædials will, I think, work sulkily for a short time after the non-prædial’s servitude, but will soon return to their usual cheerfulness.”

A third special justice observes, “For a day or two about the period, the minds of the prædial class may be unhinged, and some remissness shown in their labour, but they have been so unremittingly trained for their entire lives to obedience and labour, that I do not apprehend any other result at this crisis.”—“I am also of opinion that the non-prædials, who will then become free, will betake themselves to an honest calling, either as domestics, or labourers, or tradesmen, for wages.”

A fourth is of “opinion, as far as he can see, that the change in the relation of the non-prædial and prædial apprenticed labourers, to be accomplished in August next, appears to be so perfectly understood by the parties themselves, that he has no reason, at present, to expect any great excitement among the prædial class of apprenticed labourers at the crisis alluded to.”

A different conclusion is adopted by a fifth special justice, who reports “that having visited every estate in the district last month, and in communication with the prædial apprenticed labourers, I found several under the impression that all classes were to be liberated next August from the restriction of apprenticeship; and when that period arrives, much discontent, in my opinion, will exist with the prædial class, and their services to their employers, for the two years ensuing, will be given with much reluctance.”

The sixth declares, “I feel an inability to advance any positive reason to support the supposition that the contemplated change in the apprenticed system, to be accomplished in August 1838, will probably create any ebullition of feeling on the part of the prædial apprentices, or, on the other hand, that the continuance of service enjoined on them as prædials will be received with a right understanding of this important alteration. I offer this remark, because I have been unsuccessful in meeting with an apprentice of the prædial class who, on interrogation, has been prevailed on to explain to me his individual feelings as to the approaching crisis in 1838; confining myself, however, to the general effect likely to be produced, in my own district, by the measure just alluded to, I am

inclined

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inclined to think that, although the change will no doubt be received by the majority of the prædial apprentices as disadvantageous to their particular interest, and perhaps as oppressive in its operation, I do not infer from thence that the result of this feeling will elicit any open display of intemperate conduct or systematic insubordination. I am strengthened in this opinion by the fact, that a very general anxiety prevails among the apprentices in this district to avail themselves of the timely opportunity afforded them for inquiring as to their classification, in all cases wherein they may feel themselves aggrieved; and I conclude, from this circumstance, that being fully impressed with the essential difference which distinguishes the classification of prædials and non-prædials, they are most desirous for the magistrates' decision on their claims, so that any doubts entertained by them, with regard to their registration, may be finally set at rest prior to that period, when their non-prædial brethren will be emancipated from further apprenticeship."

"The prædial apprentices, on whom the two years additional service is entailed, will no doubt experience, as a collective body, some feeling of discontent when this change shall come into operation; but at the same time I must express my conviction that the late measures directed by his Excellency to be pursued with reference to the classification appeals will materially tend to modify this anticipated feeling of discontent, by affording to those labouring under real or imaginary doubts a seasonable opportunity for a settlement of their claims before that crisis arrives, when it is most essential that every contested appeal should be satisfactorily adjusted."

The seventh special justice says, "I have thought much and seriously upon this subject, and am of opinion that little danger of excitement or unusual insubordination is reasonably to be expected or apprehended on or after the 1st of August 1838 in consequence of any jealousy which may be supposed to exist on the minds of the prædial class, who will from that period be bound to serve two additional years. My reasons for coming to this conclusion are—

"Firstly, because, from the general good conduct of the apprentices themselves for nearly four years, who have, under all the circumstances of the momentous change they are passing through, discharged their duties in a very respectable manner, it is to be presumed that similar good conduct will influence them upon the occasion in question.

"Secondly, because the apprentices have been for nearly four years accustomed and familiarized to the peculiar position the two classes will be placed in on the 1st of August 1838, and have been in the habit of considering that position inevitable; and, as far as I am a judge, no jealousy has been as yet created in the minds of the prædial class, who, as I said before, will have to serve the two additional years. I therefore hope the crisis will, with the assistance of the measures taken by his Excellency to adjust the classification on or before that day, pass off favourably, provided the injudicious interference of persons at home does not produce a contrary result. On this subject I am unwilling, but, in strict accordance with my duty, compelled to make a few remarks, particularly as regards what has been lately said in England on the working of the apprenticeship. Humanity to the apprentices themselves should have influenced well-meaning individuals, and induced them to forbear exciting dissatisfaction in the minds of this vast multitude of recently emancipated slaves, and by so doing teach them, for the first time since the commencement of the apprenticeship, that their condition is by no means improved. It is scarcely credible that any man at all acquainted with the innumerable evils of slavery can for a moment make so unfounded an assertion, and one so likely to create incalculable mischief.

"I watched carefully the conduct of the apprentices in my late district, who are almost exclusively prædials, upon the arrival of the reports of the meetings in England. When those speeches and statements were made, I regret to say, I could plainly perceive an unfavourable impression made upon them; a cloud hung over them for a few weeks, which gradually disappeared, so easily affected are these people. That a considerable number of acts irreconcilable with the law are committed by a certain class of under employers, such as assaults, and acts which may be considered cruel, by the same description of individuals; but if those persons violate the law, they are sure to be punished by the law, of which the special justices do not hesitate to avail themselves, frequently to its utmost limit.

limit. In fairness, I must declare, that the upper order of proprietors, attorneys, and managers seldom commit themselves, although they are unfortunately obliged to bear their full share of the odium attached to acts in which they have no participation; at the same time, when we look back and consider the situation the parties were placed in in relation to each other prior to the 1st of August 1834, it is surprising how few bad cases of this description really occur.

“In forming opinions upon the working of the apprenticeship, this situation or position should always be held in full recollection; without being regulated by such premises, it is utterly impossible to form a correct estimate of the present state of things. If, therefore, the enthusiasts at home will but adopt the kind principle of non-interference with the working of the apprenticeship, the approaching crisis, I have no doubt, will pass over in peace and tranquillity; on the other hand, if they persevere to fix in the minds of the apprentices that their present situation is a series of hardships and cruelties, the consequences may be fatal, and go to destroy all confidence between the employer and the employed, and ultimately engender a rooted dislike to each other, and this, too, between parties whose present and future interests are absolutely indivisible.”

The eighth special justice represents that “a longer residence and a closer acquaintance with the affairs of this colony than I have had would be required to enable me to give a clear and decisive opinion. Still, however, I think I may venture to form some conclusion upon the points, from the inquiries I have made, and the conversations I have had among various classes of inhabitants.

“It would seem, then, that the coming period is one that has been looked to with considerable jealousy by the prædial labourers, as a season of exemption from coercive service on the part of the non-prædials, whom they speak of, in opposition to their own calling and condition, as ‘the lazy, the sleek, and the well fed;’ and there can be no doubt, if this feeling went no further than to excite a spirit of ill-will towards the more favoured class, it would still be a matter of serious consideration for the personal situation of those persons, whenever they might unfortunately fall into a position to experience the consequences of a sleepless hostility.

“But some of the prædial labourers have gone beyond this. They have asserted that they all object to the distinctions between them and the non-prædial class. Upon this fact I venture to raise a presumption, that the same sentiments pervade the whole body of the labourers through the island. Their locomotive habits differ in no respect here from those of labourers in other colonies, where they interchangeably form connexions, in all the relations of life, from one plantation to another. The information, derived from the people of one property, is sure to be circulated in every quarter before the lapse of many days; and if they desire to take measures upon any subject affecting their interests, a chain of communication is kept up, by the medium of the relationship adverted to, with an adroitness and a privacy as remarkable as it is true. I would illustrate this by turning to Antigua. The entire body thought alike and acted alike; and when a plan was concocted by them in July 1835, to strike for higher wages on the 1st of August, it had been so quietly and well arranged, as almost to have escaped discovery. A few days before it happened the sentiments of the labourers on one estate were learnt, and an inference was drawn that it was general. Accordingly, on the appointed day and the subsequent one, every gang in the island had refused to work, and dispersed themselves wherever they listed.

“I cannot apprehend that the prædial labourers of this island would be guilty of any act of sedition or rebellion after the 1st of August next. But I do not hesitate to assert my belief, that they will exhibit much passive resistance to the performance of work, much disinclination, listlessness, and obstinacy, in their employer’s service. The landed interest will suffer by it, and the labours of the special magistrates will be considerably increased. A discontented gang of Negroes may produce the ruin of a plantation by the most simple means; and even the manufacturers of sugar may, under such circumstances, spoil their coppers of liquor, though their employers should be at their elbows during the process.”

It is further reported to me, by an officer in the police department, that the apprenticed labourers “are, at the present time, conducting themselves in an orderly, contented, and industrious manner, witness the present prospect of a good crop of the staple productions of the country, and I have no doubt they will

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will continue to do so until the arrival of the period above alluded to; but I am doubtful whether the prædial class, at that crisis, will view, without some expression of dissatisfaction, their continuance of servitude beyond their more favoured fellows; and it is not for me to decide whether the personal disadvantages and inconveniences attending the nature of their occupation, and taking into consideration that the commerce and agriculture of the country have been supported and continued without interruption by the exertions of the prædials, might not be fairly placed in competition with the continuous services (the light work and almost total exemption from exposure to the vicissitudes of the climate) of the non-prædial class."

"If the apprenticeship system was intended as a term of probation to prepare the Negroes for ultimate emancipation, it is my opinion that the object might be just as safely effected at the earlier as if delayed to the later period, between which I look for more complaining, more restlessness, and more dissatisfaction, than we have yet experienced. But if, on the other hand, it was intended as part and parcel of the compensation of the planter, it rests for the Government to determine whether time, or a further commutation in money, shall terminate the period of apprenticeship; which latter consideration the bare hope alone of procuring possibly prevents the planters themselves from effecting."

Notwithstanding the contrarieties pervading these opinions, all seem to coincide in the anticipation, however differently accounted for, of a greater or lesser degree of disquietude, in August next, amongst the labouring population.

Upon the mere point of prædial or non prædial classification, after the measures already reported to your Lordship as in progress in this colony, there appears no room for apprehension. But the jealousy imputed to the prædial labourers of their "lazy, sleek, and well-fed brethren;" the inference, deduced from experience, of the remarkable "adroitness and privacy" with which the Negro peasantry organize plans of combination; the clouds "hanging over them for weeks," as well as the unfavourable impression "affecting them upon the arrival of reports of meetings in England;" their consciousness that "the commerce and agriculture of the country have been supported and continued, without interruption, by their exertions;" the impossibility of their failing to contrast their hard field-labour, in all weathers, with "the light work and almost total exemption from exposure to the vicissitudes of the climate" of the non-prædial body, and their constant liability to the impulse of additional irritation, whether derivable from the agitation fomented in Britain by their well-intentioned friends, or from the earlier cessation, past or to come, of apprenticeship in neighbouring settlements, when collectively considered, serve but to confirm my preference, in regard to Barbados, of that common liberation of both classes of apprentices in the course of the present year, which, in the instance of other colonies, I deemed it my duty to advocate when governor of the Leeward Islands.

In taking the liberty of intimating these sentiments to your Lordship, I beg leave distinctly to disclaim all allusion to any other than this colony. They are exclusively founded upon a dispassionate and impartial review, to the best of my humble judgment, of the interests of all ranks of its inhabitants, and upon the belief, not that there have been any proceedings of the Local Legislature in the least degree designed or calculated to impede the effect of the Imperial Abolition Act, but that the apprenticed population here are in general sufficiently intelligent and well-disposed to render the object of giving freedom to the whole, as assumed in one of the above-quoted statements, no less "safely" to be "effected" in 1838 than in 1840. On these grounds, and concurring in another remark from the same quarter, viz. that "more complaining, more restlessness, and more dissatisfaction" than have yet been experienced, will otherwise arise in the interval between those periods, I feel confident that your Lordship will not disapprove of my endeavouring, by the fair exercise, on every fitting occasion, of my legitimate influence, zealously to promote the simultaneous enfranchisement, in August next, of all the apprenticed labourers of Barbados.

I have, &c.

(signed) *E. J. Murray MacGregor*, Governor.

THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

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— No. 2. —

(No. 82.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Lord *Glenelg* to Sir *E. J. Murray MacGregor*,
Bart.

No. 2.

Sir,

Downing-street, 28 February 1838.

I HAVE had the honour to receive your despatch, No. 1 of the 1st of January, in which you communicate to me the various impressions which are entertained by the special magistrates in Barbados, in regard to the probable effects on the prædial apprentices of the liberation of the non-prædial class on the 1st of next August.

I will not allow this opportunity to pass by of conveying to you my thanks for the very full and circumstantial information which, in anticipation of my circular instruction of the 27th instant, you have thus brought under my notice on a subject of so much importance.

With regard to the intention which you intimate of zealously promoting the simultaneous enfranchisement, in August next, of all the apprenticed labourers in Barbados, I have to state that such an endeavour, prudently and judiciously made, as I have no doubt it will be by you, meets with my entire approval, and it will afford Her Majesty's Government much satisfaction to find such a measure cordially adopted by the Local Legislature. In Barbados, perhaps, more than in any other of the West India colonies, the change may be expected to take place with advantage to the interests of all classes of the community.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Glenelg*.

