

# BARBADOS

AND

## MR. JOHN POPE HENNESSY.

BY

W. P. B. S.

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PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

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1876.

BARBADOS

FOREIGN SUGAR BOUNTIES

FOREIGN EXPORT BOUNTY

NOTES - GENERAL HAYNES

## P R E F A C E.

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The following observations are based on official and trustworthy documents. So far as the Governor's official conduct on the question of confederation is the subject of comment, his own speeches and despatches are relied upon. Had no riots taken place, the personal conduct of the Governor upon this question would still have deserved condemnation. The general condition of the colony, whether good or bad, is a subject quite distinct from a consideration of the personal conduct of the Governor. Even assuming against the Governor's first statements to the contrary, that his later statements as to the existence of widespread social discontent in Barbados are true, then his speech of the 3rd March, and the line of action adopted by him, are still more indefensible.

W. P. B. S.

*Lincoln's Inn,*  
*July, 1876.*

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# BARBADOS AND MR. J. POPE HENNESSY.

Reprinted from "*The Sugar Cane.*"

## PART I.

The scheme planned by the Governor of Barbados to carry a measure of federation has originated a most serious conflict between him and the local legislature. Moreover, one part of the Governor's scheme produced such a serious illusion in the minds of the labouring classes as to lead many of them into riot and disorder. Fortunately for Barbados, the resident labourers on the various estates are so well disposed towards their employers that they resisted the temptation to join the lawless bands which roamed about the island; and in many cases the estates were protected from harm by the labourers who lived upon them. It is impossible now to conjecture how Mr. Pope Hennessy will reconcile his own conflicting telegrams, as to the extent, duration, and character of the riots, and as to the numbers of killed, wounded, and prisoners. It is, however, clear that the statements made by the West India Committee, and the telegraphic messages received by them from Barbados and published in the papers, are substantially true, whilst the telegrams sent home by the Governor, in the first instance, suppressed the information which raised the material difference between his telegrams and those of the West India Committee, and which was ultimately extracted from him by Lord Carnarvon. However, upon these divergent telegrams with the alleged exaggeration of the riots on the one side, and the admitted suppression of their serious and fatal character on the other side, it is only necessary to observe that the one who created the mischief would be the one most interested in making light of it.

That eighty estates at least should be plundered by rioters : that ladies in hundreds should have to leave their homes and take refuge at the garrison and on board the ships in the port : that

the troops should have to be called out to defend the colony : that an armed police should be shooting down resisting rioters : all this is a phase in the history of Barbados utterly unlooked for : utterly unprecedented. But it is a phase in the history of Barbados which must be studied attentively.

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There can be little doubt that Mr. John Pope Hennessy, when, in November last, he entered upon the high and responsible office of Her Majesty's Governor of the Windward Islands, was not only minded, but determined to carry Confederation.

But he was aware that the imperial Act of Parliament protected the colony by providing that the order in Council confederating Barbados with other islands could not issue except upon an address from the House of Assembly and the Legislative Council. Moreover, Mr. John Pope Hennessy knew that the Barbadian electors had returned all the members of the House of Assembly pledged to oppose Confederation—pledged to support the old constitution of the island.

Therefore, in Mr. Pope Hennessy's opening address to the Legislature of the 23rd of November last, it appears that he approached the subject most cautiously : he gently hinted that he had "some plans" by which he hoped "to render more efficient certain departments of the general administration of the Windward Islands."

It is important to observe certain passages in this opening address. From these it appears that in November, 1875, the local legislature possessed "the business-like qualities of true Parliamentary life," and Mr. Pope Hennessy substantiated this his commendation, by enumerating "no less than thirty separate enactments, all of public utility, some of primary importance," which were in course of legislation ; and then stated that it was not "as a mere compliment" that he recorded "these practical proofs of public spirit and Parliamentary capacity," and professed his deep sense of responsibility "in advising legislative bodies so intelligent and patriotic as those of Barbados," and avowed his determination "scrupulously to respect the constitutional rights and privileges of the local legislature," and declared that such were the sentiments which would actuate him in conducting the government of that "ancient and loyal colony."

The House of Assembly responded cordially to these satisfactory assurances of Mr. Pope Hennessy.

