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LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, CEYLON.

ADDRESS OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HON. SIR J. WEST RIDGEWAY, G.C.M.G., K.C.B.,
K.C.S.I., ON OPENING THE SESSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, OCTOBER 18, 1900.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

ONCE again am I able to address you in terms of congratulation on the flourishing condition of the finances of the Colony. My term of office, now drawing to a close, has indeed been a halcyon period. The revenue has never failed year by year to expand and increase. In 1896, my first year of office, there was an increase of Rs. 991,765 and a surplus of Rs. 736,714; in 1897 an increase of Rs. 2,031,949 and a surplus of Rs. 2,372,144; in 1898 an increase of Rs. 1,132,147 and a surplus of Rs. 2,294,817; and in 1899 an increase of Rs. 774,473 and a surplus of Rs. 962,202; while in the present year there should be a still greater increase of revenue, and I think that we may again confidently anticipate a large surplus. I trust that when the day, not far distant, arrives for me to render an account of my stewardship I shall be able to demonstrate that these great resources have not been wasted and frittered away, and that the material progress achieved has not been disproportionate to the means which I have been fortunate enough to command. But the time for such a review of my administration has not yet come, and on this occasion I will merely lay before you the administrative history of the twelve months which have elapsed since Sir Edward Walker, then acting for me during a visit to England, addressed you from this chair at the opening of the last session of this Council. To-day I have no new policy to propose, or even to defend, for the policy which I suggested in 1896 has for weal or for woe been adopted by you, and is now in course of accomplishment. To it we are irrevocably committed and it would be waste of time to discuss its virtues or vices. Consequently, Gentlemen, I shall not have to detain you long to-day, for my task is very simple—merely to acquaint you with the condition of your finances and the progress made during the last twelve months in various branches of the administration which happen to possess special interest for us at the present moment. The tale which I have to unfold is doubtless twice told, and more than twice told, but however bald and dreary the manner of its recital it will not be tedious, for it will repeat the pleasing story of the growing prosperity and contentment of this beautiful Island which you all love so well and serve so faithfully.

REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE.

Last October the Acting Governor expressed a hope that the estimated revenue of 25 millions would be quite reached by the end of the year. His anticipation was more than realized, for while the estimated revenue for 1899 was Rs. 24,965,500, the actual revenue amounted to Rs. 25,913,141, being an increase over the estimate of Rs. 947,642, and an increase over the actual revenue of 1898 of Rs. 774,473. The surplus revenue for 1899 amounted to Rs. 962,202, notwithstanding a large supplementary expenditure of Rs. 2,218,835.

The increase during 1899 occurred in every branch of the revenue with the exception of Sale of Government Property and Interest. The principal increase has been again under the head

Customs, which produced Rs. 356,925 more than in 1898, chiefly under the heads of Grain, Spirits and Cordials, Sugar, and Plumbago. There has also been a substantial increase under the heads of Excise, Salt, Railways, Fees of Court, and Land Sales. The expenditure for 1899 was Rs. 24,950,940, or Rs. 2,107,088 more than that of 1898, but Rs. 142,160 less than our estimated expenditure. The principal heads under which the expenditure of 1899 exceeded that of 1898 were Public Works Rs. 387,000, Pensions Rs. 83,000, Military Expenditure Rs. 618,000, Hospitals and Dispensaries Rs. 120,000, Railways Rs. 463,000, Education Rs. 40,000, Survey Rs. 40,000, Port and Marine Rs. 51,000, and Miscellaneous Rs. 404,000.

The principal heads under which the estimate for 1899 proved to be excessive were—Charges on account of Public Debt (savings) Rs. 96,222, Exchange Rs. 108,266, Public Works Recurrent Rs. 121,763, Public Works Extraordinary Rs. 777,385, Post Office Rs. 67,590, Police Rs. 48,263, and Forests Rs. 147,999.

The principal items of the supplementary expenditure were—Railway Rs. 618,839, Public Works Extraordinary Rs. 228,810, Miscellaneous Services Rs. 532,254, Military Expenditure Rs. 357,140, Hospitals and Dispensaries Rs. 85,799, and Provincial Administration Rs. 96,708. The increase of the Military Expenditure of 1899 over that of 1898 was Rs. 618,100, and is thus accounted for by (1) Difference between balance of 1897 paid in 1898 and balance of 1898 paid in 1899, Rs. 121,868; (2) Increase of expenditure on Volunteer Force, due to special items such as re-arming the Force and increase of reserve ammunition, Rs. 98,369; (3) Fortifications Rs. 154,838.

The estimated revenue of 1900 was Rs. 25,120,000, and—so large a revenue in 1899 not being anticipated when the estimates for 1900 were framed—Rs. 793,142 less than the actual revenue of 1899. The expenditure was estimated at Rs. 28,563,796. The excess of estimated expenditure over revenue was to be covered by a draft from balances which represents the estimated expenditure on the Railways and Irrigation Works sanctioned by the Secretary of State on the condition that half the cost should be contributed from the savings of current revenue. It is sound finance to expend the money which we have in hand before raising a loan.

The revenue for the first eight months of 1900 shows an increase of Rs. 740,487 over the estimated revenue for the same period. The increase is chiefly under Customs Rs. 343,464, Port and Harbour Dues Rs. 106,619, Fees of Court Rs. 91,000, Railway Rs. 261,000, and Land Sales Rs. 71,637.

The revenue and expenditure for 1901 are estimated at Rs. 26,320,000 and Rs. 26,226,814 respectively. The details will be fully explained when the Estimates are formally submitted.

PUBLIC DEBT.

On 1st January, 1900, the debt at the current rate of exchange was Rs. 54,639,637, or about Rs. 500,000 less than on 1st January, 1899. When I first addressed this Council in November, 1896, the debt amounted to Rs. 64,000,000, so that when we have borrowed Rs. 10,000,000, the moiety of the cost of the new Railway and Irrigation programme, we shall be much in the same position as in 1896. This reduction is due to redemption of debentures and to a rise in exchange. At the same rate of exchange the charges on account of interest and sinking fund were on 1st January, 1899, Rs. 2,797,730—against Rs. 3,140,000 in 1896—and of this amount, Rs. 1,570,706 were on account of the portion of the debt incurred for Railway Extension. The surplus of Railway receipts in 1899 after defraying this charge amounted to Rs. 1,983,827. Of the debt (Rs. 54,639,697) 32¼ millions were on account of Railway Construction, 17½ millions on account of Harbour, and the balance 5 millions for Waterworks and Irrigation.

COLOMBO HARBOUR WORKS.

Of the amount borrowed for Harbour Extensions (17½ millions), Rs. 10,869,417 have been expended up to 30th June last on the New Harbour Works. The amount required to complete these works is Rs. 8,374,743. The total appropriations on account of the Harbour is Rs. 19,244,160, although the revised estimate in 1898 was Rs. 17,756,861. The excess is principally due to the following items—Dredging Rs. 800,000, lowering foundation of North-West Breakwater Rs. 393,846, twelve new Buóys and Moorings Rs. 97,200, Barge-repairing Basin Rs. 173,948.

Loans to Local Boards amount to Rs. 791,745, of which Rs. 135,563 have been repaid, leaving a balance of Rs. 656,182.

PRESENT FINANCIAL POSITION.

On 1st August, 1899, the total cash balance of Government amounted to Rs. 2,225,129; on 1st August, 1900, owing to the extraordinary expenditure on Public Works it was reduced to Rs. 591,274. This

cash balance does not include Currency and Note Reserve and cash on account one-twelfth Advances in the hands of Heads of Departments. Besides the cash balances Government held on 1st August, 1900, Indian and other securities to the value of Rs. 7,096,706 as against Rs. 8,090,706 on 1st August, 1899. The amount to the credit of the Widows' and Orphans' Pension Fund on 1st August, 1900, was Rs. 2,478,573. The total of investments on account of Note Currency Reserve on 1st August, not included in the above total, was Rs. 6,302,672.

Such, Gentlemen, is our financial position. But during the present year we have incurred large liabilities, of which we must also take account if we are to realize exactly how we stand. I allude to the very extensive scheme of Railway and Irrigation Extension sanctioned by the Secretary of State during my recent visit to England. Mr. Chamberlain then finally sanctioned the construction of railways to the Northern extremity of the Island, in the Kelani Valley, and in the Hill districts of Uda Pussellawa, all of which were indicated by me to this Council in 1896 as my proposed programme of railway extension. Mr. Chamberlain also sanctioned the expenditure of five millions, to be spread over a period of eight years, on irrigation works.

The total cost of these great works is estimated to be Rs. 20,640,000, and the Secretary of State has directed that it should be met, one moiety from borrowed money and the other moiety from investments and future savings of general revenue. I calculate—but the calculation will have to be verified by experts—that towards the latter moiety there was available at the close of 1899 the sum of Rs. 6,319,067. Therefore, there would remain Rs. 4,000,933 to be provided in the future from current revenues, but towards meeting this we have the accumulated balances of the Irrigation Fund (Rs. 401,900) and also the annual contribution from revenue of Rs. 200,000 which is made to that fund under Ordinance No. 6 of 1892. This in six years would amount to Rs. 1,200,000. Accordingly on 1st January last there would remain the sum of about 2½ millions, which will have to be found during the next six years out of current revenue. Until that has been done there can be no reduction of taxation unless indeed some grave necessity should demand and justify it. The Secretary of State sanctioned this great policy of progress on this condition, and we must abide by it. I hope that there will be a considerable surplus this year. If so, and if you like to apply the whole of that surplus to discharging this liability, you can do so, and then there will remain only a comparatively small amount to be paid in 1902 and perhaps 1903. The liability will then be fully discharged. You will have found or provided for the Rs. 10,320,000—the moiety of the cost of this great policy—which, according to the decision of the Secretary of State, has to be found out of revenue. You will then be free from debt on this account, and the revenue of future years will be again at your disposal. I am only dealing with facts, Gentlemen: I do not propose to discuss the rights or wrongs of this policy. There are those who oppose the policy, and they have had ample opportunity of discussing the question in this Council. Of this opportunity they fully and ably availed themselves, and the Council by a large majority rejected their views. The policy was accordingly adopted, and is now being vigorously carried into effect. I would only say that I consider that a large and generous programme of public works to be fully justified, if not demanded, by our prosperity, which to-day appears to be still more assured than it was twelve months ago. On all sides are the signs of progress evident. Not only does our revenue increase, but the general prosperity of the Colony advances, and year by year we become less dependent on any particular industry, although tea, which now only represents about one-half of the value of our exports remains, and no doubt will long remain, our staple industry.