— No. 3. —

(No. 22.)

EXTRACT of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. M. MacGregor*, Bart.,
to Lord *Glenelg*.

No. 3.

Government House, Barbados, 1 February 1838.

“ I HAVE the honour of laying before your Lordship the copy of a message, in which my sentiments, regarding a general emancipation in August next of the prædial as well as non-prædial apprentices in Barbados, have been communicated to the Council and Assembly.

16 Dec. 1837.

When addressing your Lordship on the 1st ultimo (in my letter, Barbados, No. 1), so early a promulgation of my views was not within my contemplation; but being confirmed, by an observation in a despatch subsequently received from your Lordship, in the belief that Her Majesty's Government would willingly witness the spontaneous adoption of that measure by any local legislature, and on considering my own peculiar position in reference to this question, as well as its general bearings, it appeared to me that such a declaration on my part ought no longer to be delayed.

In allusion to the message to the Legislative Houses, I took occasion, in privy council, to observe :

“ Having therein suggested, for the deliberate consideration of those honourable bodies, the possible policy of liberating at once, in August next, the prædial and non-prædial apprenticed labourers, the Governor will not, on the present occasion, enlarge upon the merits of this question.

“ Without depreciating the well-working, upon the whole, of the system of apprenticeship, although some defects, brought by the Executive under the cognizance of the Legislative Houses, have not as yet been remedied, the Governor will confine himself therefore for the moment to remarking, that an order of things
which

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which answers, while the separation of these two classes of apprentices remains to be effected, may entail very opposite results, if that division, hitherto existing in theory alone, shall actually occur; that the measure of complete and simultaneous enfranchisement was happily accomplished without accident or inconvenience in Antigua; and the successful solution of this great problem in that island being an historical fact, that it is to the project of depressing the greater portion of the labouring population by prolonged servitude, after elevating the remainder by the boon of liberty, as an altogether untried experiment, that the rashness of innovation more justly appertains.

“It is on this account that the power of adopting, rejecting, or modifying, according to local circumstances, that particular scheme would seem to have been wisely confided by Parliament to the discretion of the several Colonial Legislatures.”

The point at issue being thus subject to internal regulation, information of the various anti-apprenticeship meetings respecting it, recently held in England, being now in circulation throughout this country, and my opinion having been previously expressed in other places, it might have been inferred, had I continued silent, that the labouring classes in this colony were, in my estimation, less ripe for liberty than their brethren, whose cause I had formerly espoused. My impression being precisely the reverse, it was but just to the peasantry of Barbados, as well as to the Legislative Houses, and to myself, that it should be made known before the 1st of August; and it appeared preferable to avail myself of an opportunity of introducing the recommendation in favour of an entire abolition at this season, while the subject at any rate engages the attention of the public, than to postpone it until the period for decision draws so near that it perhaps might be imprudent to give rise to renewed or additional excitement by its agitation.

The majority of the Council, several of the most respectable members of Assembly, and a considerable number of the inhabitants, I have every reason to believe, are friendly to the liberation of both classes of apprentices; but it is warmly opposed by some influential proprietors, or their agents, chiefly actuated, it would seem, by pecuniary motives, who, if the system of apprenticeship works between 1838 and 1840 as well as between 1834 and 1838, look forward during the former term to an amount of profit, upon which, in their apprehension, they cannot calculate with equal certainty if a different principle of labour shall be substituted.

Circumstances may ere long subdue these feelings, and in this hope, having conscientiously discharged, in the present instance, in my executive capacity, what I conceive to be an indispensable duty towards the community at large, it only remains for me to leave the further disposal of the case in the hands of the Legislative Houses.”

THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

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Enclosure in No. 4.

His Excellency the Governor to his Honour the Speaker and House of Assembly.

Encl. in No. 4.

(Copy.)

HAVING received an intimation from the Right Honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, in consequence of certain representations from a neighbouring island, "in favour of a complete emancipation of the prædial and non-prædial apprentices in the present year," that "it would be very gratifying to Her Majesty's Government to learn that the Local Legislature regarded such a change in the law as desirable and prudent," the Governor embraces the earliest opportunity of bringing this interesting subject under the notice of your honourable house.

Agreeably to the stipulations of the Imperial Abolition Act, the payment of the compensation money allotted to Barbados, affords abundant proof that "adequate and satisfactory provision hath been made by law in this colony," for giving effect, by "further and supplementary enactments," to the Imperial edict. It has been with truth declared by your honourable House, and the Board of Council, as quoted by the Governor when communicating with the Legislative House in a former instance, that the question of emancipation "being no longer a debateable point," you "have cheerfully applied yourselves, in good faith, to the consummation of this great national experiment;" and the Governor no less confidently attests that the conditions of the contract existing between the British and Colonial Legislatures, as framed by Parliament, have not been contravened.

The inquiry now adverted to, whenever it shall be the pleasure of the several branches of the Legislature to entertain it, is, therefore, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Minister for the Colonies, to be professedly approached and regulated solely according to their respective views of its local eligibility and prudence.

Although, when prospectively contemplating elsewhere the progress of apprenticeship, the Governor has long since vindicated the expediency of simultaneously accomplishing, at the earlier period, the alterations in colonial society, not susceptible of postponement beyond the years of 1838 and 1840, that suggestion was guided by the peculiar circumstances of each colony, to which it happened to be applied.

On the same principle, and without the slightest allusion whatsoever to any other colonial settlement, the Governor having come to the conclusion, that the peasantry of this island are sufficiently intelligent and loyal, to prove worthy of the gift, deems it incumbent at the present season, unhesitatingly to recommend to the favourable attention of your honourable House, the propriety of concurring, under due precautions, in the eventual acceleration of their freedom.

Without undervaluing the tranquillity hitherto happily enjoyed by the inhabitants during the apprenticeship, an apprehension may reasonably be experienced, not only of the creation of excitement by the proposed separation of classes, but of a confirmed propensity to litigation possibly to be induced, by the prolongation of a system of reciprocal complaint; and, on examining the internal and external relations of the country, the moment seems to have arrived, in which all intermediate and minor considerations ought to yield to the paramount object of permanently cementing, after the general enfranchisement of the apprenticed population, the common interests of the employers and employed.

The Governor is too well aware of the liberal courtesy of the Honourable the Assembly to dread any misconstruction of the motives by which this Address is dictated, in the conscientious discharge of the duty of the Executive; and in the sincere belief that the future prosperity of Barbados will be most securely founded on the gratitude of the mass of the people, and on the generosity towards them, at that most important crisis, for themselves and their constituents, of the Legislative Houses.

(signed) *E. J. Murray MacGregor,*

Governor.

Government House, Barbados,
16 January 1838.

—No. 4.—

BARBADOS.

(No. 49.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Bart.,
to Lord *Glenelg*.

No. 4.

My Lord,

Government House, Barbados, 14 March 1838.

13 March 1838.

WITH reference to my despatch, Barbados, No. 22, of the 1st of February, I have the honour of enclosing, for your Lordship's information, the copy of a communication addressed to me by the Honourable the House of Assembly, in reply to my message of the 16th of January last.

On this occasion I am bound to experience a just sense of the obliging expressions of the House towards myself; but when it is said, "the House conceives that it would be placing itself in an onerous position with the British Parliament were it to supersede, by an Act of its own, one of the most important provisions of the Abolition Law, and thereby assume to itself the responsibility of a measure which could be carried into effect with more safety, and with a greater chance of success, by that august body, possessed as it is of the means of meeting, by pecuniary indemnity and physical restraint, contingencies which may arise out of the proposed change in the law," it is impossible not to lament that the Assembly, according to the present sentiments of the House, although coinciding in opinion with me, "that all intermediate and minor considerations ought to yield to the paramount object of permanently cementing, after the general enfranchisement of the apprenticed population, the common interests of the employers and the employed," should yet deliberately sacrifice that paramount object to secondary, and probably illusory, considerations of momentary pecuniary indemnity or benefit.

I have, &c.

(signed) *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

Enclosure in No. 4.

The House of Assembly to His Excellency Sir *Evan J. M. M'Gregor*, Bart.,
Governor, &c. &c. &c.

May it please your Excellency,

Encl. in No. 4.

THE House of Assembly, in reply to your Excellency's message of the 15th of January, in which you are pleased to inform the House "that having received an intimation from the Right honourable Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, in consequence of certain representations from a neighbouring island, in favour of a complete emancipation of the prædial and non-prædial apprentices in the present year," that "it would be very gratifying to Her Majesty's Government to learn that the local legislature regarded such a change in the law desirable and prudent," and that your Excellency "embraces the earliest opportunity of bringing the subject under the notice of the House," begs leave most respectfully to state, however it may coincide in opinion with your Excellency, that all intermediate and minor considerations ought to yield to the paramount object of permanently cementing, after the general enfranchisement of the apprenticed population, the common interests of employers and employed, the House conceives that it would be placing itself in an onerous position with the British Parliament were it to supersede, by an Act of its own, one of the most important provisions of the Abolition Law, and thereby assume to itself the responsibility of a measure which could be carried into effect with more safety and with a greater chance of success by that august body, possessed as it is of the means of meeting, by pecuniary indemnity and physical restraint, contingencies which may arise out of the proposed change in the law.

The House of Assembly tenders to you, Sir, its sincere thanks for the generous manner in which your Excellency, "no less confidently" than publicly "attests the fact," that the conditions of the contract existing between the British and Colonial Legislatures, as framed by Parliament, have not been contravened "by the Colonial Government," and assures your Excellency "the inquiry now adverted to" has, in deference to the opinion of Her Majesty's Minister for the Colonies, and in conformity with the inclination of the House itself, been "professedly approached and regulated" in the same spirit of conciliation by which its councils have hitherto been animated in giving effect to the imperial edict, which has, with truth, as your Excellency is so obliging as to observe, been acted upon in good faith to the British nation.

The House of Assembly, quite sensible of the beneficial effects of the straightforward and open conduct by which the measures of your Excellency's administration have been uniformly characterized, fully appreciates the motives by which your Excellency deemed it incumbent, in the conscientious discharge of the duty of the executive, to bring this important subject under the consideration of the House.

House of Assembly,
13 March 1838.By order of the House,
(signed)*S. Hinds*, Speaker.(True copy.)
(signed)*E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

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(No. 77.)

—No. 5.—

BARBADOS

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Bart., to
Lord *Glenelg*.

My Lord,

Government House, Barbados, 12 April 1838.

No. 5.

A COURT of Chancery was held on Tuesday the 10th instant, and as soon as its proceedings closed, and the council chamber was cleared, I placed upon the table of Her Majesty's Privy Council of this island your Lordship's circular, private and confidential despatch of the 27th of February, and requested that the opinion of each member of the board might be recorded, in immediate reference to that despatch, upon the expediency of terminating the apprenticeship by an Act of the local legislature, or of maintaining that system, after the 1st of August next, subject to the "remedial measures" of Parliament for "making the Abolition Act more effective."

From the accompanying extracts of the minutes of the board, it will be observed, that of seven members present, six voted in favour of a general liberation of the apprentices in August; and although the dissent of a gentleman of Sir Reynold Alleyne's rank and influence is much to be regretted, it is satisfactory to state that the honourable baronet disclaimed the intention of offering factious opposition, and professed himself perfectly disposed, if the projected alteration should be adopted by the legislature, to co-operate in carrying it beneficially into execution.

The Assembly being also in session on Tuesday last, the members of council repaired from the privy council board to meet that body in conference upon other business, and were empowered by me to embrace an opportunity so eligible of communicating the contents of your Lordship's despatch confidentially to the Honourable House.

The consequences of this interview between those branches of the legislature cannot be officially ascertained until after the departing packet shall have sailed; but I am not without hopes that the Assembly of Barbados, finding itself relieved from the "onerous position with the British Parliament," contemplated in the message from the House, a transcript of which accompanied my despatch to your Lordship of the 14th ultimo, No. 49, may yet resolve to unite with the council and the executive in relieving the peasantry from the restrictions of prolonged apprenticeship.

I have, &c.

(signed) *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

Enclosure in No. 5.

EXTRACTS from the Minutes of a Privy Council, held on Tuesday the 10th April 1838.

Encl. in No. 5

PRESENT:

His Excellency Major-General Sir Evan Murray M'Gregor, Bart.
The Honourable John Alleyne Beckles.
The Honourable John Brathwaite.
The Honourable Sir Reynold Abel Alleyne, Bart.
The Honourable Philip Lytcott Hinds.
The Honourable James Holder Alleyne.
The Honourable Christopher Barrow.
The Honourable Joshua B. Nurse.

The Governor stated that his Excellency considered it important, that the sentiments of the members of Her Majesty's Privy Council should be recorded upon the following question, arising out of a private and confidential circular despatch from the Right honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonies, of the 27th of February last, now laid before the board, viz.