Thus in November last Mr. J. Pope Hennessy was a "popular" governor, in a "constitutional" sense. And, upon Mr. Hennessey's own showing, Barbados was then, as it always had been, a "loyal colony" and a "contented community."

Moreover, Mr. Pope Hennessy, in November, 1875, was so puzzled at the "exceptional prosperity" of Barbados that he actually addressed a despatch to Lord Carnarvon, to explain that he was compelled to doubt that such prosperity was owing to the circumstance that the absence of unappropriated land in Barbados obliged the negroes to work for wages; and, after giving his grounds for doubting this generally accepted notion, Mr. Pope Hennessy clearly indicated his conclusion that to "a long-established resident proprietary and their influence" was due the "exceptional prosperity of the island."

It is necessary to place on record thus precisely the statements and expressions in this speech and despatch of November last, because they are statements which Her Majesty's Governor is responsible for: because they are statements utterly inconsistent with rhetorical allegations as to "class legislation" by a "planters' oligarchy," or the "bad relations between employers and employed."

1876.

This year the long-established reign of peace was changed into a reign of terror. The "popular" Governor in a "constitutional" sense became a "popular" Governor in a "socialistic" sense.

Moreover, the general apathy of the labouring classes in political matters was converted into an active support of confederation; and their loyal and respectful regard for the high office of Her Majesty's Governor and the laws and institutions of the colony was changed into defiance of the law, based on illusory expectations of a communistic character, to be realised as the followers of Mr. J. Pope Hennessy,—expectations which the popular Governor was obliged at last to dissipate—first by the bullets of an armed police, and then by the issue of a formal proclamation.

It is necessary to show how this change came about: how the gulf between "Constitutionalism" and "Socialism" came to be bridged.

The materials for the history of this curious phase in the chronicles of Barbados are contained in the official minutes of the Legislature. The period of time within which the change takes place is that between the 1st of January and the middle of April.

On the 18th January, the Governor invites attention to six measures as necessary for the efficient discharge by him of his onerous duties. These six measures are the development of the "some plans" by which certain departments were to be rendered more efficient. But it was noticed that the "six measures" had a common operation upon all the islands of the windward group.

Therefore, on the 22nd February, the House of Assembly enquired whether the six measures were to be brought about by the local Legislature of each colony, or whether they were intended to embrace all the colonies as a group. After discussing these alternative hypotheses, the House of Assembly fulfilled their solemn pledges to the electors, and boldly and clearly stated to the Governor "that they had no intention to become one of a "political federation of islands in any shape, or upon any conditions "incident to such a federation, or to merge the independent "separate Legislature of this island, whether for local or general "purposes of legislation, in a Federative Legislature, whether "such Federation and Federative Legislature already exist, or are "to be brought into existence."

"Neither have the House of Assembly, as the representatives "of the people of Barbados, any intention or wish to surrender, "or in any way modify the form of government which has been "enjoyed by this colony for upwards of two centuries, consisting "in part of a House of Assembly, elected by taxpayers enjoying "the elective franchise, and a Council nominated by the Crown in "the exercise of the prerogative."

Thus, the Barbadians who, after public meetings in June and July, 1875, on confederation, had decided to pledge their representatives to support the old constitution which they had received from the hands of the Commonwealth of England, found their representatives, one and all, unanimously opposing the attempt to subvert that constitution and revoke the rights and liberties secured to them by the Charter of Barbados of 1652.

Lord Carnarvon had, in a despatch of last January to Mr. J. Pope Hennessy, instructed him "that her Majesty's Government

“could not proceed with any measure of confederation except on the spontaneous request of each legislature concerned.”

Therefore, when the legislature of Barbados spontaneously requested not to be confederated, the colony ought to have been allowed to rest in security under the provisions of an Act of the Imperial Parliament, and upon the word of a minister of the Crown.

But Mr. J. Pope Hennessy was determined to carry confederation. He was not going to be thwarted by a little House of Commons of twenty-four members, or by the charter of the Commonwealth on which they relied. He published the Letters Patent whereby he was appointed Governor of the Windward Islands, in order to convince the Barbadians that he had power to make and unmake the Legislative Council: in order to remind them that he had power to dissolve the House of Assembly.