Before leaving the subject of our finances, Gentlemen, I must allude to the proposed Commission to inquire into the incidence of taxation. I agreed to the proposal that there should be a Commission, subject to the sanction of the Secretary of State, and on the condition that it would not propose the reduction of taxation in the whole. There is no doubt that the incidence of our taxation might be improved, and I went very fully into the subject in my address to this Council at the opening of the session of 1898-99. I then said, "I do not think that your taxation can be considered excessive. I maintain that, whatever the faults and defects of your system of taxation may be, it is not oppressive." I added, "I am far from saying that your system of taxation is ideal, and that its nature and incidence cannot be improved," and the Commission was accordingly proposed to consider this question of incidence and no other. The Secretary of State did not refuse his sanction. He agreed to the appointment of a Commission on the condition imposed by me, but he expressed a doubt whether a Commission at the present time would serve any useful purpose. This appears to have been the opinion of those who originally demanded the Commission, and the idea was dropped, wisely I am inclined to think, until the time when your revenue is free from the liability which the large programme of public works now under construction has imposed upon it.

TRADE.

The trade of the Colony is increasing with great strides, and of this the following table of annual values, excluding specie, gives striking proof :—

Year.	Value of Trade in Lacs.	Year.	Value of Trade in Lacs.
1888 ...	... 926	1894 ...	... 1,476
1890 ...	... 1,066	1896 ...	... 1,624
1892 ...	... 1,238	1898 ...	... 1,813
	1899 ...	... 2,130	

Of the total value in 1899 (2,130 lacs), imports exceeded 1,015 lacs and exports 1,114 lacs. These are the highest figures ever reached, but they will be substantially exceeded by those for the present year, for the value of the trade of the past six months amounts to 1,032 lacs as against 1,008 lacs in 1899, an increase of 24 lacs.

In 1899 imports increased in value by 146 lacs, the principal contributors of the increase being—Silk, nearly six lacs; Spirits, two and a half lacs; Manure, nearly two and a half lacs; Dried Fish, eighteen and a half lacs; Grain, five lacs; Sugar, eight lacs; Coal, twenty-two lacs; Other Food Stuffs, four and a half lacs; Wines, nearly half a lac; Haberdashery, nearly twelve lacs.

The latest obtainable returns, for the first eight months of the current year, in Customs Duties show an increase of Rs. 427,424, due to larger importations of cotton stuffs, spirits and cordials, sugar, kerosine oil, and “other goods.” In grain only is there a decrease, due partly to smaller importations into Jaffna, where local crops were good, and partly to an uncertainty as to the future of the rice market, which has led traders to reduce stocks and buy only for immediate necessities. In view of the large number of Indian coolies who have poured into this Island it is probable that the deficiency will be made good by the end of the year.

The most striking features of the export trade of 1899 were the ever-increasing quantities of tea exported, 129 million pounds (an increase of $7\frac{1}{4}$ million pounds upon the figures of the preceding year), and the great activity in the plumbago trade. During the first eight months of the current year nearly 100 million pounds of tea (an increase of 14 million pounds over the corresponding period of the preceding year) have been exported. On the other hand, the demand for plumbago has diminished greatly, with the result that 13,422 tons only have been exported, so far, this year as against 23,196 last year. The prices obtainable last year were altogether abnormal, having risen from Rs. 200 per ton in 1897 and Rs. 300 per ton in 1898 to Rs. 700 per ton in 1899.

The export of cocoanut oil which, like other palm products, decreased last year (falling in value from 160 lacs in 1898 to 143 lacs in 1899, possibly in consequence of the peasantry turning to the more lucrative industry of plumbago mining) shows a satisfactory increase. Of cacao 42,500 cwt.—an increase of 4,000 cwts. over 1898—were exported in 1899. It is significant that the cacao crop of the Island now exceeds that of coffee in value, the respective figures being $18\frac{3}{4}$ and 14 lacs. There was also a very large increase last year in the export of cinnamon. The following table shows the comparative value to total value of Ceylon produce of the staple exports during the years 1897, 1898, and 1899 :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.
Coffee ...	1·97 ...	1·06 ...	1·35
Cacao ...	1·74 ...	2·00 ...	1·87
Tea ...	62·70 ...	57·30 ...	51·86
Plumbago ...	4·97 ...	8·42 ...	22·55
Produce of cocoanut palm ...	17·59 ...	20·29 ...	14·35
Cinnamon ...	2·38 ...	2·92 ...	2·76

A striking development occurred in the direct export trade with the United States of America, the total value of Ceylon produce so exported rising from 52 lacs in 1898 to 136 lacs in 1899, a consequence, largely, of the increased value of plumbago (for which there is a large market in New York), though trade generally is no doubt fostered by the direct and regular steamer service now established between Ceylon and the States.

PUBLIC WORKS.

The total provision for the Public Works Department in 1900 was Rs. 4,511,614, of which Rs. 1,766,700 was for Annually Recurrent and Rs. 2,253,700 for Extraordinary Public Works. The amount allotted for this year for roads, buildings, and bridges was Rs. 2,027,832—the largest amount ever voted—and of this it is expected that no less than Rs. 1,687,960 will be actually spent, leaving unexpended the unprecedentedly small balance of only Rs. 339,863. If to this be added the large

expenditure by the War Office, through the medium of our Public Works Department, on the accommodation of the prisoners of war at Diyatalawa, it will be admitted that the Department has never worked more energetically. The Director of Public Works in August, 1898, estimated a sum of about Rs. 1,700,000 to be the spending capacity of his Department, inclusive of loan works; and this estimate appears to be correct.

Of the estimated expenditure during the current year, Rs. 141,537 will be on new roads and Rs. 339,732 on bridges. Several new roads have been opened in the Central Province, the North-Central Province, Uva, and Sabaragamuwa, and in the Central Province the Annfield road and the Ambawela road are approaching completion. The existing roads are rapidly being brought into good order, but consequently the cost of road maintenance is steadily increasing. It has risen from Rs. 291 per mile in 1889 to Rs. 376 and Rs. 393 per mile in 1898 and 1899. Considerable progress has also been made in substituting structures of iron and concrete for timber bridges, and in addition to several bridges of small span a 106-foot span bridge has been completed over the Dambulla-oya and a bridge of three spans (each of 80 feet) over the Kirinde-oya. A horse-bridge has been constructed over the Badulla-oya at Demodara, and the bridging of the rivers crossing the Labugama road has been completed. Other large bridges, including the new bridges on the Galle road consisting of five spans each of about 125 feet, are in hand. Among the works chargeable to loans constructed during the year were the duplication of ten miles of the water main from Labugama to Colombo and the scraping of a portion of the old main—thereby increasing the daily supply of water in Colombo by 500,000 gallons—and the new passenger jetty at Colombo.

A scheme, which has been sanctioned by the Secretary of State, for the re-organization of the higher branches of the Service and the introduction, as in the Civil Service, of the incremental system, will be laid before you for approval.

RAILWAY EXTENSION.

I have already alluded to the fact that the Secretary of State has finally sanctioned the construction of the proposed railway to the North of the Island, in the Kelani Valley, and from Nanu-oya to Nuwara Eliya and onwards to the Hill districts of Uda Pussellawa. The cost of these railways is estimated at Rs. 11,060,000, Rs. 3,400,000, and Rs. 1,181,000, respectively. On the Northern Railway, which like the Uda Pussellawa Railway is under the charge of Mr. Oliver, the expenditure at the end of August amounted to one million rupees. At both ends substantial progress had been made. On the first seven miles at the southern end the earthwork was in hand; bridges and culverts had been begun, including a bridge over the Deduru-oya; and there is a large quantity of bridge, permanent way, and other material on the ground.

On five miles of the northern end from Kankesanturai earthwork, provision of ballast, bridge and culvert foundations, were well forward, the masonry of several of the bridges and culverts was nearly finished, and at this end also there is a large quantity of permanent way material. Four Assistant Engineers were stationed at the northern, and one Chief Assistant and three Assistant Engineers at the southern end. There was no difficulty regarding labour.

I am happy to say that work on the Uda Pussellawa Railway, which has been delayed by the necessity of a new survey, has at last begun, and that I am not without hope that before I hand over the reins of office it may be completed as far as Nuwara Eliya.

Much progress has been made on the Kelani Valley Railway. Mr. Craig, the Chief Resident Engineer, on 30th August reported that work had been started on this Extension at the station ground at Maradana on 22nd March, and gradually extended along the line as the land was handed over. He was then in possession of the land on about 15 miles of the railway, all of which was under construction. Considerable progress had been made in the earthwork, which has been completed on over eleven miles of the line, and was well advanced on a further four miles. The bridges and culverts on the first five miles of the line were well advanced, but owing to the low-lying nature of the country delay had been caused by the floods, which have been frequent and later than usual this season. The ironwork for 35 culverts and 4 bridges had arrived from England. The rails and fastenings for 20 miles of line for the permanent way had arrived and been stacked at Maradana. Station building had begun, and labour, both Sinhalese and Tamil, had been abundant; the former was drawn from the villages along the line, and the latter principally from Colombo. Of the contractors, a great many had worked on previous railway extensions in this Colony. The health of the labour force and staff had been very good. The line is divided into five districts, of about nine miles, and an Assistant Engineer is to be in charge of each.

I much regret that for urgent private reasons Mr. Craig has been obliged to resign his post. We have secured an experienced and efficient successor in Mr. Phillimore.

HARBOUR EXTENSION.

Very satisfactory progress has been made with the construction of the new Breakwater, the Graving Dock, Patent Slip, &c.

There has been constructed up to September, the ironwork staging from the shore to the island breakwater, the rubble breakwater of 1,000 feet long, as well as a length of 430 out of a total of 2,655 feet in the North-West Breakwater or Northern Arm, the foundation berm of which is deposited as far as the lightship—a distance of 1,800 feet. The whole of the concrete blocks and cylinders for the Patent Slip have been made. The Guide Jetty is now in course of construction, and the trench for the foundations of the concrete walls is nearly dredged. The new Grain Sheds at Kochikada were completed in December last, and were handed over to the Customs authorities on the 3rd January. The total quantity dredged from the harbour for the twelve months ending 31st August was 264,549 cubic yards or 396,823 tons. Three new sets of moorings have been added, and additional sets will be put down as the dredging proceeds. The Barge-repairing Basin has been completed, except for the protecting wall on the top of the rubble embankment, and is now in use.

The excavation for the Graving Dock has been carried on by convict labour with very satisfactory results. The whole of the area, with the exception of the Tanque Salgadoe road, that it was intended to excavate to coping level, has been so dealt with, necessitating a cutting of over 40 feet at the east end of Dock; and, in addition to this, the site of the Dock for a distance of 500 feet has been excavated to low water level ready for the commencement of trenches for side walls.