"Whether it was or was not most conducive to the interests of the colony of Barbados, that the apprenticeship should be terminated by an Act of the Local Legislature, or maintained, after the 1st August next, subject to the operation of 'those remedial measures, the enactment of which it is now become the duty of Parliament to take upon itself,' in order to render the 'Slavery Abolition Act more effective, for securing to the apprenticed labourers the protection and advantages originally designed for them.'"

BARBADOS.

His Excellency having requested that the opinion of each member of the board might be expressed thereon:—

1. The Honourable Joshua B. Nurse considered that it would be conducive to the interests of the colony that the apprenticeship should terminate in 1838.

2. The Honourable Christopher Barrow, thinking as he did that it was impossible to withstand the current of public opinion, deemed it the best policy not to let the glass run out, and wait till 1840, but to terminate the apprenticeship in August next.

3. The Honourable James Holder Alleyne considered it better to meet the evil at once, great as it might be, of immediate emancipation than to submit to the remedial measures likely to be enacted by the Imperial Parliament.

4. The Honourable Philip Lytcott Hinds considered that it would be expedient to end the apprenticeship, rather than subject the colony to the operation of any remedial measures consequent upon its continuance.

5. The Honourable Sir Reynold Abel Alleyne considered the apprenticeship system to have worked so well, as far as his own observation went, that he did not think it would benefit either the masters or the apprentices to abolish it before 1840; moreover, as the people had enjoyed all their rights hitherto, he did not apprehend any inconvenience from the proposed remedial measures of Her Majesty's Government.

6. The Honourable John Brathwaite considered that it would tend to the peace and tranquillity of the country that the apprenticeship should terminate in 1838.

7. The Honourable John Alleyne Beckles considered that it would be conducive to the interests of the colony that the apprenticeship should be terminated by an Act of the Colonial Legislature in 1838.

(True extracts.)

E. J. Murray M^cGregor,
Governor.

N.B.—The Lord Bishop of Barbados absent on a tour through the diocese.
The Honourable and Rev. J. H. Gittens absent in the island.

—No. 6.—

(No. 82.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. M. M^cGregor*, Bart.,
to Lord *Glenelg*.

No. 6.

My Lord,

Government House, Barbados, 19 April 1838.

No. 1.
17 April 1838.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 12th inst. (Barbados, No. 77), I have the honour of enclosing an extract (No. 1) of the proceedings of Her Majesty's Privy Council, notifying the adoption, on the 17th inst., by the Rev. and Hon. J. H. Gittens (who was absent on the 10th), of the opinion signified by the majority of the members on the subject of apprenticeship.

No. 2.
17 April 1838.

By a resolution of the same date (Enclosure, No. 2), in terms no less than in spirit highly creditable to that honourable board, the legislative council has unanimously decided—

“That it is not only expedient to yield to the wishes of the British public, which have been so strongly expressed on this momentous question, but that, moreover, it will be most conducive to the general interests and happiness of the colony that a Bill should be speedily passed, declaring the absolute emancipation of all classes of apprenticed labourers on the 1st of August 1838; and further, that the said Bill be accompanied by such constitutional measures as are furnished by the British common and statute law, to the end that peace and industry, the handmaids of prosperity, may minister to the best interests of this island.”

The pledge of Sir Reynold Alleyne has thus been fully redeemed, and the sentiments of every councillor now in the colony have been recorded in the minutes, either of the privy or legislative council, in favour of the early release from their present servitude of the prædial as well as non-prædial apprenticed population.

The determination of the third branch of the legislature is yet to be ascertained. At the conference between the Council and Assembly on the 10th inst., the majority of the House, I have reason to believe, coincided with the former body; but upon the 17th, with the view, it is presumed, of averting a discussion of the question, several members of Assembly withdrew, by concert, from the House, and thereby broke up the sitting.

The retreat of those gentlemen, some of whom appear to be misled by the notion that they ought solely to consult the interests of their immediate constituents, instead of those of the community at large, apprentices included, would rather seem to indicate conscious weakness; but, in order to arrive as soon as possible

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possible at a better understanding of their designs, I have directed a call of the House to be issued for the 24th inst., and will embrace the first opportunity of reporting the result.

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For the present I shall merely add, that the ablest members of the Assembly prefer a collective enfranchisement of the apprentices in August, that the former most strenuous opponent in the House of this alternative now befriends it, and that so much good feeling mutually pervades the Honourable Board and House, that there seems no reason to anticipate the occurrence of any collision between the Council and Assembly calculated to interrupt the general harmony happily prevalent in those legislative Houses.

I have, &c.

(signed) *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

Enclosure 1, in No. 6.

At a Meeting of Her Majesty's Privy Council, held at the new Court-house,
April 17th, 1838.

Encl. 1, in No. 6.

PRESENT :

His Excellency Sir Evan Murray M'Gregor, Baronet, Governor.
The Honourable John Alleyne Beckles.
The Honourable Sir Reynold Abel Alleyne, Baronet.
The Honourable and Reverend John Gittens.
The Honourable Christopher Barrow.
The Honourable Joshua B. Nurse.

THE Honourable and Reverend John Gittens, who had been absent at the last meeting of the board, on which occasion the Governor requested the respective opinions of each member as to the expediency of abolishing the apprenticeship system in August 1838, begged to record his firm opinion, "that it would be conducive to the best interests of the colony that the apprenticeship should terminate altogether and absolutely in 1838."

Enclosure 2, in No. 6.

At a Meeting of the Legislative Council in the new Court-house, April 17th, 1838.

Encl. 2, in No. 6.

PRESENT :

The Honourable John Alleyne Beckles, President.
The Honourable John Brathwaite.
The Honourable Sir Reynold Abel Alleyne, Baronet.
The Honourable and Reverend John Gittens.
The Honourable Christopher Barrow.
The Honourable John B. Nurse.

AFTER a discussion among the honourable members of the Board of Council as to the expediency or not of terminating the apprenticeship in 1838, the secretary was desired to make an entry in the minutes to the following purport :

The Council, after the most careful consideration of the Governor's message of the 15th January 1838, in which his Excellency urged upon the Legislative Council the wisdom and expediency of terminating the apprenticeship in August 1838; reflecting, moreover, on the good faith of the British Legislature in rejecting any attempt to abolish the Emancipation Act of the Imperial Parliament of 1833, without the co-operation of the Colonial Legislatures, and taking into consideration the general good conduct of the apprenticed population under so unprecedented an experiment, and during a period of continued excitement; under such circumstances, and influenced by such reasons, the members of Council are desirous of placing on record the following unanimous opinion :

"That it is not only expedient to yield to the wishes of the British public, which have been so strongly expressed on this momentous question; but that, moreover, it will be most conducive to the general interests and happiness of the colony, that a Bill should be speedily passed, declaring the absolute emancipation of all classes of apprenticed labourers on the 1st of August 1838; and further, that the said Bill be accompanied by such constitutional measures as are furnished by the British common and statute law, to the end that peace and industry, the handmaids of prosperity, may minister to the best interests of this island."

(signed) *John A. Beckles*, President.

(True copies.)

E. J. Murray M'Gregor, Governor.

(No. 91.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Bart.,
to Lord *Glenelg*.

Government House, Barbados,
26 April 1838.

No. 7.

My Lord,

THE progress of my efforts to accelerate the abolition of apprenticeship in the colony of Barbados has been reported in various communications addressed to your Lordship on and subsequently to the 1st of January last.

My personal feelings on the subject never had been concealed; but it was of a nature so delicate as to render it especially desirable that dissension and jealousy might not be introduced by its discussion amongst the legislative body, and not only equitable, but prudent, that the invidiousness of its agitation should attach entirely to myself. My message, therefore, of the 16th of January to the House of Assembly (although I relied upon the favourable sentiments and eventual suffrages of several enlightened and influential gentlemen) was written by me on that day, without the privity of any other individual; and having been despatched, as soon as copied, to the court-house, could compromise none of the members of the legislature, all of whom were alike unprepared, and consequently alike irresponsible for its appearance.

(A.)

(B.)

Notwithstanding the reply of the Assembly of the 13th of March, I felt strongly impressed with a conviction that apprenticed servitude could not endure much longer in this island; and the arrival of your Lordship's private and confidential despatch of the 27th of February, followed by that of the 14th ultimo, forwarding the Bill amending the Act for the Abolition of Slavery, as read for the second time in the House of Lords, armed me most opportunely with the means of pressing the question home, and of demonstrating to the local authorities that my views of "the internal and *external* relations of the country," announced in January, had neither been inconsiderately adopted nor unseasonably advanced.

(D.)

(E.)

The support obtained, particularly in the last instance, from the council has been eminently useful; and I refer with pleasure to the valuable testimony borne, in the speech of the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Barbados, to the fidelity of my statement, "that the conditions of the contract existing between the British and Colonial Legislature, as framed by Parliament, have not been contravened."

(F.)

The members of Assembly who (as mentioned in my letter, Barbados, No. 82) had retired from the meeting of the 17th instant, having resumed their seats upon the 24th, I have now the honour to inform your Lordship of their discomfiture, after an amicable trial of strength on certain resolutions, in lieu of which the order of the day was substituted by the majority of the House, and a committee nominated to "frame a Bill" to "abolish the Apprenticeship in August 1838."

While the temperate manner in which this controversy has been conducted reflects credit on the moderation of the Assembly, I rejoice to learn from your Lordship's despatch of the 28th of February, Barbados, No. 82, that the measure in which it has terminated promises to prove satisfactory to Her Majesty's Government; and I fervently trust your Lordship will not be disappointed in the anticipation, that "in Barbados, perhaps more than in any other of the West India Colonies, the change may be expected to take place with advantage to the interest of all classes of the inhabitants."

I have, &c.

(signed) *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

Enclosures in No. 7.

(A.)

Encl. in No. 7.

His Excellency the Governor to His Honour the Speaker and House of Assembly.

HAVING received an intimation from the Right honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, in consequence of certain representations from a neighbouring island, "in favour of a complete emancipation of the prædial and non-prædial apprentices in the present year," that "it would be very gratifying to Her Majesty's Government to learn that the local legislature regarded such a change in the law as desirable and prudent," the Governor embraces the earliest opportunity of bringing this interesting subject under the notice of your Honourable House.

Agreeably

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Agreeably to the stipulations of the Imperial Abolition Act, the payment of the compensation money allotted to Barbados affords abundant proof that "adequate and satisfactory provision hath been made by law, in this colony," for giving effect, by "further and supplementary enactments," to the imperial edict. It has been, with truth, declared by your Honourable House and the Board of Council, as quoted by the Governor when communicating with the Legislative Houses in a former instance, that the question of emancipation "being no longer a debatable point," you "have cheerfully applied yourselves, in good faith, to the consummation of this great national experiment;" and the Governor no less confidently attests that the conditions of the contract existing between the British and Colonial Legislature, as framed by Parliament, have not been contravened.

The inquiry now adverted to, whenever it shall be the pleasure of the several branches of the legislature to entertain it, is, therefore, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Minister for the Colonies, to be professedly approached and regulated solely according to their respective views of its local eligibility and prudence.

Although, when prospectively contemplating elsewhere the progress of apprenticeship, the Governor has long since vindicated the expediency of simultaneously accomplishing at the earlier period the alterations in colonial society not susceptible of postponement beyond the years 1838 and 1840, that suggestion was guided by the peculiar circumstances of each colony to which it happened to be applied.

On the same principle, and without the slightest allusion whatever to any other colonial settlement, the Governor having come to the conclusion that the peasantry of this island are sufficiently intelligent and loyal to prove worthy of the gift, deems it incumbent, at the present season, unhesitatingly to recommend to the favourable attention of your Honourable House the propriety of concurring, under due precautions, in the eventual acceleration of their freedom.

Without undervaluing the tranquillity hitherto happily enjoyed by the inhabitants during the apprenticeship, an apprehension may reasonably be experienced, not only of the creation of excitement by the proposed separation of classes, but of a confirmed propensity to litigation, possibly to be induced by the prolongation of a system of reciprocal complaint; and, on examining the internal and external relations of the country, the moment seems to have arrived in which all intermediate and minor considerations ought to yield to the paramount object of permanently cementing, after the general enfranchisement of the apprenticed population, the common interests of the employers and employed.

The Governor is too well aware of the liberal courtesy of the Honourable the Assembly to dread any misconstruction of the motives by which this Address is dictated, in the conscientious discharge of the duty of the executive, and in the sincere belief that the future prosperity of Barbados will be most securely founded on the gratitude of the mass of the people, and on the generosity towards them at that most important crisis for themselves and their constituents of the Legislative Houses.

(signed) *E. J. Murray M'Gregor,*
Governor.

Government House, Barbados,
16th January 1838.

(B.)

The House of Assembly to His Excellency Sir *Evan John Murray M'Gregor*, Bart.,
Governor, &c.