Then Mr. J. Pope Hennessy devised an appeal to the “people,”—an appeal which would carry him and federation into the hearts of the “masses,” and which would turn the hearts of the masses against the twenty-four members of the House of Assembly.

Mr. J. Pope Hennessy, of course, saw that if he could but secure 13 members out of 24 in favour of confederation, he could, with the power he possessed over the Upper House or “Legislative Council,” obtain the necessary address to the Crown, and back would come the Order in Council confederating Barbados with the other islands.

And the Barbadians knew all this as well, and they saw with dismay their Governor entering the electioneering arena, remitting the sentences of prisoners, and by other means spreading the official canvass so as to catch the popular breezes.

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On the 3rd of March, Mr. J. Pope Hennessy boldly disclosed his scheme for obtaining the “spontaneous request” for federation which had been denied him on the 22nd February; he delivered an address wherein he advocated confederation as a measure fraught with immediate benefit to the labouring classes. Emigration being already free, and agents of other colonies being present in Barbados ready to provide free passages, Mr. J. Pope Hennessy proclaimed that, under confederation, emigration would be so free

for the labouring classes that "the now unoccupied Crown lands " and half-tilled estates will be available for their labour, and they " can come and go to the various islands as readily as they now " pass from parish to parish in Barbados." Had there been restrictions upon emigration which confederation would have removed, the Governor would have been justified in advocating that measure as tending to increase the wages of the labouring classes. But for a Governor to address the ignorant coloured masses of the people, in such a vague way, about land being available for their labour, was to render himself liable to be dangerously misinterpreted. Other passages had unfortunately the same tendency. All seemed to make out that confederation was the panacea for the ills, real or imaginary, of the coloured labouring classes.

This address was described by Mr. G. H. Chambers, as spokesman of the first deputation which warned Lord Carnarvon of the impending riots, which, a few weeks afterwards broke out, as "simply maddening."

This address in its conclusion, by an inference which a leading London paper designated as "perilously direct," stigmatised the twenty-four members of the House of Assembly as incurring the serious responsibility of standing between their "poorer country-men, and the wise policy of the British Government."

This address was officially circulated throughout the length and breadth of the island, and what was vague, but suggestive, received a "socialistic" interpretation; and Mr. Pope Hennessy became the "socialistic" governor of Her Majesty's most ancient and loyal colony.

But to be a governor implies a knowledge of the art of governing, and a power to repress that rash and ready rhetoric which—innocent when used by irresponsible speakers—becomes highly dangerous when it proceeds from authority.

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The Defence Association was formed shortly after the delivery of that address. It had then become manifest that, if the Governor's scheme of action was left to run its course, the electors would be won round by this "authorised" view of federation and its illusory advantages, and that then the House of

Assembly would be dissolved, and either popularity or terror would control the elections, and sufficient representatives would be returned to carry the address for federation.

It is necessary to notice how thoroughly the reply of the House of Assembly traverses every allegation in the address, and how dignified and firm is the reply of the Legislative Council.

Had Barbados been less true to her own real interests,—had not her many friends in this country, upon their attention being called to what was going on, at once moved to her support, led by the West India Committee and its Chairman (Mr. Thomas D. Hill) and Deputy-Chairman (Mr. Nevile Lubbock), Mr. Forster M. Alleyne, Mr. G. H. Chambers, and many other gentlemen, it is impossible to say what might have been the issue of Mr. J. Pope Hennessy's plans.

The West India Committee has had, and will have to bear, the brunt of the fighting, although they now have the assistance of the two gentlemen who have been sent over by the Defence Association, viz., the Rev. P. Bruce Austin and Mr. P. L. Phillips. The committee, however, were bound to move, not only in the interest of Barbados, but of every island liable to have this measure thrust upon it, not as champions for or against confederation, but in the interests of peace and order, and of the dispositions which conduce to peace and order.

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In conclusion, it must be shown how confederation, federation, or consolidation is a measure which revokes the Charter of Barbados, 1652.

That charter secures to the colony, on the one hand, the infeasible and unqualified right of self-taxation through its representative Assembly; and to the Crown, on the other hand, an efficient control over legislation, through its Governor and Council of Crown nominees.

But confederation necessitates a federal council. This council, under the Leeward Islands Act, is composed of elected members and official nominees, in equal numbers, with large taxing powers.