The construction of the cofferdam, which is being erected to allow of the work in connection with the excavation for and construction of the Graving Dock being carried out in the dry, is proceeding, the greater part of the work in connection with the pile-driving having been finished. The rubble protection berm, to prevent heavy seas from striking the cofferdam, was completed last March, and has proved to be thoroughly effective. The greater part of the stone needed for the construction of the Dock is being dressed by convict labour at Mahara, and the quality of the dressed stone being turned out at this quarry is reported to be very satisfactory.

THE CIVIL SERVICE.

Of the Civil Service I have little to say, except that under the new system it works efficiently and smoothly. The number of changes and transfers has been greatly reduced. Special care is taken as regards the legal training of the younger Magistrates, whose qualifications have of late been much criticised. For my part, I am satisfied that as an almost invariable rule substantial justice is dispensed in spite of the occasional mistakes in procedure. Although technical mistakes should not be passed over without correction and admonition, yet the strictures and denunciations of a section of the Press, when the Supreme Court or the Government consider it necessary to advise or rebuke the defaulter, are often ludicrously severe and altogether disproportionate to the offence or mistake, and are calculated to give the public a very false impression of the manner in which justice is dispensed in this Colony. I have had experience of and taken part in the administration of justice in many parts of the World—in India, in Ireland, in the Isle of Man and other parts of the United Kingdom, and in Her Majesty's Consular Courts abroad—and I can truthfully say that in my opinion Ceylon has no reason to be ashamed of or dissatisfied with the administration of justice within its limits.

Since the last opening of this Council there have been several changes in the Civil and Judicial Services. We in this Council have had to deplore the sudden loss of our valued colleague, Mr. Lee; the Supreme Court has been deprived by his retirement of the esteemed services of Mr. Justice Withers; and Mr. Bailey, Government Agent of the Central Province and a Member of this Council, has also left us after a loyal and efficient service of thirty-five years.

CRIME.

When I delivered my first address to this Council at the opening of the session of 1896-97, I stated that the amount of violent crime prevailing in the Colony caused me great concern and anxiety, and by enacting Ordinance No. 15 of 1896 you armed the Executive with additional powers to enable it to cope with the evil. My subsequent utterances have shown you that the earnest attention which I then gave to this most important matter has been intensified rather than relaxed. Every case of violent or

serious crime is reported to me by telegraph, and the subsequent proceedings are most carefully examined and scrutinised from beginning to end. The result of the sustained vigour and vigilance with which the law has been enforced is, I am happy to say, a very marked decrease in violent crime—a fact which will cause some natural surprise to such of you as were imposed upon by the agitation last year and in the beginning of this year, the object of which apparently was, by an unfair manipulation of selected statistics, to discredit the Government, by denouncing it for culpable laxity and inefficiency in the very branch of the administration in which it had been specially vigilant and successful. The Government had no difficulty in exposing the fallacy of these attacks, but, unfortunately, the mis-statements had meantime gained currency and some credence in England in unofficial circles, to the great detriment of the reputation and material interests of the Colony.

Yes, Gentlemen, the statistics of the three years 1897-99 that have passed since I gave special attention to this subject show a very satisfactory decrease of crime—more especially of serious crime—and this notwithstanding that the machinery for reporting crime has been so much improved that there is now very little unreported crime. The number of institutions in all Police Courts and Municipal Courts have decreased by 6 per cent.; the number of true offences cognizable by the Police by 27 per cent.; and the number of those offences which are classed under the head of serious crime by 29 per cent.; with the result that in 1899 the proportion of serious crime to population was 1 in 1,229 instead of 1 in 852 as in 1897. To this result all denominations of serious crime have contributed with the exception of housebreaking by night; the number of cases of this offence in 1899 increased by 30 per cent., and their frequency in Colombo and its environs a few months since excited much angry criticism of the Police.

Housebreaking by night is an offence difficult of prevention and of detection in every country, but especially so in this country where the isolation of houses in enclosures thick with trees at a distance from the road, the flimsy nature of the materials often used in their construction, the insecurity of the fastenings of doors and windows, and the frequency with which they are left open at night, whether from carelessness or a desire for fresh air, and the absence of night watchmen, universally employed by householders in India under similar circumstances, offer the burglar many facilities. The burglar is the product of civilization, and Society must anticipate the Nemesis which dogs its progress. As wealth increases the temptation to burglary grows, the technical education of the burglar is perfected, and his appliances become more elaborate. Property can no longer enjoy the freedom and immunity of poverty, and in self-defence must also have recourse to the weapons of civilization in the shape of locks, bolts, and other inconvenient safeguards, which are the indispensable necessity of Western civilization in its present advanced stage. It is gratifying to know that though the Police of the country were under these conditions unable to cope with the difficulties of prevention, they secured in 1899 convictions in 12 per cent. of the cases—a better figure than that shown by the London Police.

The Southern Province had the worst record in 1899 of 1 serious crime in 719 of population, followed by the Western Province with 1 in 814; and the Southern Province had also the worst record for violent crime. The North-Central Province showed the best record of 1 in 5,132, and next to it the Northern with 1 in 4,767.

Homicides decreased by 16 per cent; this does not mean very much, it being so often a mere chance whether an assault with dangerous weapons ends fatally or not; but the decrease in the number of cases of grievous hurt by 43 per cent. and of cases of hurt and grievous hurt with a knife and similar weapons by 12 per cent. conclusively shows the success of the extraordinary measures taken to secure the prompt and adequate punishment of those guilty of violent crime against the person.

During the early months of the current year there was an extraordinary outburst of violent crime practically all over the Island, induced in part, some high authorities believe—I mention but do not venture to endorse the theory—by the excessive heat which then prevailed, and by the state of unrest of the public mind consequent on the wars in which the British Empire has been engaged; and in part, I fear, to the unusual leniency with which Magistrates in 1899 dealt with cases of hurt with the knife and similar weapons. The outburst subsided with the advent of the rains and will, it is hoped, be succeeded by a corresponding reaction which will allow the figures for this year to compare favourably with those of preceding years; but, even as it is, the number of serious crimes committed during the first half of 1900 were only 2,126, as compared with 2,362 in the first six months of 1899 and 3,152 in the first six months of 1898.

That flogging is a deterrent from the reckless use of the knife and similar weapons is shown by the decrease, since Magistrates have been invested with the power of inflicting it, in offences involving that punishment of 12 per cent., but it is not generally appreciated that it is efficacious as a deterrent only

in proportion to the certainty of its infliction. The number of false cases involving the use of the knife, &c., increased from 27 per cent. in 1897 to 30 per cent. in 1899, but this increase gives little cause for alarm ; the system of reporting all offences, especially offences of this class, is so rigorous that Peace Officers, to avoid the possibility of incurring blame for any neglect of it, report to Court every case in which a wound is inflicted by such a weapon, no matter how inflicted. This may be carrying the system to extremes, but it is safe in that it prevents the subsequent fabrication of false charges. The system of Inquirers has been only a qualified success, owing to the difficulty of finding suitable men willing to undertake the duties of the office, to which no pay is attached, but it is probable that the increase of the percentage of convictions in cognizable cases from 63 in 1897 to 71 in 1899 is partly due to its influence.

The power of quartering punitive Police was exercised in three instances in 1899 ; in two owing to the prevalence of serious crime in the villages concerned, culminating in one instance in a prolonged riot which resulted in the death of two men ; in the third owing to the occurrence of two murders by persons unknown within a period of a few weeks. In each case the Police Force remained for six months and its payment was shared by all the able-bodied inhabitants of the village.

In 1898 a chapter was added to Ordinance No. 15 of 1896 giving Magistrates power to prohibit any person convicted of the reckless use of the knife, or who is of such a character and habit as to render it inexpedient he should carry a knife, from carrying a knife without the license of the Government Agent, and rendering penal the breach of such prohibition. It is hoped that the application of its provisions will assist towards securing the disuse of the knife as a weapon of offence : two hundred and eight orders under it were passed in 1899.

The Habitual Offenders' Ordinance has answered the expectations formed of it : during the three years under review, though the number of convictions of persons convicted more than thrice previously has remained constant, there has been a decrease of 19 per cent. in the number of convictions of persons convicted less than thrice previously. By the amended Ordinance of 1899 power was given to District Judges to inflict a sentence of four years' imprisonment on habitual offenders ; this has relieved the Supreme Court of the duty of dealing with a large number of cases involving such small issues so easily decided as not to require for their decision the deliberations of a jury. The increasing misuse of fire-arms in the commission of offences has impressed on Government the necessity for taking steps to restrict and control their possession. With these objects an Ordinance will shortly be introduced prohibiting, under substantial penalties, the manufacture or sale of firearms, and the possession or use of firearms without a license—an annual license.

EDUCATION.

Education continues to progress and consequently the expenditure to increase. The vote has risen from Rs. 474,387 in 1890 to Rs. 869,837 in 1900, an annual average increase of about Rs. 40,000, and yet educational enthusiasts denounce the Government for parsimony. This year the proposed provision is Rs. 906,297, which exceeds by more than Rs. 80,000 the provision for 1900. But even this is not likely to be the limit of the demand upon us in 1901, for there is always supplementary expenditure, consequent, not only on the natural increase of population, but on increased proficiency which enables higher grants than those provided to be earned. During the last five years there has been an average supplementary expenditure of Rs. 34,299.

The Secretary of State during the last year has more than once drawn my attention to this increasing expenditure, and the question is one which must sooner or later be taken up in earnest. To check, or even not to encourage, the growth of Education would indeed be a shortsighted policy, unworthy of a civilized Government. On the other hand, we cannot continue indefinitely to increase an expenditure which in less prosperous days we may be unable to continue. The solution of the problem is to be found in inducing localities to contribute to the cause of Education within their limits, and I propose that this session you should empower Municipalities, Local Boards, and even Village Communities, to levy a rate or cess for Educational, Medical, and other local requirements.

During the year 13 new Government schools and 46 new Grant-in-aid schools have been opened and much energy has been infused in the direction of the Department by its new head, Mr. S. M. Burrows. An annual conference of Inspectors has been instituted, and the Board of Education continues to render valuable assistance. The Grant-in-aid and Departmental Codes have been revised. The value of the University scholarship has been raised to £200 per annum for four years and an outfit allowance granted. Physical exercises are now systematically taught in Government schools, where sanitary instruction is also given. The defective nature of the English language learned in both classes of schools is under careful consideration, and the gradual extension of Government English schools on a

vernacular basis has been strongly recommended, as the model agreed upon in 1898 has proved to be workable and efficient. Ceylon is far ahead of India as regards the ability of the general population to speak and understand English, but there is reason to fear that the people are contented with a mere smattering of the language and that it is not as thoroughly taught or learned as in former years. I am glad to say that the long-standing grievance of the Masters of the Royal College in the matter of salaries has been satisfactorily dealt with.

THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE.

Mr. Human reports that the number of students on the roll of the College for the past year was 125 and the number who finished their course since the opening of the Legislative Council last year is 78. Out of 65 of the students who entered the College as possible candidates for recruiting Government Departments, 36 have been successful in gaining direct appointments in the Survey, Railway, Irrigation, Post Office and Telegraph Departments.

A new department of the College is about to open, viz., a department of Drawing and Arts. The Instructor has arrived from England, and a temporary building has been prepared and is ready to accommodate the classes to be formed in Freehand Drawing and Painting. It is intended also to give special attention to an attempt to form classes for training teachers of Drawing for service in the schools of Ceylon. Elementary Drawing—the foundation of all technical education—is very inadequately taught in the schools of Ceylon, apparently for want of trained teachers, and it is hoped that the steps now being taken will lead to better results in this important branch of elementary education. The work of the College is being carried on in the temporary buildings which have been made to serve, with difficulty, for the past seven years. You voted last year the sum of Rs. 25,000 towards the construction of a new building more worthy of the Colony, but there has been some delay in the preparation of the plans and estimates and no progress has yet been made.

SURVEY.

Progress in all branches of Survey work continues satisfactory, the outturn in all cases exceeding that of 1899. The Topographical Survey in the North-Central and Eastern Provinces has already covered about 3,000 square miles, so that by the end of the year I anticipate the Topographical and Cadastral Surveys will exceed 9,000 square miles out of the 25,000, which is the approximate area of the Island. The north-east of the Island has now been surveyed, and all except the current year's work has been mapped. Within this area, practically every village, path, hill, stream, and tank is clearly shown on a one-inch map. There are of course omissions and errors, as there must be in all preliminary work, but all these will be corrected by a few surveyors who will revise the one-inch maps as soon as there is sufficient completed to issue a four-inch-to-the-mile map of the Island, which is so much required.

The Cadastral or Block Surveys have also made considerable strides, the rough estimate of the work done this year up to September being about 200,000 acres, a considerable portion of which, about 80,000 acres, is in the North-Central Province, to which and the Southern Province the other cadastral parties were moved early in the year, for it has been decided to concentrate the work on these Provinces, and I hope to obtain your approval to the appointment of Settlement Officers who will follow in the steps of the Survey and settle all land disputes between the Crown and the villagers.

At the opening of the session of 1898-99 I explained to you that it had been found necessary to abandon the system by which application surveys were made by licensed surveyors, and to revert to the practice of employing officers of the Survey Department on this important work. Accordingly officers of the Department were attached for this purpose to each Province according to its requirements. This arrangement was however soon disturbed by demands for railway surveys, and the newly-appointed surveyors were withdrawn to meet the new requirements. Consequently the year 1900 began with heavy arrears and the question again had to be faced. Delay in application surveys is not only unfair to the applicants who have deposited fees, but it involves a loss of the revenue produced by land sales, and, what is still more unfortunate, it checks the development of the country. I was prepared, as stated in my address of 1898, to increase the staff of the Survey Department so as not to interfere with the Topographical and Block Surveys, but the Surveyor-General was unable even with an increase of the supervising staff to accept this addition to his heavy duties and responsibilities. Accordingly at a Conference held in June last it was decided to permanently allocate, at the cost of the Block Survey, about half of the existing staff to application surveys, and it is hoped that by the end of next year all arrears as well as current surveys will have been worked off.

I the less regret this interference with the Block Survey as that survey has progressed hitherto beyond my most sanguine expectations, and at the present rate it would soon outstrip the work of settlement which should promptly follow in its wake. This—the settlement of all land disputes between the Crown and the villagers—is the great benefit which we hope to derive from the survey, and I have included in the Estimates of next year provision for the appointment of a Settlement Officer who will begin work in the Matara District.

**TEA AND OTHER PRODUCTS AND SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION AND WORK DONE IN THE
ROYAL BOTANICAL GARDENS.**

There is no progress achieved during my term of office which affords me greater satisfaction than the high development of the Royal Botanical Gardens, and of the means of scientific research and investigation which has been effected under the able direction of Mr. J. C. Willis.

The field of operation of his Department has been considerably extended by the appointment of a scientific staff—Entomologist, Mycologist, and Chemist—and the opening of a laboratory in which these officers as well as the increasing number of scientific visitors to the Colony may work. The work of the Entomologist and Mycologist is chiefly of a preventive kind for the aid of established industries—a work of at least as much importance as that of introducing new industries, but of a less conspicuous kind. We cannot hope to free the Island of pests, insect and fungous, but we may hope to do a good deal towards keeping them in check and saving industries from such a fate as overtook coffee. Few realize the loss caused by even a small outbreak of a disease. At a moderate estimate, the grey blight on tea in July, 1899, caused a loss of Rs. 250,000, and the tea caterpillars of 1899 a loss of Rs. 100,000. If even a percentage of such losses can be prevented, much good is done.

So far these officers have been mainly occupied in working at the life histories of the chief prevalent diseases, but a promising beginning has been made in the organization of a system of regular tours in the course of which scientific officers and practical cultivators may meet to discuss and test both diseases and remedial measures. Without cordial co-operation little can be done, but as this progresses there is reason to hope that much may be done, and that outbreaks of disease may be nipped in the bud and loss be averted. Already this year the two officers mentioned have reported (chiefly by letter) on over four hundred and fifty cases of disease. The Entomologist has established at Peradeniya a fumigation plant, and all importations to the gardens are now freed of dangerous insects. It is much to be desired that private importers should adopt this very simple precaution also. Experiments in the introduction of useful insects from abroad are also in progress, though as yet with little success.

As regards existing industries, extension of cultivation seems now confined largely to cocoanuts, cardamoms, tobacco, cacao, &c.

During the year 1898 it was supposed by local authorities that the tea planting industry in Ceylon was fast approaching its maximum of production, which would probably be reached with an export of between 120 and 130 million pounds. But although the raising of the rupee by the Indian Government to an artificial value of sixteen-pence, gave a decided check to the farther planting of tea, yet more liberal cultivation through the application of manure has led to increased crops—385,000 to 390,000 acres are now covered with tea—and the present year is likely to give an almost unprecedented advance. This will be seen from the following statement, the figures for 1900 being the revised estimate issued by the Committee of the Planters' Association a few weeks back :—

<i>Total Exports of Ceylon Tea.</i>			
		Increase on previous year.	
	lb.		lb.
1896	108,141,412	...	10,000,000
1897	116,054,567	...	8,000,000
1898	119,769,071	...	3,700,000
1899	129,894,156	...	10,000,000
1900 (Estimate)	142,000,000	...	12,000,000

This large increase of production, accompanied by similarly expanding crops in India, has caused anxiety lest consumption should be overtaken and exceeded; but hitherto, with the increased demand for our teas in Russia, America, and Australasia, the surplus has been nearly all taken off. In the United Kingdom it was feared that the increase of the Customs duty from 4*d.* to 6*d.* per pound, as a War Tax, would check consumption; but this has not been the case. On the other hand, the average price realized for Ceylon tea in Mincing Lane has fallen. In 1899 there was a slight improvement in prices

over the previous year; but this has not been maintained during the present season so far. The average for the first nine months of this year of Ceylon tea in Mincing Lane is about 7½d. against 8d. per pound for the same period of last year. On the other hand, the disturbances in China, leading to some interference with the usual overland transit of tea to Russia, encourages the hope of the transfer to Colombo of an increasing proportion of the trade. Already Russia is proving one of the best customers for Ceylon tea.

Export of Ceylon Tea to Russia.

				lb.
1896	...	...	...	201,313
1897	...	...	...	439,349
1898	...	...	...	2,714,003
1899	...	...	...	3,949,740
1900 (up to 8th October)	...	...	...	6,584,343

And as one of the results of the Tea Court at the Paris Exhibition, and of the work of the "Thirty Committee" through their special agent, an increased demand for Ceylon tea on the Continent of Europe generally, as well as in Russia, may be anticipated. Then, too, the endeavour to meet the requirements of the American market by a supply of pure green teas should gradually tell, while the shipment of ordinary black teas to the same market steadily increases.

Altogether, therefore, the prospects of the great tea industry of the Colony are, at this moment, not unsatisfactory, although much may depend on the judicious management of plantations, in respect not only of the "plucking" of leaf but also of the application of fertilizers calculated to sustain and invigorate, rather than unduly stimulate and possibly injure, the tea bush. There has been less trouble with blights—grey and brown—than last year, and the methods of dealing with these diseases are becoming well understood, so that though there will probably be further outbreaks, even severe ones, we may look to their being kept in control.

Cacao is apparently doing well, and the canker though troublesome is kept in hand: the planting of the more resistant *Forestero* kinds continues. Cocoanuts too seem prosperous.

Two of the principal minor industries—tobacco and citronella—have been receiving special attention from Mr. Willis and his assistants this year. In both cases danger from over-production and foreign competition looms ahead, and a thorough study is being made of the whole question by the Director and the Chemist to see what remedy offers, if any, and what can be done in the improvement of native methods.

Turning now to "new" products, the first to claim attention is an old one reviving—cinchona. This is once more being planted here, a rise in price of quinine having occurred of late. Para rubber continues to be planted, but the future of this industry in the East appears to lie with the Malayan colonies, and it is likely to be only a minor product in Ceylon. Attention has also been drawn to camphor by the recent establishment of the Japanese Government monopoly of the Formosan supply. The price of crude camphor has risen to nearly two shillings a pound. The tree succeeds at many elevations in Ceylon, and yields camphor by distillation from the leaves and twigs—whether in paying quantities is being tested in a series of experiments by the Chemist, whose results will be published later. There seems a fair prospect that this may prove a profitable minor industry, especially as the tree seems well adapted for wind belts and for ornamental purposes. Rhea is again attracting attention, owing to the higher price now offered for the ribbons. Vanilla continues to be planted in small quantity, and several other products have been tried by planters to some extent.

The general condition of the Botanic Gardens continues to improve, and the two chief gardens especially are in a higher state of equipment and upkeep than almost ever before. The facilities offered to European botanists for study and research in the Tropics attract more such men every year, and already four men have arranged to work there during the winter season. The final volume of the late Director's "Flora of Ceylon" has now been completed by Sir J. D. Hooker, and was recently published.