MAY it please your Excellency,—The House of Assembly, in reply to your Excellency's message of the 16th January, in which you are pleased to inform the House "that having received an intimation from the Right honourable Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, in consequence of certain representations from a neighbouring island, in favour of a complete emancipation of the prædial and non-prædial apprentices in the present year," that "it would be very gratifying to Her Majesty's Government to learn that the local legislature regarded such a change in the law desirable and prudent," and that your Excellency "embraces the earliest opportunity of bringing the subject under the notice of the House," begs leave most respectfully to state, that however it may coincide in opinion with your Excellency that all intermediate and minor considerations ought to yield to the paramount object of permanently cementing, after the general enfranchisement of the apprenticed population, the common interests of employers and employed, the House conceives that it would be placing itself in an onerous position with the British Parliament were it to supersede, by an Act of its own, one of the most important provisions of the Abolition Law, and thereby assume to itself the responsibility of a measure which could be carried into effect with more safety and with a greater chance of success by that august body, possessed as it is of the means of meeting, by pecuniary indemnity and physical restraint, contingencies which may arise out of the proposed change in the law.

The House of Assembly tenders to you, sir, its sincere thanks for the generous manner in which your Excellency "no less confidently," than publicly, "attests the fact," that the conditions of the contract existing between the British and Colonial Legislatures, as framed by Parliament, have not been contravened "by the Colonial Government," and assures your Excellency "that the inquiry now adverted to" has, in deference to the opinion of Her Majesty's Minister for the Colonies, and in conformity with the inclination of the House itself,

been

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been "professedly approached and regulated" in the same spirit of conciliation by which its councils have hitherto been animated in giving effect to the imperial edict, which has with truth, as your Excellency is so obliging as to observe, been acted upon in good faith to the British nation.

The House of Assembly, quite sensible of the beneficial effects of the straightforward and open conduct by which the measures of your Excellency's administration have been uniformly characterized, fully appreciates the motives by which your Excellency deemed it incumbent, in the conscientious discharge of the duty of the executive, to bring this important subject under the consideration of the House.

By order of the House,

(signed)

S. Hinds, Speaker.

House of Assembly, 13th March 1838.

(C.)

His Excellency the Governor to His Honour the Speaker and House of Assembly.

A COPY of a "Bill which has been introduced into Parliament to amend the Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies, and which was read a second time in the House of Lords on the 13th ultimo," received from Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, on the 15th instant, is communicated by the Governor for the information of the Honourable the House of Assembly.

(signed)

E. J. Murray M'Gregor, Governor.

Government House, Barbados, 17th April 1838.

(D.)

At a Meeting of the Legislative Council, in the new Court House, April 17, 1838.

PRESENT :

Honourable J. A. Beckles, President.
 „ J. Brathwaite.
 „ Sir R. A. Alleyne.

Honourable and Rev. J. Gittens.
 „ C. Barrow.
 „ J. B. Nurse.

(Extract.)

AFTER a discussion among the honourable members of the Board of Council as to the expediency or not of terminating the apprenticeship in August 1838, the Secretary was desired to make an entry in the minutes to the following purport :—

“The Council, after the most careful consideration of the Governor's message of the 15th January 1838, in which his Excellency urged upon the Legislative Council the wisdom and expediency of terminating the apprenticeship in August 1838; reflecting, moreover, on the good faith of the British Legislature, in rejecting any attempt to abolish the Emancipation Act of the Imperial Parliament of 1833, without the co-operation of the Colonial Legislatures; and taking into consideration the general good conduct of the apprenticed population under so unprecedented an experiment, and during a period of continued excitement; under such circumstances, and influenced by such reasons, the members of Council are desirous of placing on record the following unanimous opinion :

“That it is not only expedient to yield to the wishes of the British public, which have been so strongly expressed on this momentous question; but that, moreover, it will be most conducive to the general interests and happiness of the colony that a Bill should be speedily passed, declaring the absolute emancipation of all classes of apprenticed labourers on the 1st August 1838; and further, that the said Bill be accompanied by such constitutional measures as are furnished by the British common and statute law, to the end that peace and industry, the handmaids of prosperity, may minister to the best interests of this island.”

(signed)

John A. Beckles, President.”

(E.)

At a Meeting of the Board of Legislative Council, in the new Court-house,
 April 24, 1838.

PRESENT :

Honourable J. A. Beckles, President.
 „ The Lord Bishop.
 „ Sir R. A. Alleyne, Bart.
 „ Rev. J. Gittens.

Honourable C. Barrow.
 „ J. H. Alleyne.
 „ J. B. Nurse.

(Extract.)

THE Lord Bishop rose and spoke as follows :—

“Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Council,

“I was informed yesterday, that during my absence from the island, the Members recorded their opinion as to the expediency of absolutely abolishing the apprenticeship in August 1838. I am most anxious to record my entire concurrence in this resolution; but

I wish

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I wish it to be understood that I do not consider the measure as called for by any hardships under which the labourers in this island are suffering, nor from the want of any essential comfort, nor from the deprivation of any thing which a labourer may fairly claim from his master; still I do express my concurrence in the resolution of the Board, and I do so on these grounds, that I am satisfied the measure can be safely carried in this island, and if safely, then I feel justly; for I consider the very important interests which are involved in the measure. I must confess, too, that I am unwilling that Barbados should be behind any other island, especially in a measure which may be carried both safely and justly, and where its example may be of such beneficial consequence. I am just returned from visiting the northern islands of the diocese. I have gone over every part of Tortola, and though it is far more fertile than the off islands, yet even these are sufficiently productive for the labourer to raise the lesser and necessary provision of life, and yet with these islands in their very face, the Legislature of Tortola has passed the Act of Abolition. Some of the proprietors were opposed to it, but they have now given up their opposition; and I heard, whilst in Antigua, not only that the Act had passed, but that on the day of its passing, or the following day, some of the leading proprietors rode through the island, and were met by the people with expressions of the utmost gratitude, regarding the Act as a boon granted to them by their masters.

“ At Nevis the Act has passed.

“ At St. Christopher’s the Council are in favour of its passing, and with Nevis emancipated in its vicinity, there is little doubt but that the Act must pass. At Monserrat also it has passed. At Antigua, which I visited last year, I found that every thing was proceeding quietly and regularly. I found, too, the planters in high spirits, and some estates, which had been given up, restored; and the small patches and tenements of the free people, commencing last year, now in a very satisfactory state of cultivation. It is possible, indeed, that these last mentioned, unless the population be proportionably increased, may affect the cultivation of the larger estates, but there they are, and flourishing, as I have described, whilst I was in the island. A contiguous though abandoned estate was purchased by Sir Henry Martin, for about 9,500*l.* currency, being 3,000*l.* more than he had offered a few years previously. To compare Barbados with any other island, either as to population, wealth or state of agriculture, is unnecessary. I have seen nothing like the commercial activity which I saw in the streets yesterday, except at St. Thomas; and I feel, therefore, on all these grounds, that the Act may be passed safely and justly. At the same time I am not unmindful or insensible to the state of public opinion in the mother country, nor to the many new and harassing annoyances to which the proprietors may be exposed during a protracted continuance of the apprenticeship. I request that my full concurrence in the resolution of the Council may be recorded on the minutes of this day’s proceedings.”

His honour the President moved, that his Lordship’s sentiments be recorded.

(signed) *C. T. Cunningham*, Clerk of the Council.

(F.)

House of Assembly, Tuesday, 24th April 1838.

(Extracts.)

Messages from his Excellency the Governor.—The first, informing the House that he had received a new commission, appointing him Governor of Barbados, Grenada, St. Vincent, Tobago, Trinidad and St. Lucia; the second, enclosing “ a copy of Lord Glenelg’s proposed Bill for amending the Abolition Acts,”—were read.

Mr. Clarke rose and said, “ That in rising to make the usual motion for a committee to reply to the communications received from his Excellency the Governor, he should feel it his duty to draw the particular attention of the House to the subject of the communication last received, conveying a copy of a Bill, which had been read a second time in the House of Lords, to amend the Abolition Acts of the several legislative colonies,” &c. &c. &c. “ It is my deliberate conviction that this House should lose no time in providing for the complete emancipation of the apprenticed labourers on the 1st of August next,” &c. &c. &c.

Mr. Hodgkinson presented the following resolutions, which he moved might be adopted:—

Resolved, 1. That an acquiescence in any measure for shortening the apprenticeship would be a breach of duty on the part of this House, inasmuch as it has no right to vote away the property of its constituents secured by an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and which the representatives of the people are bound to protect, not to violate.

2. That the apprenticeship system has been found to answer all the purposes for which it was projected, as is evident in the prosperous state of the country, the contented cheerful conduct of the apprentices, and their rapidly improving condition.

3. That the British Government not having thought it prudent to introduce a Bill in Parliament for shortening the duration of the apprenticeship, but having brought forward a measure for the better protection of the apprenticed labourers, it is gratifying to this House to observe that the principal provisions contemplated by the Government in that measure have been already substantially enacted by the legislature of this island.

4. That this House having full confidence in the faith and honour of the British Government, and in the judgment and firmness of his Excellency the Governor, is determined faithfully to carry through the apprenticeship system both in letter and spirit, feeling assured

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that a steady and upright course is best calculated to insure the great object contemplated by Parliament, namely, to prepare the apprentices for a state of freedom before the period fixed by law for that event shall arrive.

Mr. Clarke immediately rose and moved the order of the day. The question being put on Mr. Clarke's motion, the order of the day was carried by a majority of eleven to seven.

Dr. Bascom rose, and gave notice of a Bill to regulate the costs and awards of actions relating to trespass; of a second, to cause the registration of all the inhabitants of this island; of a third, to abolish the apprenticeship system in August 1838. He moved the appointment of a Committee to frame the last-mentioned Bill; and the Speaker nominated Messrs. Bascom, Bovell, Clarke, Hodgkinson, Applewhaite, Waith and Haynes, to frame the said Bill, and to reply to the Governor's messages.

—No. 8.—

(No. 107.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Bart., to Lord *Glenelg*.

No. 8.

My Lord, Government House, Barbados, 11 May 1838.

COPIES of your Lordship's circular letter of the 2d ult., and of the Bill then depending in the House of Commons, for the amendment of the Imperial Slavery Abolition Act, were communicated to the Council on the 8th instant, but will not become known to the Assembly until the 15th, on which day the House meets by adjournment, and the packet sails for England.

The Solicitor-general, Mr. Clarke, is, I regret to say, seriously ill, having recently caught the scarlet fever from Mr. Best (son of Mr. Best, member of Council) who was himself infected when visiting the sick in a plantation hospital, and unfortunately dying, after a week's illness, was attended to the grave by about 1,000 negroes, manifesting every mark of respectful sorrow and attachment.

Pending the indisposition of the Solicitor-general, who is a member of the committee of the legislature occupied in preparing an Apprentice Abolition Act, their labours, I have reason to fear, may be somewhat retarded, owing to the unavoidable absence of that law officer of the Crown.

Having been most reluctantly, although indispensably, engaged in the irksome and painful task of enforcing the penal law against the apprenticed population at the commencement of the present system, no one can unite more cordially with your Lordship than myself in anxiously deprecating the recurrence, during its continuance, of a necessity so distressing; but I have cited a creditable example, in Mr. Best's instance, of the good feeling of the Barbados peasantry; and now that measures are in progress, as already represented in my previous despatches, for their early emancipation, it affords me sincere pleasure to assure your Lordship, with reference to the enclosed transcript of a message to the Legislative Houses, that there seems no reason to apprehend any interruption of the internal quiet of this island.

Were disturbances unhappily to be excited, either here or in any other colony, it would seem impossible that a more eligible mode of quelling them could be employed than that made available by your Lordship for securing a rapid concentration of force at any given point, on a sudden emergency, by means of steam vessels of war.

I have, &c.

(signed) *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

Enclosure in No. 8.

Encl. in No. 8.

(Circular.)
2 April 1838.

His Excellency the Governor to His Honour the President and Council.

THE Governor presents to the Honourable the Council the accompanying copies of a circular despatch from Lord Glenelg, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, and of a Bill now depending in the House of Commons, intituled, "An Act to amend the Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies," in which it is provided that "nothing in this Act contained shall apply to any colony to which the said Act for the Abolition of Slavery does not apply, or in which the apprenticeship established under the said Act of Parliament shall be already lawfully determined at the time when the Governor shall receive notice of the passing of this Act."

On perusing the Right honourable Secretary of State's despatch, it has been a source of the highest gratification to the Governor to be aware that, on the 17th ultimo, "The Council, after the most careful consideration of the Governor's message of the 16th January 1838, in which his Excellency urged upon the Legislative Council the wisdom and expediency of terminating the apprenticeship in August 1838; reflecting moreover on the good faith of the
British

British Legislature in rejecting any attempt to abolish the Emancipation Act of the Imperial Parliament of 1833, without the co-operation of the Colonial Legislatures, and taking into consideration the general good conduct of the apprenticed population under so unprecedented an experiment and during a period of continued excitement, 'unanimously resolved, That it is not only expedient to yield to the wishes of the British public, which have been so strongly expressed on this momentous question; but that, moreover, it will be most conducive to the general interests and happiness of the colony that a Bill should be speedily passed, declaring the absolute emancipation of all classes of apprenticed labourers on the 1st of August 1838,' and no less pleasing to the Governor to understand that, on the 24th ultimo, a Committee of the House of Assembly was nominated in furtherance of that most desirable and most important object.