Lord Granville foresaw the necessity of this taxing power. In fact, in a despatch to Sir B. C. C. Pine, he says:—"It is impossible, on any system of union, to dispense with a general revenue,

“raised for general purposes, by taxation imposed by the general legislature.” And Sir B. C. C. Pine thus describes to his lordship the actual operation of the voting power of the federal council:—“Then, my lord, the very nature of the general council will give the Crown considerable power over its proceedings. It has the weight and influence of three superior officers, and a president of its own selection. The circumstance, too, that most of the members will have to come from a distance to the meetings will give the Crown an advantage. It can ensure the attendance of its own officers and nominees much more certainly than the elective side can do.”

It is the horror which the Barbadians have of being bound hand and foot to colonial officialism that inspires their resistance to confederation. Their island is free from debt, their legislation is in strict accord with the spirit of English liberty which breathes in every line of their charter. What is held in this country as the ideal of Radicalism is the law in Barbados: they have annual parliaments and paid magistrates in every district of the island; and, what is more, every summary conviction and every decision of the paid magistrate can be instantly appealed from to a court composed of three paid magistrates, on law and facts, and from them, on any point of law, to the Chief Justice of the Island. Moreover, twice a month every decision of a single magistrate is sent for inspection to the three magistrates who composed the Court of Appeal, and any error is at once corrected, although the parties themselves may not have exercised their right of appeal. The franchise enables about 1 in 20 of the whole adult male population to vote. As to the “poverty-oppressed multitude,” it is only necessary to state that no form of administration will diminish the growth of population, or increase the flow of capital beyond the natural requirements of the island. Nor will employment for the redundant labour of Barbados be found, until foreign bounties and Cuban slavery are put an end to.

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It is to be hoped that Barbados will now be freed from confederation—that he who mentions confederation or anti-federation may be bound to forfeit a “shot and a turkey,” which Ligon, in his antiquarian and classical history of Barbados, states was the forfeit exacted from any planter who mentioned the words “Cavalier” or “Roundhead.”

Lastly, it is necessary to observe that the illusions which led many of the coloured rioters to get killed and wounded were connected, by their own interpretation, with those very points in Mr. Pope Hennessy's speech of the 3rd March which were most calculated to attract their attention, and gain their good favour. These poor creatures, some of whom died for their belief, openly avowed that they had the Governor's sanction for their idea as to a division of the estates among them, as to their right to take potatoes, &c. The Governor was entreated, long before the serious riots broke out, to disabuse them of this idea, and he refused. Perhaps the Governor felt that he could still control, for his own purpose, the forces of popularity which he had conjured into existence, but he failed; and the consequences of the failure were riot and bloodshed, and must be visited upon the one who was responsible for the "beginning of strife."

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PART II.

Mr. J. Pope Hennessy issued the following Proclamation when the riots were over:—

"Whereas on the Twenty-sixth of April I caused a Proclamation to be issued respecting the efforts made in certain quarters to dangerously mislead the people. And Whereas the proposals of Her Majesty's Government respecting Confederation have been characterized in language which might lead to further grave misapprehensions, I, John Pope Hennessy, Governor, and Commander-in-Chief as aforesaid, issue this present Proclamation setting forth the plain facts respecting Confederation which Her Majesty's Government wish the people to understand:—namely, that it would be a great mistake to suppose that Confederation could either injure or benefit in any considerable degree the social condition of any class; that, beyond possibly affording some further facilities for movement among the Islands, and for obtaining employment in a larger field, it could do little to change the condition or prospects of the labouring class; and that of course it could give them no proprietorship or occupation of land in this Island, in which every acre has long ago been disposed of; that all parties must look rather to that improved education which is a guarantee of order and loyalty, and to the amelioration of

“ the public institutions of the Island, as the most direct means of  
 “ removing much of the ignorance and distress which unhappily  
 “ prevail in Barbados; while, on the other hand, there has been no  
 “ reason whatever to suppose that Confederation, if adopted by the  
 “ Legislature, could affect the financial independence of Barbados,  
 “ or make any other changes in the Island than would, without  
 “ Confederation, commend themselves to enlightened public opinion :  
 “ that, therefore, there being no ground whatever for anticipating  
 “ any very considerable benefit, injury, or change of any kind, it is  
 “ quite unjustifiable to discuss this or any other legislative proposal  
 “ in excited meetings; and that all loyal subjects should avoid  
 “ political agitation, violent language, or attributing improper  
 “ motives to those who may differ with them in opinion,—that on  
 “ the contrary they should look dispassionately to the published  
 “ despatches of the Secretary of State, and the constitutional  
 “ proceedings of the Legislative Houses and of the Governor, for  
 “ their guidance and information.