HOSPITALS.

In my address at the opening of the session of 1896-97 I remarked that during the last twenty years "we have expended on an average Rs. 100,000 annually on building hospitals and dispensaries; and I further find that the cost of establishments for these hospitals and dispensaries has increased from Rs. 600,000 in 1876 to Rs. 1,050,000 in 1890 and Rs. 1,303,000 in 1895. The time seems to be approaching when the Island will be equipped with all the hospitals and dispensaries which we can afford to construct and keep up; I asked Dr. Kynsey to give me a list of all hospitals and dispensaries which he

“ considered would be necessary to meet the requirements of the Island for a long term of years to come. That list was examined by the Director of the Public Works Department and the cost of carrying out that programme was estimated by him at the sum of Rs. 750,000. The cost of the additional establishment required for these new hospitals and dispensaries would amount to an annual sum of Rs. 141,000, or Rs. 1,444,000 in all. This expenditure, I think, Gentlemen, ought to be spread over a term of years.”

Since then we have expended about Rs. 308,000 in building new hospitals and dispensaries and the annual charge for establishment has risen from Rs. 1,303,000 in 1895 to Rs. 1,632,813 in 1900. In 1901 there is provision for Rs. 188,768 on account of new hospitals and dispensaries and Rs. 373,215 on account of establishments. There must be some finality in the increase of our expenditure under this head, and, as in the case of Education, I think that the day must soon come when localities, and especially the large towns, must share the expense of supplying their medical requirements. The larger works under construction are hospitals for Maturata, Dimbula, and Pussellawa, an infectious diseases hospital at Nuwara Eliya, and additions to the Dikoya and Balangoda hospitals and to the leper asylum at Hendala.

The Department has been very satisfactorily administered by Dr. Perry and its institutions have given relief to many thousands. During the prevalence of sickness in remote places itinerating apothecaries have relieved much suffering and quinine has been widely distributed gratuitously in the fever districts.

The Bacteriological Institute, the building which was so generously given by Mr. Charles de Soysa, was opened during the year, and is found to be of the greatest service to the Medical Department and will be of immense benefit to the Island generally. Through the munificence of Mr. A. S. Fernando a sum of money has been given for the erection of a Library Hall for the Students of the Ceylon Medical College.

GENERAL HEALTH AND SANITATION.

During the past year the general health of the Island has been good. There have been the usual outbreaks of malaria after the burst of the monsoons in those parts of the Island where this disease is common, but, with the exception of that in the North-Western Province, no outbreak has been very virulent.

Until quite recently the Island has been singularly free from any serious infectious disease, but in July cholera was introduced by immigrant coolies from India, and small outbreaks occurred at several places; in all there were 43 cases with 29 deaths. In none of these outbreaks did the disease assume epidemic proportions and they were quickly stamped out.

Smallpox has been present in various parts of the Island during the year: the largest number of cases occurred in villages 6 miles from Kadugannawa, where there were 33 cases and 5 deaths. Sporadic cases occurred in 27 other centres.

There has been no case of plague, although it has threatened the Island from almost every quarter. The same precautionary measures have been followed out to prevent the introduction of this disease as in former years. The Colony owes a debt of gratitude to the Plague Committee, who, under the able presidency of the Hon. Mr. Taylor, have discharged their difficult and delicate duties with unrelaxed vigilance and efficiency.

Last year papers were submitted to you containing correspondence with the Secretary of State regarding sanitary improvements in Colombo, a question in which, as you know, I have always taken the greatest interest. The result was the appointment of an influential Commission to inquire into and report upon the whole question. Their report is now under consideration. The principal recommendations are the adoption of Mr. Mansergh's revised scheme, whereby that portion of the Municipality which drains into the harbour should be first undertaken. The total cost of this scheme would be Rs. 2,605,000 and the annual charges are estimated at Rs. 192,100. The Commission also recommend the completion of the duplication of the main conveying water from Labugama to Colombo at a cost of about two millions of rupees. There would therefore be a total annual cost of Rs. 312,000 to be met, and the Commission suggest means for defraying this large expenditure which will have the careful consideration of Government.

The operation of “ The Small Towns Sanitary Ordinance ” has been extended to several small towns and villages and an experienced officer of the Public Works Department has been placed on special duty in order to advise as to the improvement of the water supply in localities where the supply is defective or impure. To keep our Island free from zymotic disease we should spare no labour or reasonable expenditure. There is no more effective safeguard than the supply of pure drinking water to our towns and villages.

POST OFFICE AND TELEGRAPHS.

In my address on November 7, 1898, I said: "It will probably be necessary to increase the supervising staff of the Department. Since 1877 the revenue of the Department has risen from Rs. 259,000 to Rs. 967,000, the sale of postage stamps from Rs. 238,000 to Rs. 615,000, the amount of inland money orders from Rs. 154,000 to Rs. 4,309,000, Indian money orders from *nil* to Rs. 2,702,000, the number of post offices from 92 to 140, the number of telegraph offices from 13 to 65, and the staff from 335 to 1,107; yet the supervising staff has not been increased."

I asked the Colonial Office to obtain the services of an expert from the staff of the Imperial Post Office to examine and report on the working of the Post Office in Ceylon with a view to necessary improvement and reform. Mr. Mellersh was the officer selected. He arrived on the 9th January, 1899, for one year; but when that time had expired it was found advisable to retain his services for a further period of six months.

Upon his advice several reforms have been effected. As regards the outlying post offices an efficient system of inspection has been established and a better form of accounts has been introduced, and time has been economised by the issue of telegraph stamps direct from the head office (General Post Office) to the several postmasters instead of their being supplied by the Government Agents. At the head office the work of the Savings Bank and Money Order branches has been re-organized; the Parcels branch, which was in a very unsatisfactory state, has been placed on a sound footing; the counters in the hall have been re-arranged and improved (and will be shortly further improved) for the greater convenience of the public; and the work in the mail room has been accelerated, and will be further accelerated when the necessary alterations have been effected.

Mr. Mellersh drew attention to the necessity for increased accommodation and the matter is receiving the attention of the Government. He also recommended the strengthening of the European staff by the appointment of an Accountant and of an Assistant Accountant. The necessity for the former being immediately recognized, an Accountant, Mr. Fox, was selected from the staff of the Imperial Post Office and assumed duty in June. The appointment of an Assistant Accountant will shortly follow.

The report of the Committee on the re-organization of the Post and Telegraph Department was made in September, 1899, and the recommendations contained in it were adopted and came into effect on the 1st January, 1900. The chief features of the scheme are the introduction of the incremental system, the abolition of extra clerks paid by the day, the institution of a compulsory entrance examination, and the provision that successful candidates should not be confirmed in their appointments until they had undergone two years' probation. By these measures the prospects of the employees have been brightened and the Department is likely to obtain better men.

Telegraph extension has been completed during the present year from Jaffna to Anuradhapura (119 miles), from Wattegama to Madulkele (10 miles), from Balangoda to Haldummulla (23 miles), and an additional wire from Colombo to Polgahawela (46 miles) has been erected. There will further be completed this year lines from Vavuniya to Mullaittivu (59 miles). There has been telephonic extension of five new lines in Colombo and one in Nuwara Eliya, and the metallic return circuit in Colombo has made great progress.

FORESTS.

The Forest Department has worked satisfactorily. The year 1899 was devoted to the starting of the new regime described in the opening address in 1898. Demarcation of the forest areas to be reserved was pushed on with great assiduity, no less than 1,084 miles of boundary and compartment lines being cleared and re-opened. The working of the reserves was started on a more systematic plan, the fellings being concentrated within specified areas and not at odd and indefinite places as hitherto. This will enable the Department to have a better check on the outturn and yield of the forests and it also simplifies supervision. Depôts were only kept at the principal marts and the remnant stocks in other depôts were sold off. This partly accounts for the exceptionally large surplus which the Department showed on its working. The cash surplus alone amounted to Rs. 147,898, while, taking into account the value of timber delivered free of cash payment to the Public Departments, the value of free grants, &c., this surplus amounts to Rs. 207,395.

In 1900 the same policy has been followed and the work of demarcation has been carried on with the same energy, 1,218 miles having been opened, widened, or re-cleared up to the end of the month of July. The revenue this year is somewhat backward, owing to the late arrival of timber at the Central Depôt, and, although as large a surplus is not to be expected as in 1899, there is no reason to doubt that the estimates will be realized. Much labour has been expended on enumeration surveys, *i.e.*, on stock taken of our forests: we now know what timber is available and the outturn can be better regulated.

An officer of the Department is about to sail for the east coast of India in order to ascertain whether a trade in timber and firewood cannot be opened with the ports on the Coromandel coast.

RAILWAY ADMINISTRATION.

The revenue for 1899 was Rs. 7,658,887 against Rs. 7,549,620 in 1898, and the revenue for the first eight months of the present year shows an increase of Rs. 379,700 over the revenue of the corresponding eight months of 1899. The nett receipts of 1899 were, however, Rs. 389,143 less than in 1898—a loss greatly due to the liberal manner in which the Government have met the requirements of the planting community in the matter of reduction of rates. In addressing the Council on the opening of the session for 1898 I referred to the agitation in favour of the reduction of railway rates and expressed my views on the subject, explaining the proofs the Government would require in support of claims for reduced rates, and finally, after very thoroughly investigating the various proposals, a reduction was granted from 1st February, 1899, of the rates per mile on rice, tea, and tea packing over the mountain section of the line beyond Nawalapitiya to the same basis as that obtaining below Nawalapitiya—a reduction which on the 1897 traffic was estimated at a loss in revenue of Rs. 211,000, but which for the eleven months in 1899 actually amounted to Rs. 215,000. The Government have also sanctioned a reduction in the rates for manure from the 1st January next.

To meet the difficulty of overcrowding and insufficiency of house accommodation in Colombo we granted a special reduction in the third class monthly season ticket rates from 1st July, 1898, with the result that the number of season ticket holders has increased from an average of 800 per month in 1897 to 2,000 per month in 1899, and a still further increase has taken place during the first eight months of 1900. The increased passenger traffic has been provided for by the running of additional trains between Colombo and suburban stations, and the train service on the Seaside line generally has been improved and expedited, involving a considerable increase in the working expenses.