These circumstances, so well adapted to the prevention of every conceivable pretext for subsequent excitement, unknown, as they were, to my Lord Glenelg when the despatch under consideration emanated from his Lordship, necessarily render the instructions therein contained inapplicable to the actual situation of the various classes of Her Majesty's subjects composing the population of this ancient and loyal colony, fortunately enjoying, as it does, under the blessing of Divine Providence, the most profound tranquillity.

No clearer manifestation of benevolence, or of confidence, can be offered by the executive to the apprenticed labourers than the proposal for the acceleration of their freedom, which in January last the Governor, in the deliberate, unbiassed and constitutional exercise of his judgment, felt it justly due to them, and consequently to his official station, no longer to refrain from earnestly recommending to the attention of the Council and Assembly; neither is it possible to extend to the labouring orders a more conciliatory or more powerful encouragement for unremitting perseverance in their present peaceable and orderly demeanour than the acceptable reward which, dispensing with the intervention of Parliament, and dutifully participating in the deep interest graciously cherished by Her Majesty the Queen in the welfare and happiness of the apprentices, the Legislative Houses are about to bestow upon the deserving peasantry of this island, by means of "an abridgment of their appointed term of service during the present year."

The Honourable Board of Council, the Governor doubts not, will thankfully appreciate the decisive and vigorous measures adopted by Her Majesty's Government for the prompt and effectual suppression of any local disturbances that may occur in the West Indies.

(signed) *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

Government House, Barbados, 8th May 1838.

(True copy.)

E. J. M. M'Gregor, Governor.

— No. 9. —

(No. 112.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Bart.,
to Lord *Glenelg*.

My Lord, Government House, Barbados, 16 May 1838.

No. 9.

At a meeting of the Privy Council held at the court-house, yesterday I inquired of the Honourable Board whether it is desirable,

1st.—That the Governor in Council should be authorized to liberate the apprentices from further service on any day between the of June and the 1st of August 1838.

2d.—That the Barbados Bill for abolishing apprenticeship should be assimilated, as nearly as possible, to the Antigua Bill for the Abolition of Slavery, recently recommended as a precedent by my Lord Glenelg, and of the provisions of which, in relation to the negroes, Lord Stanley, in April 1834, expressed unqualified approbation.

3d.—That the prolongation of apprenticeship in certain cases beyond the 1st of August 1840, in repayment of absence from the employer's service, sanctioned by the 64th Clause of the Island Abolition Act, be entirely remitted by the Legislature from the 1st of August 1838.

4th.—That the day on which the liberation from apprenticeship of the labouring population shall commence be appointed a day of general thanksgiving to the Almighty.

5th.—That a proclamation be prepared explanatory of the new obligations the peasantry are about to incur, inculcating the propriety of attention to their religious duties, of perseverance in habits of industry and obedience to the laws, and especially exhorting them to dismiss their prejudices against agricultural employment, and to induce their children to partake of the labours of the field, as well as of the advantages of education.

6th.—That a sum of money should be placed for public purposes at the disposal of the Governor in Council.

7th.—That

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7th.—That the punishment of the lash be removed forthwith from the jurisdiction of the magistracy to that of the courts.

On the first point, as the Bill in preparation for emancipating the apprentices embraced the prædial class alone, it was judged best to leave the question open for the present.

On the second, it was surmised, in as far as related to an exact assimilation of the Bill to the Antigua Slavery Abolition Act, that resistance might be expected in the Assembly, and one member of the Privy Council avowed himself likewise strongly opposed to it.

The third, fourth and fifth proposals were considered unobjectionable.

•The object of the sixth recommendation is connected with confidential arrangements between his Excellency the Lieutenant-general commanding the forces and myself, respecting certain possible temporary movements of troops for the benefit of their health to convalescent stations, and was effectually met by the assurance that the Legislative Council and Assembly would readily defray any charges that might arise under this head.

A Bill embodying the seventh suggestion was stated to be in progress, pursuant to a message which, with a previous understanding to this effect, I laid before the Council and Assembly on the 4th ultimo, conformably with my impression upon that subject submitted to your Lordship in a despatch of the 14th of March last, Barbados, No. 47.

While these proceedings occupied the Privy Council, the House of Assembly had on their table below the message of the 8th instant, accompanying my despatch of the 11th, No. 107, and two other messages, of which copies are enclosed, one containing the concluding passages of your Lordship's private and confidential letter of the 2d of April; and the other announcing the enactment by the Council and Assembly of St. Vincent of a law (in accordance with the Antigua Slavery Abolition Act) for the liberation of the apprentices in that island on the 1st of August next.

Possessed of such materials in aid of their deliberation, the Council and Assembly were perfectly in condition, as it appeared to me, to come to a definitive conclusion; and the Privy Council, participating most kindly in my feelings, solicited, in their legislative capacity, a conference with the Assembly, and informed them that, if an Act for the Abolition of Apprenticeship were passed instanter, I should deem myself justified in detaining Her Majesty's Packet Mutine until to-day, for its conveyance to your Lordship.

This proposition being acceded to, a Bill hastily drawn up, which passed the two Houses, was read to me in Privy Council, and finding it impracticable to win more eligible terms for the apprentices, I thought it advisable, at least, to secure for them the best that were procurable, without further loss of time, and at once intimated an intention of accepting the Act tendered for my sanction, which, when received from the proper department, will be forwarded to your Lordship in a separate despatch.

To the Council (Sir Reynold Alleyne included) I am generally indebted for the zealous support afforded me; and in justice to the Assembly it is to be remarked that all the proceedings of the Committee, originally selected for the preparation of the Bill, are in the hands of Mr. Solicitor-general Clarke, whose illness, reported in my despatch Nos. 107 and 110, unhappily continues, and your Lordship will doubtless make every due and considerate allowance for the imperfections of an Act drawn up under such unusual disadvantages.

Possibly, from the accident of my having had the good fortune to assent to the Bill "for the Abolition of Slavery in Antigua and its dependencies from and after the 1st of August 1834," I may be unconsciously somewhat too partial to its provisions; and the apprenticeship since intervening, as well as the demand for labour, existing in Barbados to a far greater extent than in most other islands, may certainly tend to render less eminent in this densely-peopled colony that risk of "sudden dislocation and confusion" which induced the Legislature of Antigua "to allow the newly manumitted" slaves a longer conditional tenure of their ancient abodes for the election "of their future places of residence and service;" and it is much to be desired that this expectation, by which I believe the majority of the House of Assembly here to have been influenced upon the present occasion, may be warranted by a propitious result.

I have, &c.

(signed) *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

No. 3.

4 April 1838.

1. & 2.

8 & 15 May 1838.

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Enclosure 1, in No. 9.

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His Excellency the Governor to His Honour the President and Council.

THE Governor submits to the consideration of the Honourable the Board of Council extracts of a despatch from the Right honourable the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, with reference to the possible final termination, with the concurrence of the local legislatures, of the system of apprenticeship at an earlier period than that now fixed by law.

Encl. 1, in No. 9.
2 April 1838.

Government House, Barbados, (signed) *E. J. Murray M'Gregor*, Governor.
8 May 1838.

A similar message to the House of Assembly.

Enclosure 2, in No. 9.

His Excellency the Governor to His Honour the President and Council.

THE Governor considers it proper to state, for the information of the Honourable Board of Council, that, by accounts recently received by express from his Excellency the Lieutenant-governor, it appears that an Act for the Abolition of Apprenticeship, in accordance with the Antigua Act for the Abolition of Slavery, was to be passed on the 11th instant, by the Honourable the Council and Assembly of St. Vincent.

Encl. 2, in No. 9.

Government House, Barbados, (signed) *E. J. Murray M'Gregor*, Governor.
15 May 1838.

A similar message to the House of Assembly.

Enclosure 3, in No. 9.

His Excellency the Governor to His Honour the President and Council.

THE Governor earnestly recommends to the benevolent consideration of the Council the adoption of such means as to the Honourable Board may seem most advisable and expedient, in order generally to substitute some other description of secondary punishment for the suppression of offences, in lieu of the infliction of the lash.

Encl. 3, in No. 9.

Government House, Barbados, (signed) *E. J. Murray M'Gregor*, Governor.
4 April 1838.

A similar message to the House of Assembly.

(True copies.)

(signed) *E. J. Murray M'Gregor*, Governor.

—No. 10.—

(No. 113.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Bart.,
to Lord *Glenelg*.

No. 10.

My Lord, Government House, Barbados, 16 May 1838.
REFERRING to my previous letter of this date, No. 112, I do myself the honour of forwarding to your Lordship the under-mentioned Act passed by the legislature of this island, together with its summary, viz.

Act.

“An Act for terminating the Apprenticeship of the Prædial Labourers within this Island on this 1st day of August 1838.”

I have, &c.
(signed) *E. J. M. M'Gregor*, Governor.

(Barbados.)

Enclosure 1, in No. 10.

AN ACT for terminating the Apprenticeship of the Prædial Labourers within this Island on the 1st day of August 1838.

CLAUSE 1—Discharges all prædial apprenticed labourers on the 1st of August 1838 from the then remaining time of their apprenticeship, and from all obligations and penalties imposed on them under the original Abolition Act. Encl. 1, in No. 10.

CLAUSE 2—Prevents the expulsion or ejection of labourers from the estates to which they were attached before August 1st, till after November 1st, 1838, and imposes a penalty of 2*l.* 10*s.* for ejecting them, except only in the case of misconduct.

CLAUSE 3—Directs that infirm persons, &c. shall be supplied with adequate food, clothing and medicine, by the owners or directors of the estates to which they were attached before August 1st, 1838, under a penalty of 2*s.* 6*d.* currency per week for neglecting so to supply them: Provided, that if such infirm persons, &c. have relations or reputed relations in the first degree able to afford them maintenance, the owner, &c. of the estate to which they

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were attached shall be under no liability for their support after 1st August 1839: Provided, that if the owner of such infirm persons, &c. be unable to support them, the liability in such case be upon the parish to which such infirm persons, &c. belong.

(True copy.)

(signed) C. T. Cunningham, Col. Sec.

E. J. M. M'Gregor.

N. B.—No report procurable, Mr. Clarke, Her Majesty's Solicitor-general, being seriously ill.—E. J. M. M'Gregor.

Enclosure 2, in No. 10.

(Barbados.)

Encl. 2, in No. 10.

AN ACT for terminating the Apprenticeship of the Prædial Labourers within this Island on the 1st day of August 1838.

Printed Act of
April 5, 1834.

WHEREAS by the Act of this island for the Abolition of Slavery, the apprenticeship of the prædial labourers will not expire until the 1st day of August 1840: And whereas the legislature of the island, duly considering the same, deem it expedient to terminate their apprenticeship on the 1st day of August next:

Persons holden as
apprenticed la-
bourers on 1st August
1838, discharged
from remaining term
of their apprentice-
ship, and from all
obligations and
penalties imposed on
them under the
original Abolition
Act.

CLAUSE 1.—Be it therefore enacted, by his Excellency Sir Evan John Murray M'Gregor, baronet, governor and commander-in-chief of this island, chancellor-ordinary and vice-admiral of the same; the honourable the members of Her Majesty's Council, and the general assembly of this island, and by the authority of the same; that all and every the persons who on the 1st day of August in this present year of our Lord 1838, shall be holden within this island as prædial apprenticed labourers, shall upon and from after the said 1st day of August 1838 become and be to all intents and purposes whatsoever absolutely freed and discharged of and from the then remaining term of their apprenticeship created by the aforesaid Act for the abolition of slavery, and of and from all and every the obligations imposed on them by, and pains and penalties incurred under, the said Act.

Labourers so dis-
charged to have a
right of residing on
their respective
plantations till
1st Nov. 1838, and
proprietors expelling
them from such
plantations, except
only for misconduct,
&c. before 1st of
November, to be
fined 2*l.* 10*s.*

CLAUSE 2.—And be it further enacted, that until the 1st day of November next ensuing, it shall not be lawful for the owners or directors of plantations or places to eject or expel any prædial apprenticed labourer or labourers hereby discharged from the remaining term of his, her or their apprenticeship as aforesaid, who shall be willing to continue to perform such work as shall be assigned to him, her or them, and shall truly and faithfully perform the same for stipulated wages on such plantations or places from the houses or habitations which he, she or they respectively personally occupied in his, her or their state of apprenticeship as aforesaid; but the said owners or directors of the said plantations or places shall be and they are hereby required to permit and suffer the said labourers to have and enjoy respectively the personal occupation of the said houses or habitations, by way of temporary and gratuitous accommodation, until the said 1st day of November next ensuing, without any molestation or interruption of or by the said owners or directors of the said plantations or places, under a penalty of 50*s.* current money of this island, to be recovered before any justice of the peace as in the case of servants' wages, and paid to the party aggrieved: Provided always, that in case of non-performance of work, of insubordinate, quarrelsome, disorderly or riotous behaviour, or in case of drunkenness, theft, trespass or other gross delinquency on the part of any such labourer, it shall be competent to two or more justices of the peace, upon view and impartial inquiry into the merits of the complaint, by an authority under their hands and seals, to sanction the expulsion of such delinquent.