“ Given under my hand and seal at arms at Government House,  
 “ this Twenty-fifth day of May, one thousand eight hundred and  
 “ seventy-six, in the thirty-ninth year of Her Majesty's Reign.

“ God save the Queen ! ”

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This proclamation ought to close the case of the colony against its Governor. The sequence of events may be thus stated :—

1. In November, 1875, Mr. J. Pope Hennessy arrived in Barbados, and found awaiting him a loyal colony and a contented community: he opened the Legislature with a speech which has before been noticed, and he became at once popular, because of his assurances that he would respect the rights and privileges of the local Legislature.

2. In the same month, Mr. J. Pope Hennessy sent a despatch to Lord Carnarvon, wherein he attributed Barbadian prosperity to the influence of the resident proprietary, and gave his reasons for so doing.

3. On the 14th January, 1876, Mr. J. Pope Hennessy invited attention of Legislature to six points connected with the administration, and this message originated the discussion of confederation.

4. On the 28th of the same month, Lord Carnarvon addressed a despatch to Mr. J. Pope Hennessy, expressly enjoining him that "Her Majesty's Government could not proceed with any measure of confederation except on the spontaneous request of each legislature concerned," and stating "that he," Lord Carnarvon, "did not desire in any degree to press this question upon the reluctant consideration of the various colonies."

5. On the 22nd February, the House of Assembly spontaneously requested not to be confederated.

6. On the 3rd of March, the Governor delivered his address, wherein he advocated confederation as a measure calculated to bring material advantages—such as lighter taxation, better wages, facilities for cultivating unappropriated land—to the labouring classes.

7. On the same day, Mr. J. Pope Hennessy published the Letters Patent of his appointment as Governor-in-Chief of the Windward Islands, and in the above address drew attention to the unusual powers conferred upon him.\*

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\* The third and fourth paragraphs of these Letters Patent are as follows:—

3. And whereas WE have deemed it expedient that, for the purpose of advising you, there shall henceforward be in OUR Island of Barbados an Executive Council, we do, therefore, by these presents, grant, provide, and declare that there shall henceforward be within our said Island of Barbados *two distinct and separate Councils*, to be respectively called the *Legislative Council* and the *Executive Council* of our said Island. And we do hereby further direct and declare our pleasure to be that all and every the powers and authorities vested in or exercised by the Council of our said Island of Barbados, except so far as the said powers and authorities are or shall be by these our Letters Patent, or by any instructions under our sign manual signet, assigned to the said Executive Council, shall continue to be, and the same are hereby vested in the said Legislative Council. And we do declare our pleasure to be that the said Executive Council shall be invested with such powers and duties, and shall be composed of such persons and constituted in such manner as may be directed by the instructions accompanying this our commission, or by any other instructions which may from time to time be addressed to you by us under our sign-manual and signet, and all such persons shall hold their places in the said Council at our pleasure.

4. And we do further declare that the said *Legislative Council* of our Island of Barbados shall be composed of such *public officers* and *other persons* within our said Island as shall from time to time be by us designated or

8. After the 3rd of March, the police and other officials were employed to circulate and distribute the Governor's speech of that date throughout the Island. Emissaries and agitators proceeded to point out to the coloured labouring classes the several points in the Governor's speech which have already been commented upon Thereupon, the coloured classes betrayed, for the first time, great interest in Confederation. They annexed to Confederation its alleged advantages to themselves upon the highest of all authorities, but failed to appreciate these advantages in any other light than a socialistic one. About the same time many prisoners were released from prison by the Governor.

9. After the 3rd of March, an association was formed in Barbados for the defence of the constitution.

10. When the coloured labouring classes discovered that their employers—that all the owners of property, both white and coloured—that all the members of the House of Assembly—were opposing federation, they felt that the Governor was alone their friend, and that all the white and coloured "have somethings" were the enemies of all the poor "have nothings."