Over half a million rupees (Rs. 558,915) were expended out of revenue during 1899 on new works, and a still larger amount (Rs. 650,000) is being spent this year in enlarging and improving the accommodation at various stations, extending the appliances for ensuring safety in trains working, and providing additional rolling stock both for goods and passenger traffic. The improvements are too numerous to mention in detail, but the most important and most costly has been that of providing additional accommodation at Nawalapitiya, both for the convenience of passengers and facilitating the heavy yard work. Considerable improvements have also been effected at Kandy; a new station has been built at Kelaniya; the platforms at Wellawatta and Dehiwala have been extended and covered; the platform at Peradeniya junction has been roofed; a new platform shelter, overbridge, and siding have been provided at Mount Lavinia; and minor alterations have been carried out at several other stations.

The improvements at Colombo, for which the sum of Rs. 300,000 was specially granted from loan account have been completed by the installation of the electric light in Colombo goods and passenger yards, and the extensive shunting operations in these yards are now carried on as safely and expeditiously by night as by day. Improved first and second class lavatories have been fitted up at Colombo, Kandy, and Nawalapitiya, and additional latrine accommodation has been provided at Hatton and Kadugannawa.

The traffic returns show considerable developments last year in the various industries of the Colony, the chief increases being tea 7,000 tons, plumbago 6,000 tons, and cocoanut produce 3,000 tons; but the returns for the first six months of this year record a large decrease in plumbago, and also a falling off in cocoanut produce and cacao. The principal increases have been in tea and manure.

In continuation of the scheme for extending to other branches of the Clerical Service an incremental system of classification, a Committee was appointed in November of last year to inquire and report upon the position of the Clerical Staff of the Railway Department, and the proposals of the Committee will be submitted shortly for the consideration of the Council. The scheme, as suggested by the Committee, involves an immediate increase of Rs. 9,835 over the present cost, but as it is probable that 25 of the existing vacancies will be filled by students of the Technical College who were promised a commencing salary of Rs. 500, whereas the commencing rate of the revised scale is Rs. 360, the first cost will be increased to about Rs. 13,000. The Committee have also submitted a subsidiary scheme for the classification of overseers, timekeepers, and storemen, the first cost of which will be only about Rs. 700.

IRRIGATION.

In consequence of the large expenditure sanctioned—five millions—on irrigation, there is great activity in the Department, which has been thoroughly re-organized and enlarged. The Department has now an independent existence, and is no longer a branch of the Public Works Department.

The head is Mr. H. T. S. Ward, late Assistant Director of Public Works, and his principal Assistant is Mr. H. Parker. In addition to an Office Assistant, the staff consists of thirteen Irrigation Engineers, and eight additional Engineers are expected shortly from England. They are assisted by a staff of Inspectors, Overseers, mostly Ceylonese, and eleven Ceylonese Assistant Surveyors are being trained for service. In addition there are employed solely on village works under the Provincial Irrigation Boards thirteen Inspectors and twenty-three Sub-Inspectors.

In 1899 the total expenditure amounted to Rs. 373,642, and was distributed as follows: on construction, viz., the Giant's tank, Kanukkeni, Deduru-oya, Walawe-ganga, and Minneri and other works Rs. 193,291, on maintenance Rs. 69,881, on village tanks Rs. 70,875, on surveys Rs. 12,126, on establishment Rs. 90,153, and on miscellaneous Rs. 8,188. In 1900 up to June 30 the expenditure was Rs. 250,036, viz.—on construction Rs. 146,258, on maintenance Rs. 38,846, on village tanks Rs. 83,028, on surveys Rs. 5,321, on establishment Rs. 56,509, and on miscellaneous Rs. 3,098.

The work done this year includes the completion of the preparation of the following estimates—(1) Vakaneri Rs. 353,654, (2) Rukam Rs. 89,376, (3) Kanukkeni tank Rs. 62,000, (4) Sagamam and Vammiyadi Rs. 59,058, (5) Walawe-ganga extension scheme Rs. 37,108, (6) Kalawewa Yoda-ela improvement Rs. 154,168, (7) Tembittiya tank Rs. 16,604; Total Rs. 771,940. Of these (1) being in excess of Rs. 300,000 will be submitted to you; (2), (3), (4), and (5) have been sanctioned by the Central Irrigation Board; and (6) and (7) are still under consideration.

The preparation of the following estimates is well advanced, and they will be submitted for sanction before the end of the year—the Giant's tank scheme, expected to amount to Rs. 150,000; the Unichchai scheme, Eastern Province, for irrigating about 19,000 acres in the Eastern Province Rs. 650,000; the Kelani flood banks for rendering cultivable and protecting from damage by floods about 12,000 acres of land in and round Colombo, to Rs. 300,000; the Minneri scheme for irrigating 10,000 acres Rs. 150,000; the Illuppalama to irrigate about 1,500 acres in the North-Central Province Rs. 38,765.

The following important surveys are in progress—the Tissamaharama and Yodiyawewa extension; Magam pattu extension of the Walawe-ganga scheme; Allai supply channel; Kondavadvan, an extension of the Patipolai-ar scheme to irrigate some 10,000 acres in the Eastern Province; the ancient scheme in the valley of Mi-oya in the North-Western Province near the line of the Northern Railway; the Nachiyaduwa-Nuwarawewa scheme in the North-Central Province for irrigating land in the Malwatta-oya valley along the line of the Northern Railway, from Anuradhapura northwards. These works provide for the re-opening of a network of important irrigation works the whole length of the Northern Railway from Kurunegala to Madawachchi.

The work which it is proposed that the Department should at present undertake consists in the carrying out of the works for which the estimates have been or are being prepared, amounting in the aggregate to over Rs. 2,000,000, and in investigating and preparing estimates for other large schemes in the Northern, North-Central, North-Western, Eastern, and Southern Provinces or elsewhere, should preliminary examination appear to justify further investigation. It is also proposed gradually to take over the maintenance of all irrigation works in Ceylon except village tanks and channels.

LABOUR.

The camp at Ragama continues fully to answer the object for which it was created. You will remember that when I assumed office the stream of immigration had turned towards Colombo, and there was no adequate provision made there for the accommodation for the great influx of coolies. Consequently, when Tuticorin, or the district whence the cooly came, was cholera-infected (as was too often the case) immigration had temporarily to be stopped, to the great detriment of the tea industry and consequent loss of the Colony generally. This necessity occurred soon after I succeeded to the Government and I did not fail to realize the danger which any interference with the labour supply must involve to our great staple industry, and accordingly I searched for a way out of the difficulty. I first thought of establishing a depôt at Dutch Bay, where coolies could be landed and, if necessary, quarantined, but after an inquiry by a Commission I decided to postpone that scheme until the Northern Railway as far as Kurunegala was completed, and a tramway could be constructed connecting it with Puttalam. Meantime I fixed on a site in the neighbourhood of Colombo, where the Ragama depôt now stands. This depôt contains five separate camps, accommodating in all 6,000 coolies, with all the necessary adjuncts, such as bathing-places, latrines, incinerator, kitchens, hospitals, &c. Coolies on being landed, instead of being scattered over Colombo and its environs, and afterwards over the whole country, exposed to various risks, and perhaps disseminating disease in many directions, are landed and taken by special train to Ragama,

comfortably fed and housed there, and then sent on to the estates for which they are intended. If they come from cholera- or plague-infected districts they are kept in quarantine at the cost of Government so long as the medical authorities consider it to be necessary. Thus the planting districts—and indeed the whole of Ceylon—have been kept practically free from cholera and absolutely free from plague, though both have been raging in the country whence we receive our coolies. On the construction of these camps we have so far expended Rs. 210,000, and in addition we pay for the whole of the upkeep and the maintenance of those coolies who are detained in quarantine. For the first nine months of the year these charges amounted to over Rs. 16,000. The money has been well invested, and to the existence of the Ragama depôt and its excellent arrangements, so admirably supervised by Mr. Ellis, I greatly attribute the immunity which this Colony has so greatly enjoyed from cholera, and so absolutely enjoyed from plague in these days when the latter fell disease has spread into the countries and islands on all sides of Ceylon.

The camp at Tataparai—a railway station nine and a half miles from Tuticorin—was established, with the consent of the Madras Government, in order to protect the immigrant coolies passing through Tuticorin, who were subject to much hardship and black-mailing, besides being liable to be attacked by cholera, the contagion of which they too often conveyed to Ceylon. The coolies are detained at Tataparai, where they can buy wholesome food at moderate prices, and whence they are conveyed by special train to the jetty, some distance beyond Tuticorin, and thence direct to the steamer, thus avoiding all intercourse with Tuticorin. The depôt is under the charge of a Medical Officer of the Ceylon Service. It is proposed to make residence practically compulsory on the coolie who proposes to land in Ceylon, and consequently the camp and the hospital accommodation will be enlarged.

The supply of labour during the present year has been unprecedentedly abundant. The arrivals up to the end of September numbered 122,029 and the departures 43,227, the excess of arrivals over departures being 78,802, or more than double the natural increase of the population of the Island by births. There appears to be some danger, even after taking into consideration the demand in labour for Public Works, of over-importation. It has been calculated that there are now in Ceylon 83,000 more coolies than there were last year. It is unfortunate that there is no system in the importation of coolies and no organized attempt on the part of employers of labour to regulate the supply according to the demand. It will become a serious question if coolies are unable to earn sufficient for their maintenance in consequence of the estates having to work very short time in order to give some employment to each member of an excessive labour force.

This immigration could not possibly have been thus carried on without restriction during the year, when both plague and cholera were prevalent in India, but for the existence of the camp at Ragama. During the months of April, May, and June large numbers of coolies poured into the country, some of them absolutely infected with cholera and many from infected districts. Altogether 65,776 coolies passed through the camp, making a total daily average of about 730, but on many days this average was of course considerably exceeded.

It is difficult to see how, even supposing that there had been no disease at all, these coolies could have got up-country. The only depôt at Kelani could not have contained above a hundred and accordingly the balance must, especially in wet weather, have sought accommodation in the scattered houses between Kelani and Colombo. There would have been no way of communicating with them or collecting them for despatch by special train, as is done at Ragama, and it is not too much to say that in a week there would have been a scene of chaos almost impossible to describe. In addition to this, it must be borne in mind that some of the coolies arrive perfectly destitute, unable even to pay for their night's meal; and these men are now fed and accommodated at Ragama and sent on to their estates. They could neither have got to their destination nor have remained at Kelani without money; and this money could not possibly have been received for days, and when received the coolies might have been unable to get seats till the funds sent were again exhausted. It is not too much to say that under these circumstances the whole labour force of the Island must have become disorganized. But these difficulties, great as they are, are only those which would arise at times when there was no disease. The arrival of an infected ship with a coolie who had died of cholera on board—and this occurred on several occasions—must, had Ragama not been established, have resulted in a stoppage of immigration. For it is clear that only one course could have been adopted: the vessels must have been quarantined on arrival and immigration must practically have ceased. In the meantime the camp at Tataparai would have become congested and crowds of indigent coolies would have collected there unable, without remittances, either to advance or return. They must inevitably have been exposed to great privation, and repeated outbreaks of cholera must have been inevitable. New arrivals, taking warning by the fate

of their predecessors, would, while they had still funds, have returned to their villages, never again to visit Ceylon; they would have deterred others from setting out, and the sources of supply of our labour force would have been stopped, even if the Indian Government did not intervene. It seems impossible for any impartial person to consider the circumstances fairly without admitting that the establishment of Ragama camp—and that alone—has saved the staple industry of the Island from disasters, the magnitude of which it would be difficult to over-estimate.