All infirm persons,
&c. to be supplied
during their natural
lives with adequate
food, clothing and
medicine, by those
owners, &c. to whose
estates, &c. they
were attached pre-
vious to 1st August
1838.

Proviso.

CLAUSE 3.—And be it further enacted, that the owners or directors of plantations or places shall be and they are hereby required to supply those persons who in their aforesaid state of apprenticeship were attached to such plantations or places respectively, and shall on the said 1st day of August 1838 be afflicted with any such disease, or mental or bodily infirmity as may render them permanently incapable of earning any part of their subsistence, with adequate food, clothing, medicine, medical attendance, lodging and maintenance during their natural lives, or until due and adequate provision shall be otherwise made for them by law, under a penalty of 2*s.* 6*d.* current money of this island per week, to the use of the person not supplied as aforesaid, to be recovered before any justice of the peace as in the case of servants' wages: Provided always, that in case any such person afflicted with any such disease, or mental or bodily infirmity as aforesaid, shall have any relations or kindred, or reputed relations or kindred in the first degree able to maintain him or her, the owner or director of the plantation or place to which he or she was attached as aforesaid, shall from and after the 1st day of August 1839 be relieved from any further liability for the food, clothing, medicine, medical attendance, lodging and maintenance of such infirm person: And provided also, that in case the owner of any such plantation or place to which any such infirm person shall have been attached, shall be in such reduced circumstances as to be unable at any time to furnish such food, clothing, medicine, medical attendance, lodging and maintenance as aforesaid, then and in such case the same shall be furnished to such infirm person by the churchwarden of the parish to which he or she shall belong, at the cost and expense of the said parish.

2d Proviso.

Read three times, and passed the Council
unanimously, this 15th day of May 1838.

T. C. Cunningham, Clerk of the Council.

(A true copy.)

Attested this 16th day of May 1838.

C. T. Cunningham, Col. Sec.

Read three times, and passed the General
Assembly, this 15th day of May 1838.

John Mayers,

Clerk of the General Assembly.

Government House, Barbados, 16th May 1838.

E. J. M. M'Gregor, Governor.

MONTSERAT.

—No. 11.—

COPY of a DESPATCH from Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke* to Lord *Glenelg*.
(No. 201.)

MONTSERAT.

No. 1

No 1

No. 2.

My Lord, Government House, Antigua, 28 Dec. 1837.

I HAVE the satisfaction of reporting to your Lordship that resolutions have been passed by the council and assembly of Montserrat, for the termination of the system of Apprenticeship in that island on the 1st of August 1838, and instructing the law officers of the Crown to prepare a Bill for that purpose.

I inclose extracts of the President's letter and of the minutes of the proceedings.

I have, &c.

(signed) *W. M. G. Colebrooke*.

Enclosure 1, in No. 11.

(Copy Extract.)

Sir,

Montserrat, 22d December 1837.

Encl. 1, in No. 11.

I HAVE the honour to send you the Minutes of both Houses of the Legislature on the 14th and 16th instants, by which you will perceive the contemplated improvements for our jail.

Your Excellency will also learn with peculiar interest the appointment of a Committee of both Houses of the Legislature for the attainment of an object of the highest importance to the future happiness and prosperity of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects in this island, viz. the final abolition of our Apprenticeship Act, on the 1st of August 1838; which, if accomplished with a due regard to the interests of all parties, will, I trust, realize the anxious and sanguine expectations of the whole community.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Henry Hamilton*, President.

His Excellency Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke*,
Governor.

Enclosure 2, in No. 11.

(Copy Extract.)

PROCEEDINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE OF MONTSERAT.

Encl. 2, in No. 11.

16th November 1837.

The following Message came down from the Council :

“Gentlemen,

“REFERRING to Lord Glenelg's despatch of 14th November, this board would call to the attention of your Honourable House the approaching crisis, when part of the Apprenticeship will expire by the Abolition Act. Viewing the success of a state of freedom in the island of Antigua, the failure of the Apprenticeship system in this island, and its attendant expense; and, following the suggestions recommended by Her Majesty's Government, this board would advise the boon of freedom being extended to all classes of apprentices; that the present Act be repealed, and a general emancipation take place on the 1st August 1838; in the mean time, such salutary laws be passed as will secure to this colony peace and good order.”

(By command)

(signed) *Frs Burke*, Act's Clerk of the Council.

On motion of Mr. *W. Dyett*,—

Resolved, The following Messages be sent to the Council :

“We concur with the views respecting the propriety of terminating the Apprenticeship system on the 1st August 1838, expressed in your late Message.”

(signed) *Rich^d H. Dyett*, Speaker.

“We have come to a resolution that the Queen's counsel be directed to bring in a Bill to repeal the Apprenticeship Act, and all Acts referring thereto, and for finally terminating the Apprenticeship system on the 1st of August 1838, to which we request your concurrence.”

(signed) *Rich^d H. Dyett*, Speaker.

MONTSERRAT. On the motion of Dr. J. Dyett,—

The following Message was sent to the council :

“ We have resolved, That a Committee of both Houses of the Legislature be appointed to ascertain the number of individuals entitled to the services of non-attached prædial labourers, and the annual value of their services, and also the number of persons who, being deprived by an Act of General Emancipation of their claims upon their present employers, and being, from age or infirmity, unable to maintain themselves, will require to be legally provided for ; and have appointed Dr. J. Dyett, John P. Trott, and D. Sydney, Esquires, to join a competent number from your board, to which we request your concurrence.”

(signed) *Rich^d H. Dyett*, Speaker.

The following Messages came down from the Council :

“ Gentlemen,

“ We concur with your House that the Queen’s counsel be directed to bring in a Bill to repeal the Apprenticeship Act, and all Acts referring thereto, and for finally terminating the apprenticeship system on the 1st August 1838.”

(By command)
(signed) *Fr^s Burke*, Acts Clerk of the Council.

“ Gentlemen,

“ We concur with your House that a Committee of both Houses of Legislature be appointed to ascertain the number of individuals entitled to the services of non-attached prædial labourers, and the annual value of their services ; and also the number of persons who, being deprived by an Act of General Emancipation of their claims upon their present employers, and being, from age or infirmity, unable to maintain themselves, will require to be legally provided for ; and have appointed the Honourable Richard S. Goodall, and the Honourable Michael Furlonge to join the Members from your House ; any three of whom to make a quorum.”

(By command)
(signed) *Fr^s Burke*, Acts Clerk of the Council.

— No. 12. —

No. 12. EXTRACT of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke* to Lord *Glenelg*, dated Government House, Antigua, 24 March 1838.

Vide Appendix,
No. 1.

I HAVE the honour to inclose to your Lordship copy of a letter from the President of Montserrat, transmitting an Act for the approval of Her Majesty in Council.

The Act for the final termination of the apprenticeship in August next was passed by me during my late visit to the island, and makes due provision for the aged and infirm.

Enclosure in No. 12.

Encl. in No. 12. EXTRACT of a Letter from President *Hamilton*, to Governor, Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke*, dated Montserrat, 9 March 1838.

I HAVE the honour to hand your Excellency the following Act, for transmission to the Right honourable the Secretary of State—An Act to repeal an Act for the Abolition of Slavery, in August 1838.

(No. 138.)
(Montserrat.)

AN ACT to repeal an Act, intituled, “ An Act for the Abolition of Slavery in this Island,” and all other Acts auxiliary thereto.—(Passed 20 February 1838.)

WHEREAS by an Act of this island, intituled, “ An Act for the Abolition of Slavery,” it is, amongst other things, enacted, That from and after the 1st day of August in the year of our Lord 1834, all persons who, in conformity with the laws in force in this island, should on or before the 1st day of August in the year of our Lord 1834 have been duly registered as slaves in the said island, and who on the said 1st day of August in the year of our Lord 1834 should be actually within the said island, and who should by such registries appear to be on the said 1st day of August in the year of our Lord 1834 of the full age of six years or upwards,

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upwards, should by force and virtue of the said Act, and without the previous execution of any indenture of apprenticeship or other deed or instrument for that purpose, become and be apprenticed labourers; and it was by the said Act provided that, for the purposes aforesaid, every slave engaged in his ordinary occupation on the seas should be taken to be within the said island; and it is by the now reciting Act further enacted, That during the apprenticeship of any such apprenticed labourer, such person or persons should be entitled to the services of such apprenticed labourer as would for the time being have been entitled to his or her services as a slave, as if the said reciting Act had not been made: And it is further enacted, in and by the now reciting Act, that the said apprenticed labourers should be divided into three classes; the first of such classes consisting of prædial apprenticed labourers, attached to the soil, and comprising all persons who in their state of slavery were usually employed in agriculture, or in the manufacture of colonial produce or otherwise, upon lands belonging to their owners; the second of such classes consisting of prædial apprenticed labourers, not attached to the soil, and comprising persons who in their state of slavery were usually employed in agriculture, or in the manufacture of colonial produce, on lands not belonging to their owners; and the third of such classes consisting of non-prædial apprenticed labourers, and comprising all apprenticed labourers not included within either of the two preceding classes: And it was by the said now reciting Act further enacted, That no person who should become a prædial apprenticed labourer by virtue of the now reciting Act, whether attached or not attached to the soil, should continue in such apprenticeship beyond the 1st day of August in the year of our Lord 1840, and that no person who by virtue of reciting Act should become a non-prædial apprenticed labourer should continue in such apprenticeship beyond the 1st day of August in the year of our Lord 1838: And whereas it is deemed advisable and expedient, as well for the benefit of the employer as for the benefit of the apprenticed labourer, that the apprenticeship of all the classes should cease, determine and be at an end on the 1st day of August next; and that such apprentices shall on the said 1st day of August be as free as any other of Her Majesty's subjects, to all intents and purposes; and that the Act of this island, intituled, "An Act for the Abolition of Slavery," and all other Acts auxiliary thereto, should cease and determine on the said 1st day of August:

We, therefore, Your Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the President administering the government of this island, and the Council and Assembly of the same, do pray Your most excellent Majesty, that an Act of this island, made and passed in the fifth year of the reign of King William the Fourth, intituled, "An Act for the Abolition of Slavery," and an Act passed in the same year, intituled, "An Act for the Protection and Maintenance of Apprenticed Labourers in this Island, and for insuring the punctual discharge by such Apprenticed Labourers of the services due by them to their employers, and generally for regulating the conduct and for the punishment of any offences committed by such Apprenticed Labourers;" and an Act passed in the same year, intituled, "An Act establishing a Police in the said Island;" and an Act passed in the same year, intituled, "An Act for the Classification of Apprenticed Labourers;" and an Act passed in the same year, intituled, "An Act for giving the Special Magistrate Jurisdiction over Apprenticed Labourers, and directing their mode of proceeding in the exercise of such Jurisdiction," shall on the said 1st day of August next cease, determine and be totally void and have no force or effect whatsoever; and that all and every apprentice and apprentices in the said island, of every class, shall on the said 1st day of August be and become as free to all intents and purposes as any other of Her Majesty's subjects.

And be it enacted, That the said persons so to be manumitted on the said 1st day of August next shall be entitled to receive relief on the same footing as all Her Majesty's other subjects in this island.

And be it further enacted, That from and after the said 1st day of August next, all owners or directors of plantations in this colony shall be and are hereby required to supply those persons who in their state of apprenticeship were attached to such plantations respectively, and shall, at the time of such emancipation, be afflicted with any such disease or mental or bodily infirmity as may render them permanently incapable of earning any part of their subsistence, with such food, clothing, lodging, medicine, medical attendance, and such other maintenance and allowances as by a certain Act passed in the year 1798, intituled, "An Act more effectually to provide for the support and to extend certain regulations for the protection of slaves, to promote and encourage their increase, and generally to meliorate their condition;" an owner was required to supply to and for any slave being of the same age, sex, and under the same circumstances as such persons shall respectively be, under a penalty of 5*l.* for every offence, to be recovered before any two or more justices of the peace, and such justices of the peace are hereby empowered and required upon complaint to them made to grant a warrant to bring the offender before them at the time, and place in such warrant specified, and if on the conviction of such offender on his or her confession, or on the evidence of one or more credible witness or witnesses upon oath (which oath such justices are hereby empowered to administer,) such penalty shall not be forthwith paid, it shall and may be lawful to and for such justices to levy the same by distress, and for want of distress to commit every such offender to the common gaol, there to remain for any time not exceeding 20 days, unless such penalty and all reasonable charges shall be sooner paid, and which penalty, when recovered, shall be paid into the public treasury for the use of this island: Provided always, and be it enacted, That in the event of any dispute or difficulty in ascer-

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MONTSERRAT.

Preamble.

Repeal Abolition Act, and all Acts auxiliary thereto, on the 1st day of August next.

Apprenticeship to cease and determine, and all classes of labourers to be free on the said 1st day of August 1838.

Persons discharged from apprenticeship entitled to relief.

Owners or directors of plantations to provide for diseased, aged and infirm persons on their estates.

Penalty of 5*l.* for each offence, recoverable before any two or more justices; justices to issue warrant to bring offenders before them. If offenders convicted, and penalty not forthwith paid, to be committed to common gaol not exceeding 20 days. Penalties, when recovered, to be paid into the public treasury. In case any dispute arise as to the right

of any party claiming to be maintained, then two justices, with the aid of a medical man, are to make a binding decision.

If further compensation, awarded beyond 20,000,000 *l.* to be paid to the persons suffering pecuniary loss by the abridgment of the term of apprenticeship.
Suspending Clause.

taining whether any particular individual shall be included in such number of persons, it shall and may be lawful for the parties interested to make their appeal to two or more of the nearest of Her Majesty's justices of the peace, who, taking to their counsel some experienced medical practitioner, shall, under their hands and seals make a peremptory and conclusive decision in this behalf.

And whereas many of the inhabitants of this colony will suffer considerable pecuniary loss by the abridgement of the term of apprenticeship for which this Act provides; Be it and it is hereby enacted by the authority aforesaid, that in the event of further compensation than of 20,000,000 *l.* already given being awarded to the masters of apprenticed prædial labourers of both classes, that such further compensation shall be allotted to and paid over to the person or persons suffering pecuniary loss in consequence of the passing of this Act.

And be it enacted and ordained by the authority aforesaid, That nothing in this Act contained shall have any force or effect whatsoever until the same shall have been duly confirmed by Her Majesty in Council.

Dated at Montserrat, this 20th day of February 1838, and in the 1st year of Her Majesty's reign.

Passed the Assembly this 13th day of
January 1838.

Henry Wm. Dyett,
Clerk of the Assembly.

Rich^d H. Dyett, Speaker.
W. M. G. Colebrooke.

Passed the Council this 18th day of
January 1838.

M. Chambers,
Dept^t Clerk of the Council.

Duly published in the town of Plymouth, in the island aforesaid, this 20th day of February, in the year of our Lord 1838, and of Her Majesty's reign the first.

Wm. J. Hamilton,
Pro. Mar. Gen^l.

— No. 13. —

(No. 60.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Lord *Glenelg* to Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke*.

No. 13.

Sir,

Downing-street, 15 June 1838.

I HAVE the honour to transmit to you herewith an Order passed by Her Majesty in council on the 8th instant, specially confirming the two Acts numbered 138 and 139, the former of these Acts being for the total and immediate termination of the apprenticeship system in the island of Montserrat.

In forwarding this Order to the President of Montserrat, you will desire him to signify to the council and assembly of that island Her Majesty's gracious approbation of the liberal and enlightened course which they have pursued in bringing to a close by their own voluntary act. the system of apprenticeship in Montserrat.

I have, &c.

(signed) *Glenelg.*

NEVIS AND VIRGIN ISLANDS.

— No. 14. —

EXTRACT of a DESPATCH from Governor Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke* to Lord *Glenelg*, dated Government House, Antigua, 16 April 1838.

NEVIS AND
VIRGIN ISLANDS.

No. 14.

I REPEATED to the President (of Nevis) my recommendation for the termination of the system in August next, with a view to the advantage of all parties.

Pursuant to this recommendation, it appears that the Council and Assembly on the 10th of March, held a general conference on the subject, and are reported to have divided in favour of the termination of the system by a majority of 17 to 4, which resolution is stated by the special magistrate to have been publicly made known.

After these proceedings, I cannot permit myself to doubt that the measure will be brought to a prosperous issue, and that the expectations raised by the announcement to the apprentices of the result of the conference will not be disappointed.

I have the satisfaction of also reporting to your Lordship, that, pursuant to my recommendation, a Bill has been passed by the Legislature at Tortola for terminating the apprenticeships in the Virgin Islands in August next, under the most gratifying circumstances.

I have not failed to impress on all the local legislatures the necessity of passing such laws as are required to meet these important changes in society.

— No. 15. —

(No. 68.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke* to Lord *Glenelg*.

My Lord,

Government House, Antigua, 18 April 1838.

No. 15.

I HAVE much gratification in forwarding to your Lordship a note which I have received from Mr. President Isaacs, at Tortola, informing me that a Bill had passed the legislature of the Virgin Islands for terminating the system of apprenticeship on the 1st of August 1838, and, with others preparatory for the change, were about to be sent up for my approval.

Anticipating the adoption of this measure in the islands under this Government, I brought under the consideration of their legislatures the various provisions which would require to be made, and I have not failed to advert to the necessity of securing to the indigent and infirm a participation in the relief which is afforded by law to the other classes.

I have, &c.

(signed) *W. M. G. Colebrooke*.

P. S.—I have subjoined an extract of a letter from Tortola, explanatory of the effect produced upon the negroes by the passing of the Bill for their final liberation.

W. M. G.

Enclosure 1, in No. 15.

Mr. President Isaacs presents his compliments to Sir William Colebrooke, and feels much pleasure in acquainting him that the Act for terminating the system of apprenticeship throughout the Virgin Islands on the 1st of August next, together with several others consequent thereon, have passed the Legislature, which are being fairly transcribed, and which will be forwarded by the coming steamer, if completed in time for Sir William's approval.

Tortola, April 13th, 1838.

Enclosure 2, in No. 15.

EXTRACT from a private Letter.

Tortola, 13th April 1838.

Encl. 2, in No. 15.

THE General Emancipation Bills passed yesterday, after a strong opposition.

The news of the Bill having passed spread like wild-fire, and I was delighted in riding out last evening at the hearty salutations of the negroes.

It is already evident that these measures will prove highly beneficial, as the people will quietly and contentedly slide into the new state of things, being aware a boon has been granted them. I do not think a single planter who has any tact will lose a man who is worth keeping.

— No. 16. —

NEVIS AND
VIRGIN ISLANDS.

(No. 88.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke* to Lord *Glenelg*.

No. 16.

My Lord,

Antigua, 8 May 1838.

THE departure of Her Majesty's ship *Racer*, Captain Hope, enables me to acknowledge your Lordship's circular despatches of the 2d April, received this day, and on the important subject of these communications to inform your Lordship that there is much reason to hope that the system of apprenticeship in these islands will be terminated by all the local legislatures in the present year, and that the public tranquillity will be preserved.

Anticipating all the difficulties which are likely to arise from the maintenance of the system beyond the 1st of August next, I have been unceasingly anxious for the attainment of this result, and I will not lose sight of the object of obtaining a recognition of the claims of the aged and infirm to participate in the relief afforded by law to other classes of the community.

I have, &c.

(signed) *W. M. G. Colebrooke*.

— No. 17. —

(General, No. 98.)

COPY of a DESPATCH from Sir *W. M. G. Colebrooke* to Lord *Glenelg*.

No. 17.

My Lord,

Government House, Antigua, 17 May 1838.

ON the receipt of your Lordship's circular despatch marked "Private and confidential" of the 2d of April, I had an opportunity of reporting by Her Majesty's ship "*Racer*," the expectation I had formed that the system of prædial apprenticeship was likely to be terminated in the present year in these islands.

I have on former occasions so fully explained my views on this subject, that your Lordship will have been prepared for such a measure, so far as depended upon my exertions to promote it, and the recent proceedings in Parliament are much calculated to strengthen the grounds in favour of its adoption.

In the Bill which has been passed at Tortola, the claim of the aged and infirm to parochial relief has been recognized; and with the understanding that due provision be made to render this relief effectual, I have not objected to the Bill, on the ground that estates have not been made as at present responsible for the charge, involving as it does a different mode of relief for persons who become chargeable before and after the 1st of August.

At Nevis the Bill is still in progress, and from the unsettled state of the public mind in that colony since the resolution of the Council and Assembly to terminate the system became known, I hope that it will be shortly passed; and I have the assurance of Sir Henry Macleod that it is likely to be adopted in St. Christopher's.

From the effect of the recent dissolution on the composition of the House of Assembly at Dominica, I have suggested to the Lieutenant-governor that it would be attended with the best effect, if the Council, which includes some of the principal landholders, should originate the Bill, which would tend to preserve the bond of union between the apprentices and their employers, while it would avoid the effect of protracted public discussions on a subject of such intense interest to the rural population.

Having circulated the various Acts which have been in operation in this island since 1834, I will endeavour as far as possible to avoid their defects, and to preserve uniformity on those which may be passed by the other local legislatures.

I have, &c.

(signed) *W. M. G. Colebrooke*.

S T. C H R I S T O P H E R.

— No. 18. —

COPY of a DESPATCH from Lieutenant-governor Sir *Henry Macleod* to
Lord *Glenelg*.

ST. CHRISTOPHER.

o. 18.

My Lord,

Government House, 18 May 1838.

As it is impossible to communicate through Sir William Colebrooke by this packet (which is hourly expected here), I have the pleasure to announce that the Legislature of this colony have resolved to abolish the apprenticeship system on the 1st August next, and I have the honour to inclose the duplicate of a despatch I have addressed to his Excellency on the subject.

(4.)

I have, &c.

(signed) *H. Macleod*, Lieutenant-governor.

Enclosures in No. 18.

Sir,

Government House, 18 May 1838.

Encl. in No. 18.

My correspondence will have shown your Excellency that although I had hitherto failed in my attempts with the Legislature for the abolition of the apprenticeship system in August next, I was still led to think it would eventually be adopted. Having pressed the matter, I was asked for a dissolution, that the members might take the sense of their constituents. Your Excellency will think with me that in a small island like this, and where 15 members for the rural parishes in the absence of the proprietary body are returned by 35 voters, it was not necessary; and I was also aware that one great object was to throw out four members who support the Government. Knowing likewise that parties at the time were nearly balanced on the question, I thought it politic neither to risk the loss of those I could depend upon, nor fair on these gentlemen not to have a voice in a popular measure, throughout which they have supported me. I did not therefore consent; but finding there was a great inclination, particularly in the council, to reconsider the subject, I prorogued, and yesterday again submitted the abolition of the system on the 1st of August next, which I have great satisfaction in announcing for the information of Her Majesty's Government was carried unanimously in the Council, and with hardly a dissentient voice in the Assembly.

I transmit my speech, with the answers from both branches, with my replies; and I trust the Right honourable the Secretary for the Colonies will think, under all circumstances, that the general answer I made to the assembly, while it did not pass over the ungracious allusion to the Imperial Parliament and myself, considering they had felt it necessary after a former and recent resolution, "that it was inexpedient to shorten the term of apprenticeship," was best calculated to prevent further irritability on their part; for it would have been almost as presumptuous in my defending at length the proceedings of the Imperial Parliament, as it would have been hopeless to convince them that I had caused the imperfect law under which the system has been carried on to be administered with strict honesty, but determination that the apprenticed labourers should have the full benefit of the spirit of the English Abolition Act. In this I have been ably and zealously assisted by the special magistrates of this island, who on all occasions have answered my fullest expectations, and who, under abuse and contumely heaped upon them by persons and the public press, have steadily and faithfully performed their duties.

I beg to add, the Bill for the Abolition was read a first time yesterday in the House of Assembly, and, that although I failed in obtaining the insertion of the Clauses of the Antigua Act to which Lord Glenelg alludes, yet the persons incapacitated from procuring their own livelihood will be provided for by the parishes as other paupers.

I have, &c.

(signed) *H. Macleod*, Lieutenant-governor.

Mr. President, and Gentlemen of the Council,
Mr. Speaker, and Gentlemen of the Assembly,

SINCE I last met you, Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies has sent me a Bill, intituled, "An Act to amend an Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies," which, having passed the House of Lords, has been twice read in the House of Commons. In its present state, and before it comes into force here by proclamation, I refrain from further remark, than that it would seem to provide for the proper working of the apprenticeship system.

ST. CHRISTOPHER. I have likewise to announce, that Her Majesty's Law Officers have decided that all plantation tradesmen are non-prædials, which entirely changes their classification in this island.

I will now advert to the reason that led me to prorogue this General Assembly.

I have always advocated the freedom of the labouring classes; but when the abolition of the apprenticeship system was first mooted, knowing this Legislature was not prepared to adopt it, I was then averse to the discussion of the subject, as calculated to raise hopes in those most interested, particularly if proposed by the executive, and consequent discontent and excitement, if rejected by the local Legislature. It has since, however, been debated in this and almost every other Assembly, and favourably entertained by many; it is, in consequence, become the engrossing topic among all classes of the community, which, with other events that have occurred, has so totally changed the aspect under which it was before viewed, that, at the request of the Honourable the Council, I prorogued, that I might again propose the abolition of the apprenticeship system in August next.

I now, accordingly, recommend it, with earnest entreaty for your cool and dispassionate consideration, assuring your Honourable Board and House, that though not possessed of property in the soil, both from the situation I hold and as an individual, I have a deep feeling of interest for the welfare of this colony, and while, from its present peculiar position, I have not a doubt in my own mind as to the policy of granting this great boon, I can well understand the hesitation and anxiety of those differently situated, in making this momentous change.