This year 115,835 coolies have passed through the camp; the largest number in camp at any one time was 3,484; and of these 2,771 coolies were at the same time quarantined in three separate camps. Although there were only twenty cases of cholera and sixteen deaths, yet there were eleven distinct outbreaks, and it is worthy of remark that in these eleven outbreaks fewer people were attacked and died than in the one recent outbreak up-country. If these outbreaks had taken place on estates, the mortality, trouble, and expense must have been very great. As I have shown, over a hundred thousand more coolies landed in Ceylon during the first nine months of 1900 than during a similar period of 1899; that is to say, seven coolies landed this year for every one that landed last year. The whole of this large force have been despatched to their destinations without trouble, delay, or inconvenience to any one.

HARBOUR ADMINISTRATION.

The revenue of the Harbour Board continues to increase, and in 1899 for the first time Harbour Dues reached the large sum of one million of rupees—an increase of nearly 62 per cent. since 1891. The revenue and expenditure for 1899 were respectively Rs. 1,347,318 and Rs. 1,254,918, showing a substantial increase of revenue over expenditure of Rs. 92,000. Harbour dues to 1st October amounted to Rs. 832,129.67, being an increase of Rs. 71,801.38. The charges for interest and sinking fund for 1899 aggregated Rs. 949,598 and for 1900 Rs. 951,297. The number of vessels which entered Colombo Harbour up to 1st October last was 2,017 with a tonnage of 3,351,563 tons, against 1,795 vessels with a tonnage of 2,586,364 tons during the corresponding period of last year.

The question of additional coaling facilities has arisen in connection with the very large increase in the importation of coal, which rose from 326,297 tons in 1895 to 511,692 tons in 1899 and 533,804 tons during the first nine months of the present year—an increase of 139,122 tons over the figures of last year—a marked feature of the trade this year being the largely increased use of Indian coal. In August last the Chamber of Commerce drew attention to the necessity of increasing the storage accommodation, and the question was accordingly referred to a Committee who carefully considered the proposals of the Chamber of Commerce, but found that their adoption would not only involve a very large additional cost, but great delay in the completion of the Harbour extension; but they were reluctantly forced to the conclusion that there is no practicable way of materially increasing the present coaling grounds until the completion of the new Breakwaters. In these circumstances, they recommended the construction of four or five substantial jetties on the new reclamation ground, and, although they were not unmindful of the objection thereto, of facilities for mooring coal hulks in the Harbour. These recommendations are now under the consideration of Government.

To meet the growing requirements of the port two additional pilots have been engaged, a second steam launch sanctioned, and buoys for six additional steamer berths put down; a new scale of pilotage fees has also been drawn up and brought into force.

In November, 1899, a commodious passenger jetty, completed at a cost of Rs. 166,000, was opened; in January of the current year five iron grain sheds, standing on the reclaimed grounds at Kochchikade, were completed at a cost of three lacs of rupees, and have proved of great value in relieving the pressure on the limited space at the Wharf. In addition to the above, a barge-repairing basin—a long-felt want—is just approaching completion at a cost of Rs. 174,000. Government have further consented to improve the sea frontage and jetty accommodation in the Wharfage Company's premises upon the Company undertaking to pay 4 per cent. interest on the capital so expended. Details of the work to be undertaken have not however been finally settled.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The Commission which I appointed in January, 1899, under the presidency of Mr. Justice Lawrie, to inquire into and report on the advisability of establishing a Department of Agriculture reported on 31st October, 1899. A majority of the Commission recommended the appointment of a Director of Agriculture to be assisted by an advisory board, and that there should be attached to the Department the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, a Mycologist, Agricultural Chemist, Entomologist, and Veterinary Surgeon. A majority also recommended that the Irrigation Department should be combined with the new Department. After careful consideration in Executive Council of this report, and also of the

views expressed by Messrs. Willis and Ferguson and others, I decided that the time had not yet come when the appointment of a Director of Agriculture would be justified, but that the formation of an unpaid Central Board on the same lines as the Central Irrigation Board, and of Provincial Boards under the Government Agents, would be desirable. The suggestion that a Mycologist, Entomologist, and Agricultural Chemist, should be attached to the staff of the Royal Botanic Gardens was approved, and has been carried out.

In December last a Committee composed of the Hon. Messrs. Taylor and Ellis, the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, and the Director of Public Instruction were appointed to consider the suggestion that the Agricultural School should be transferred to Kandy and placed under the direction of the Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens. The Committee recommended that the existing school be closed at the earliest possible date, and the buildings for the present be left in the charge of the Director of Public Instruction, and that the land be sold for building sites. They also recommended that if Government contemplated the addition to the Royal Botanic Gardens of an experimental farm or garden, the Agricultural School should be transferred to Peradeniya and be established there as a part of the experimental garden. This proposal has been accepted by Government and Mr. Willis has submitted a scheme, now under consideration, for acquiring land suitable for the purpose at a cost which it is hoped will be largely covered by the sale of the land adjoining the existing school at Colombo.

It has long been recognized that the present Law Courts are not worthy of the Colony, and moreover are very deficient in the ordinary conveniences to which the Supreme Court is entitled. The question was referred to a Committee, which recommended extensive alterations in and additions to the existing buildings, and these it is proposed to undertake as quickly and thoroughly as possible. The approximate cost will be Rs. 376,500, of which Rs. 107,455 are available in the shape of lapsed Loan Board funds.

Neither the Commission on Public Works nor the Committee for the Revision of the Ordinances has yet reported.

LEGISLATION.

The following were the legislative enactments of the session just concluded: Ordinance No. 4 of 1899, consolidating the law relating to Pilots; Ordinance No. 5 of 1899, consolidating and making some changes in the law relating to Opium; Ordinance No. 6 of 1899, Inquiries into Shipping Casualties; Ordinance No. 7 of 1899, consolidating and amending the law relating to Habitual Criminals; Ordinance No. 9 of 1899, consolidating the law relating to Cemeteries and Burials; Ordinance No. 10 of 1899, amending the law relating to Ceylon Post and Telegraphs; Ordinance No. 1 of 1900, repealing certain Ordinances; Ordinance No. 2 of 1900, incorporating the Council of Legal Education; Ordinance No. 3 of 1900, removing doubts as to working of Widows' and Orphans' Pension Fund; Ordinance No. 4 of 1900, consolidating the law regulating the carriage of passengers and goods by boat; Ordinance No. 6 of 1900, authorizing the power to raise small loans; Ordinance No. 7 of 1900, prohibiting the exportation of arms to China; and Ordinance No. 8 of 1900, amending "The Courts Ordinance, 1899."

There was also passed Ordinance No. 5 of 1900 which effected a few alterations in the Waste Lands Ordinances, and which I hope will close that chapter of our legislation. The Ordinance in question has fully answered our expectation and has proved to be a very useful, beneficial, and popular enactment. It affords, and is now generally recognized as affording, a cheap and expeditious means of settlement between the Crown and the villagers, and, although naturally disliked by unscrupulous land speculators, its merits are day by day more appreciated by the people, who are glad by its means to arrive at an amicable settlement of land disputes with the Crown. It continues to be worked in a generous spirit and the nett result of last year showed 101 settlements and decisions, in only 10 of which recourse to the courts was necessary.

During the coming session you will have the opportunity of considering several useful measures.

Among them will be Ordinances embodying the by-laws now in force in the Municipalities of Colombo and Galle.

These by-laws, though they have worked satisfactorily for some years, are liable to be declared invalid on the ground that they exceed the powers delegated to the Council, and where the by-laws are in themselves beneficial it is of course desirable that by making them the subject of enactment by this Council the danger of their being declared invalid should be obviated.

At the request of the Ceylon Educational Association endorsed by the Municipal Councils of Colombo, Kandy, and Galle, it is proposed to amend the Municipal Councils Ordinance so as to exempt

from the payment of all rates under that Ordinance all buildings exclusively appropriated to educational purposes. The exemption already obtains within the limits of the various Local Boards.

An Ordinance has been drafted which provides that the funds administered by the Road Committees shall be expended as well upon materials employed in road construction and maintenance and incidental charges as upon the necessary labour, the present law authorizing expenditure on such labour only.

A short Bill will be introduced to give effect to certain amendments required by the Secretary of State to be made in the Consolidating Local Boards Ordinance, No. 13 of 1898.

It was suggested by the Secretary of State that a comprehensive Interpretation Ordinance on the lines of those obtaining in other Crown Colonies should be introduced, defining the terms of constant occurrence in legislative enactments, and a Bill has been drafted which will repeal the existing Ordinances No. 1 of 1852 and No. 23 of 1884.

A comprehensive Ordinance consolidating and amending the law on the subject of carriages, carts, and coaches will be introduced. It embodies the principle of registering all vehicles in the Island, and re-enacts the provisions now obtaining as to the licensing of vehicles let to hire.

The existing Customs Ordinance (No. 17 of 1869, section 80) requires the master, owner, or agent of a ship, who desires the Collector to detain any goods or merchandise subject to any claim for freight or general average, to specify the amount of the freight or general average. It appears that Colombo not being a terminal port like London and Calcutta, it is in general impossible in, say, a case of general average, for the ship's agents to specify the precise amount for which particular goods are liable, and it has therefore been deemed advisable to amend section 80 so as to dispense with that requirement. The Bill drafted includes also an amendment of Ordinance No. 11 of 1891 so as to exempt sporting trophies and like articles from the prohibition of exportation of horns and hides of spotted deer and sambur. A further amendment corrects a slip in Ordinance No. 18 of 1896 by substituting "wholesale cash price" for "wholesale cost price."

An Ordinance will be introduced for amending the Ordinance No. 2 of 1895, which regulates the marriages of all but Kandyans and Mohammedans. These amendments, which do not touch any fundamental part of the Ordinance, have been found in practice to be desirable. They have reference to temporary appointments in cases of sudden illness or incapacity of registrars, notification of disuse of places of worship, guardians for the purpose of consent to marriage, the issue of certificate of notice by both registrars where notice has been given to two, to authorizing assistant provincial registrars also to discharge certain duties now assigned to the Registrar-General and provincial registrars only, and to the correction of clerical errors in marriage registers.