Should this measure be adopted, I need not remind your Honourable Board and House, there are laws necessary to meet it, and I am confident that they will be framed with your usual liberality and attention.

St. Christopher, 17 May 1838.

(signed) *H. M'Leod, Lieut-govr.*

To His Excellency Sir *Henry Macleod*, R. H. & K., St. W., Lieut.-colonel in the Army, Lieut.-governor of St. Christopher and Anguilla, Chancellor and Ordinary of the same, &c. &c. &c.

Sir,

WE, the members of the Board of Council, in answer to the speech which your Excellency has been pleased to deliver at the opening of the new Session, beg leave to state that, under the strong pressure of the various circumstances mentioned by your Excellency, and of others to which you have not alluded, are of opinion that the abolition of the apprenticeship on the 1st of August next has become expedient, and that we are prepared to co-operate in immediate measures to accomplish this object. We beg to assure your Excellency, that we will approach the consideration of those laws which may be necessary to ensure the successful cultivation of the soil, with an earnest desire to protect the interests of all classes; and we trust that Her Majesty's Government will favourably entertain laws that shall be enacted in such a spirit.

We beg also to assure your Excellency of our conviction, that in pressing this subject upon the consideration of the Legislature you have been influenced by the desire of promoting the prosperity of this community.

Council Chamber, 17 May 1838.

(signed) *Wm. Greatheed Crooke, President.*
Dan. Gateward Davis.
W. Wharton Rawlins.
Thomas Swanston.
Robert Claxton.
J. T. Caines.
J. H. Rawlins.
J. K. Wattly

REPLY.

Mr. President and Gentlemen of the Council,

You do me but justice in expressing your conviction, that in pressing the subject of the abolition of the apprenticeship, I have been influenced by the desire of promoting the prosperity of this community.

I rejoice exceedingly that you have determined on the abolition, and I feel assured that your best exertions will be used for promoting the future interests of all classes.

Council Chamber, 17 May 1838.

(signed) *H. Macleod, Lieutenant-governor.*

THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

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To His Excellency Sir *Henry Macleod*, Knight of the Royal Hanoverian Guelphic Order, Lieutenant-colonel in the Army, Lieutenant-governor of the Islands of Saint Christopher and Anguilla, Chancellor and Ordinary of the same, &c. &c. &c. ST. CHRISTOPHER.

May it please your Excellency,

WE, the members of the Commons House of Assembly of the Island of Saint Christopher, having had your Excellency's Address of this date under our consideration, have come to the following resolution, viz.

“ Resolved, That the measures adopted by the Imperial Parliament for destroying the efficiency of the apprenticeship system, and the discouragement to its continued well working, shown by the executive of these islands, render it absolutely necessary to prepare for its termination in August next.”

And we confidently hope that the measures which will be introduced into this House in furtherance thereof, may be such as will meet with your Excellency's concurrence.

Assembly Room,
17 May 1838.

(signed) *A. Hart Rawlins*, Speaker.

REPLY.

Mr. Speaker and Gentlemen of the Assembly,

I AM happy that you have come to the determination to abolish the system of apprenticeship in August next; but I cannot agree that the measure adopted by the Imperial Parliament would destroy the efficiency of the apprenticeship system, nor am I aware of the executive of these islands having in any way discouraged the continuance of the well-working of that system.

I sincerely trust that the measures you introduce will be such as to meet the approbation of Her Majesty's Government.

Council Chamber,
17 May 1838.

(signed) *H. Macleod*, Lieutenant-governor.

S T. V I N C E N T.

— No. 19. —

ST. VINCENT.

No. 19.

COPY of a DESPATCH from Lieutenant-governor *Tyler* to Lord *Glenelg*.

My Lord, Government House, St. Vincent, 12 May 1838.

It is with no ordinary feelings I fulfil the gratifying duty of transmitting to your Lordship direct by the mail, which leaves this evening, the copy of a Bill for abrogating the apprenticeship of prædial labourers in this colony, which passed the legislature yesterday.

Your Lordship, on reference to my correspondence with his Excellency the Governor-in-chief on the 25th and 26th of April, will observe, I anticipated such a measure; I was not mistaken; its attainment, I am proud to say for the honour of the colony, has been accomplished, as your Lordship will see by the inclosed address from the Council and Assembly, spontaneously and unanimously, with a perfect confidence in its results.

I have therefore only to offer my sincere congratulations to your Lordship that my anxious exertions have been crowned with success, and to express a hope, that when the Act shall be submitted for the favourable consideration of our most gracious Sovereign, your Lordship will be pleased to declare the cheerful co-operation of all classes towards its accomplishment.

I shall do myself the honour of transmitting this communication, accompanied by a transcript of the Bill, and all the necessary official documents connected with the subject, to his Excellency Sir Evan M'Gregor, in the usual manner.

I have, &c.

(signed) *George Tyler*, Lieutenant-governor.

Enclosures in No. 19.

To His Excellency *George Tyler* Esq., Captain in the Royal Navy, Lieutenant-governor and Commander-in-chief for the time being, &c. &c. &c.

Sir,

Encl. in No. 19.

WE, the Members of Her Majesty's Council and the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly, respectfully approach and place in the hands of your Excellency a Bill, intituled, "An Act to abrogate the Apprenticeship of Prædial Labourers in the Island of Saint Vincent and its Dependencies."

In passing this most important measure, the two branches of the legislature are not insensible of the difficulties, the sacrifice and inconvenience which will fall with much severity on persons in all professions, circumstances and situations; but, actuated by a spirit of benevolence and an enlarged philanthropy, they are of opinion they have not granted the boon of emancipation upon any conditions inconsistent with the character, the safety and the true interests of the country.

Upon this occasion the Council and Assembly think it but an act of justice to acknowledge and commend the zeal and honourable dealing which your Excellency has on all occasions manifested in the discharge of your important duties, and it is highly gratifying to them that the pleasing and solemn duty of giving effect to this Act has been committed to your Excellency.

(signed) *John Peterson*,
President of Council.

Court-house,
11th May 1838.

(signed) *N. Struth*,
Speaker of Assembly.

To His Honour the President and Members of Her Majesty's Council, and to His Honour the Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly.

THE Lieutenant-governor, in congratulating the Honourable Board of Council and the Honourable House of Assembly on the measure of emancipation which they have spontaneously and honourably granted to the prædial labourers by the Bill now before him, cannot but express his firm conviction that this instance of their liberality will best insure the permanent welfare of the colony; that, by cheerfully meeting the end which could not be indefinitely postponed,

postponed, they have adopted the safest and most certain means to encourage that confidence and willing intercourse, which, by directing the energies to industrious exertion, will convert our rural population into a faithful and happy peasantry.

For the flattering expressions conveyed to the Lieutenant-governor personally, he feels thankful, and if the discharge of his official duties merits your encomiums, he begs you will believe that those efforts to perpetuate and augment the happiness and security of all classes within this government shall ever occupy his best attention.

Government House, Saint Vincent,
11th May 1838.

(signed)

George Tyler.

(True copies.)

Geo. Tyler, Lieutenant-governor of St. Vincent.

ST. VINCENT.

AN ACT to abrogate the Apprenticeship of Prædial Labourers in the Island of *Saint Vincent* and its Dependencies.

WHEREAS the prædial labourers in this island and its dependencies are by the laws of the Imperial Parliament and of the said island subject to an apprenticeship until the 1st day of August 1840, which it is expedient to abrogate, we therefore, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lieutenant-governor, Council and Assembly of the island of Saint Vincent and its dependencies, humbly pray your most Excellent Majesty, that it may be enacted, and be it and it is hereby enacted by the authority aforesaid, That all and every the prædial labourers who on the 1st day of August 1838 shall be subject to apprenticeship within this island and its dependencies, shall upon and from and after the said 1st day of August 1838 become and be to all intents and purposes free and discharged from the obligations which are by law imposed upon them as apprenticed labourers.

1.
Terminates the apprenticeship on 1st August 1838.

And be it further enacted, That until the 1st day of August 1839, it shall not be lawful for the owners or directors of plantations to evict or expel any labourer or labourers, person or persons who shall be willing to continue to perform such work as shall be assigned to him, her or them, and shall truly and faithfully perform the same for stipulated wages, or who shall be then labouring under any such disease or mental or bodily infirmity as may render him, her or them incapable of earning his, her or their subsistence, from the habitations or tenements which he, she or they respectively personally occupied in his, her or their state of apprenticeship, except in case of insubordinate, quarrelsome or riotous behaviour, or in case of drunkenness, theft, trespass or other gross delinquency on his, her or their part, when it shall be competent to any two or more justices of the peace, upon due and impartial inquiry made into the merits of the complaint, by an authority under their hands and seals, to sanction the expulsion of any such delinquent, but the said owners or directors of plantations shall be and are hereby required to permit and suffer the said labourer, and persons to have and enjoy respectively the personal occupation of the said habitations or tenements by way of a temporary and gratuitous accommodation for the year ending on the said 1st day of August 1839, and no longer, without any molestation or interruption of or by the said owners or directors of plantations, under a penalty of 5*l.* current money for every offence, to be recovered and applied in the manner hereinafter mentioned.

2.
Renders unlawful the eviction from their habitations of labourers willing to work for wages (unless for ill conduct) before the 1st August 1839; also of persons who from disease are incapable of earning their subsistence.

And be it further enacted, That from and after the said 1st day of August 1838, all owners or directors of plantations in this colony shall be and are hereby required to supply those persons who shall on the said 1st day of August 1838, be afflicted with any such disease, or mental or bodily infirmity, as may render them permanently incapable of earning their subsistence with such food, clothing, lodging, medicine, medical attendance, and such other maintenance and allowances as by the laws now in force in this colony a master is required to supply to and for any apprenticed labourer being of the same age and sex, and under the same circumstances as such persons shall respectively be, until proper arrangements and due and adequate provision shall be made for their maintenance and relief by the respective parishes, or by some other benevolent and effectual plan in their favour, and no longer, under a penalty of 5*l.* current money for every offence, to be recovered and applied in the manner hereinafter mentioned.

3.
Makes it imperative on masters to give food, &c, to those not able to earn their subsistence until parochial laws are made.

Provided always, and be it enacted, That in the event of any dispute or difficulty in ascertaining whether any particular individual shall be included in such number of persons, it shall and may be lawful for the parties interested to make their appeal to two or more of the nearest of Her Majesty's justices of the peace, who, taking to their counsel some experienced medical practitioner, shall under their hands and seals make a peremptory and conclusive decision in this behalf.

4.
Provides for the settlement of disputed claims.

And be it further enacted, That all the penalties imposed by this Act shall and may be proceeded for within the space of one calendar month after the offence shall have been committed, and shall be recovered before any two or more of the nearest justices of the peace, and such justices of the peace are hereby empowered and required, upon complaint to them made, to grant a warrant to bring the offender before them at the time and place in such warrant specified; and if on conviction of such offender, or his or her confession, or on the evidence of any one or more credible witness or witnesses upon oath (which oath

5.
Mode of proceeding of justices and appropriation of penalties.

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ST. VINCENT. — such justices of the peace are hereby empowered to administer) any such penalty shall not be forthwith paid, it shall and may be lawful to and for such justices of the peace to levy the same by distress, and for want of distress, to commit every such offender to the common gaol, there to remain without bail or mainprize for any time not exceeding twenty days, unless such penalty and all reasonable charges attending the recovery thereof shall be sooner paid, and all such penalties when so recovered and levied as aforesaid shall be paid into the public treasury to be applied to the general uses of the colony.

Dated at Kingstown this 11th day of May, in the first year of the reign of our Sovereign Lady Queen Victoria, and in the year of our Lord 1838.

Passed the Assembly this 11th day of May 1838.

N. Struth, Speaker.

Passed the Council this 11th day of May 1838.

P. Hopley, Clerk pro. tem.

G. Van Heyningen, Deputy Clerk of the Council.

St. Vincent.

These are to certify, That the foregoing is a true and correct copy of a Bill, intituled, "An Act to abrogate the Apprenticeship of Prædial Labourers in the Island of Saint Vincent and its Dependencies." (Passed the Council and Assembly the 11th day of this instant month of May.)

Given under my hand, at the Secretary's Office at Kingstown in the said Island, this 12th day of May 1838.

G. Van Heyningen, Deputy Public Secretary.

P A P E R S

RELATING TO THE

MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE LEGISLATURES

OF

BARBADOS, MONTserrat, NEVIS,

VIRGIN ISLANDS,

ST. CHRISTOPHER, & ST. VINCENT,

FOR

THE ABOLITION

OF THE

SYSTEM OF APPRENTICESHIP

ON THE

1st AUGUST 1838.

[PRESENTED TO PARLIAMENT BY HER MAJESTY'S COMMAND.]

*Ordered, by The House of Commons, to be Printed,
26 June 1838.*