In view of the Census to be taken in March next certain amendments have appeared to be desirable in the Census Ordinance, 1880, and it has been considered advisable to repeal that Ordinance and to re-enact it with the amendments adopted. These relate to details in which the experience of two Censuses taken since the passing of the Ordinance has shown amendment to be necessary.

The Conference of Government Agents in 1897 recommended the extension of the Small Towns Sanitary Ordinance, 1892, to a greater number of towns than it at present applies to, and the increase of the town funds by the addition thereto of certain licenses, fees, and fines. This led to the Governor obtaining from the Government Agents the reports on the subject which are printed in Sessional Paper No. 18 of 1898. A bill was then drafted which embodied the result of this inquiry, and was submitted to the Conference of 1899. Certain further amendments then suggested were adopted.

In September, 1899, I appointed a Commission to report on the general question of the control of Notaries Public. The Commission recommended that certain additions and amendments should be made to the Ordinance No. 2 of 1877, which now regulates the admission and practice of Notaries Public. Accordingly a draft Ordinance had been prepared, which enacts certain additional rules intended to secure more efficient control and supervision of Notaries, and especially of Notaries who are not professional lawyers (that is, Advocates or Proctors).

A comprehensive Bill consolidating and amending the law relating to the registration of Titles to Land and of Deeds relating to Land was drafted in 1898 by Mr. Arunachalam, the Registrar-General, and was published in the *Gazette* in July of that year. It was then referred to a Committee, consisting of the Attorney-General and Messrs. F. J. de Saram, V. A. Julius and W. P. Ranesinghe, and after certain amendments which were found necessary, now stands in the shape in which it will be presented to the Legislative Council. The registration of titles to land, as distinguished from the mere registration of deeds affecting land, can only proceed upon a Cadastral Survey defining every single separate holding of land, and had it been necessary to delay the operation of this Ordinance until the Cadastral Survey of the

Island should have been completed, the Ordinance would not now have been introduced, for such a Cadastral Survey, if undertaken by the staff at present available to the Surveyor-General for the Block Survey, would according to that officer's estimate occupy 168 years, and cost 32 millions of rupees. I attach the utmost importance to the Block Survey as rendering possible the settlement of all lands in the Island claimed by the Crown. Like the Ordinances it supersedes, the proposed Ordinance could be brought into operation in any district where the Block Survey has been supplemented by the detailed survey required, and it has been so amended as to permit of the titles to land claimed by the Crown being investigated, settled, and registered. Once the title of a person to a piece of land is registered under this Ordinance, title to that land can thereafter only be made by grant from or lawful succession to such person, the acquisition of title thereto by prescription not being permitted; and registration is made essential to the validity of a deed creating an alienation of or encumbrance on such land.

The Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance Amendment Ordinance was introduced during the last session, and the reasons for its introduction have already been made public. It gives the Provincial Committee power to make rules for assessing the proportion in which each temple in the Province shall contribute to the expenses to be incurred in carrying out the provisions of the Ordinance; previously the assessment had to be made after the expenses had already been incurred. Due provision is made for the publication of the rules so made.

I propose with your approval to appoint a Commissioner with powers under the existing law to enforce the provisions of the Buddhist Temporalities' Ordinance, which the apathy or passive resistance of the Provincial and District Committees has rendered practically inoperative.

Most persons are agreed as to the advisability of preserving the historical and architectural remains that are to be found in different parts of the Island. The Supreme Court having ruled that offences with regard to such antiquities could not be dealt with under the Treasure Trove Ordinance, it has been thought desirable to introduce a special Ordinance dealing with the subject.

A Bill amending the Penal Code as to punishment of defamation was drafted some time ago to meet what was understood to be the wishes of the Unofficial Members of this Council, and its introduction has been approved by the Secretary of State. It provides for the increase of the punishment provided by the Code so as to include rigorous imprisonment. The Supreme Court, which alone can try such offences, will now be empowered to sentence the offender to rigorous imprisonment instead of as formerly to simple imprisonment only. The maximum term of imprisonment will remain as before at two years, and there is of course the alternative of fine in the discretion of the Court.

The subject of regulating the sale and use of firearms has engaged the anxious consideration of Government owing to a decided increase of crimes of violence attempted and committed by their means. The existing Ordinance, No. 19 of 1869, which provides for the licensing of an arm once for all with a license fee of Re. 1.25, will be replaced, if the draft Ordinance be accepted by the Council, by a provision requiring an annual license. In the case of guns and rifles the fee for the annual license will be the same, Re. 1.25; but it has been considered advisable in the case of revolvers and pistols, which are not usually employed in the pursuit of game, but which have been the instruments of several deliberate murders in this City, besides figuring with unpleasant prominence in the accounts of recent burglaries, to impose a heavier fee, and this has been provisionally fixed at Rs. 50, an amount which you will probably consider it desirable substantially to reduce. A discretion is given to the licensing authority, who is the Government Agent, Assistant Government Agent, or an officer specially appointed by the Governor for the purpose, to issue in a proper case a free license, or to refuse or cancel (subject to confirmation by the Governor in Executive Council) a license in any case. Any headman or officer of police or any peace officer, who fails to inform against any person known by him to be guilty of a breach of the Ordinance, is rendered punishable with a fine of Rs. 50.

Section 50 empowers Police Courts to issue warrants to search for unlicensed firearms, and any Public Servant is authorized to call upon a person carrying or using a gun to forthwith produce his license therefor, and to arrest any person possessing, carrying, or using an unlicensed arm and convey him before a Police Court. Provision is also made for dealers' and manufacturers' licenses and for the keeping and inspection of dealers' books. The penalties for breaches of the Ordinance are increased, and the burden of proving the existence of a license as a defence is laid upon the accused. The court is empowered to award to a person vexatiously prosecuted a reasonable sum in lieu of costs, and a three months' period of limitation is fixed for prosecution.

A draft Ordinance will be submitted to the Council intended to give effect to certain amendments of details of procedure which the working of the existing Ordinance relating to the registration of births and deaths has shown to be necessary or advisable.

The Ordinance No. 2 of 1896 empowered the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, to make rules for the purposes of the Ordinance, and among other things for the appointment of Inspectors of Mines and Factories, and for regulating all matters and things connected with or relating to the safety of persons employed in or about any mine or factory.

The rules made under this enactment provided for proprietors of factories sending in certificates as to the competency of persons in charge of boilers, such certificates to be signed by the engineer in charge of such boilers and connected machinery, or other engineer nominated by the owner and specially licensed for the purpose by Government.

In order to cause as little inconvenience and expense as possible to the proprietors of factories, the Government are willing to accept a certificate by the engineer so employed to the effect that the requirements of the Ordinance are sufficiently complied with in any factory. In default of such a certificate it will become necessary to have the factory inspected by the Government Inspector, and the draft Ordinance empowers the Governor, with the advice of the Executive Council, to make a rule for imposing and recovering a fee for such inspection. Another amendment imposes a license fee of Rs. 50 for each mine, intended to form a fund to defray the cost of an efficient inspecting staff.

CONCLUSION.

In conclusion, Gentlemen, let me remind you that the session which has just expired has been coincident with days of trouble—if not of danger—to the Empire, which was suddenly called upon “to take up arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing end them.” Thus came the opportunity to Ceylon of proving the truth and sincerity of those professions of loyalty and patriotism which she had so loudly proclaimed at the time of the Jubilee. And I am proud to say that the Colony with one accord rose to the occasion and gladly seized the opportunity thus offered. This Legislature promptly placed at the disposal of Her Majesty’s Government the British Regiment which is stationed here to maintain order and guard us from invasion and deprecation, thus giving emphatic expression to the confidence which all sensible men repose in the loyalty and contentment of all classes and races in this fortunate country. Nor did we content ourselves with this proof of our patriotism. From our small European population we raised a contingent of 130 young men, well mounted and fully equipped, to represent the Crown Colonies among the armed levies which the self-governing Colonies were despatching to the seat of war. Our contingent—too few in numbers—has been cruelly decimated by disease, but those who remain have been in the forefront of the fighting and we have the testimony of the Commander-in-Chief, spontaneously offered, that they have rendered excellent service.

Yet another opportunity has presented itself to our eager loyalty. During the operation of war our brave troops have captured many thousand prisoners and Her Majesty’s Government have been in difficulty as to where they should be interned. Ceylon, with its variety of climate, its loyal, contented population, and its many advantages and amenities, naturally suggested itself, and when I was asked whether the Colony would accept the responsibility I unhesitatingly replied in the affirmative. I knew that Ceylon was prepared in this crisis to submit to far greater sacrifices than this; and after all, Gentlemen, where is the sacrifice? There is no danger; the Colony undertakes no financial responsibilities; on the contrary, the pecuniary advantages will be hers. But I need not preach to the converted. The feeling of the whole Colony, as well as of this united Legislature, is unmistakably in favour of the action which this Government has taken, and the few, but noisy complaints, of a somewhat sordid nature, of which the echo occasionally reaches our unwilling ears, merely emphasize and accentuate the remarkable unanimity of this loyal community. And even these hollow murmurs will die away, recently hushed into silence, when their pessimistic authors read Mr. Chamberlain’s despatch submitted to you, which conveys not only assurances which should satisfy the most querulous critic, but which communicates the grateful acknowledgments of Her Majesty’s Government for the loyalty and public spirit shown by the Colony at a critical time.

One more generous action on the part of this Colony it is my pleasant duty to record. Again has Ceylon nobly responded to a cry for assistance from the neighbouring Continent of India, sorely afflicted by one of the most disastrous famines recorded in a long history of similar visitations. Promptly did this Council vote for the relief of distress the sum of Rs. 75,000 as the nucleus of a fund, which has now reached the large amount of over two lacs, no mean sum for so small a community as ours. I rejoice at this manifestation of kindly and sympathetic feeling towards India, our friendly neighbour, whose concerns are so interwoven with our own, for such kindly offices in time of trouble must tend to cement and strengthen with grateful sentiment those material bonds of common interests which must always link our lot to that of our great neighbour.

GENTLEMEN OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL,

I now leave you to deal with the business which will be duly laid before you, with full confidence in your wisdom and industry, and with the hope and prayer that the blessings which we have so abundantly enjoyed during the past year may, by God's favour, be continued to us during the year to come. May the Divine Providence so guide your deliberations that our resources may be utilized for the best and lasting advantage of the various races of this Colony, of whose interests you, Gentlemen, are the chosen and responsible guardians.