11. When this state of feeling was openly manifested by threats, incendiary fires, and by other signs of impending riot, the Governor was entreated to issue a proclamation to correct the false and dangerous notions about confederation which were prevalent in the minds of the lower classes, but this the Governor refused to do.

12. The period of riot ensued. No cry of any grievance was raised, but only the cry of "God bless Pope Hennessy for these

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named for that purpose, by any instruction or instructions, or warrant or warrants, to be by us for that purpose issued under our sign-manual and signet, and with the advice of our Privy Council, *or as shall be provisionally appointed by you*, all which Councillors shall hold their places in the said Council at our pleasure; and we do hereby accordingly authorize and empower you from time to time to appoint such and so many persons as may appear to you requisite to be members of the said Legislative Council subject to the signification of our pleasure thereupon; provided, nevertheless, that the total number of the members for the time being of our said Legislative Council resident within our said Island shall not at any time by any such provisional appointments be raised to a greater number in the whole than nine.

federation potatoes!" as the riotous mobs in full trust that the Governor was their champion, proceeded to plunder the provision grounds. Some forty or more persons according to the Hospital reports were killed or wounded by the police and the riots were terminated by a general occupation of the island by the troops.

13. When all was over, Mr. J. Pope Hennessy issued the foregoing proclamation.

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It will be noticed that the Letters Patent declare that thenceforth there shall be "two distinct and separate councils," whereas one council only appears to be provided by the constitution of the island, as settled and confirmed by the charter granted by the Commonwealth of England, 1652, which declares as follows:—

"19.—That the government of this island be by a Governor, Council, and Assembly, according to the ancient and usual custom here; that the Governor be appointed by the States of England, and from time to time received and obeyed here, the Council be by him chosen, and an Assembly by a free and voluntary election of the freeholders of the island in the several parishes; and the usual custom of the choice of the Council be represented by the Commissioners to the Parliament of England, or to the Council of State established by authority of Parliament, with the desires of the inhabitants for the confirmation thereof for the future."

It is well settled by all writers on constitutional history that the Crown alone has no power to vary the constitution of any colony acquired by settlement. Barbados is a colony so acquired. It is to be hoped that the legality of this change, thus arbitrarily effected, will be discussed in Parliament: in which case it will not be inappropriate to recall to mind the fact that the 9th article of Lord Clarendon's impeachment (see "Journal of House of Commons" for 6th November, 1667) charged him with the introduction of "an arbitrary government into his Majesty's several plantations." Lord Clarendon, in his autobiography, deals with this charge as referring solely to his conduct with respect to Barbados.

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It is to be hoped that Parliament will clearly discern that confederation would revoke that right of self-taxation possessed by the Representative Assembly of Barbados under its present constitution.

It is possible that the Treasury of Barbados might, for a time, be kept distinct from the Treasuries of other islands. But that independence would have its value seriously diminished when Barbados became liable to taxation by a federal council, wherein Crown nominees would dominate the voting power.

When a question of self-taxation is involved in any measure, nothing can be conceived more unconstitutional than that the representative of the Crown should contest such a question with a colony.

If a colony desires confederation, its spontaneity need not be induced by official influence. The measure ought to be discussed on its true merits. And if there be one person who ought to remain strictly neutral in the discussion, it is Her Majesty's Governor. Otherwise the weight and influence of the Crown would appear as inducing a spontaneity which did not exist.

And even supposing on such a question as confederation, which gives to the Crown officials a powerful voice in the taxation of the people, and the voting of supplies, there were two parties in the legislature of a colony, the one in favour and the other opposed to the measure, how dangerous to peace and order would be the active partisanship of the Governor and Crown officials. How exasperated would the minority feel at the intervention of the Crown! How ready to believe that but for such intervention their cherished privileges would have been secure! But supposing an overwhelming majority in the legislature, supported by a like majority of the electoral body, were opposed to a measure calculated to deprive the colony of its right of voting its own supplies and controlling its own expenditure, what can be conceived more inconsistent with all the forms and traditions as well as the spirit of constitutional government, than that the representative of the Crown should grasp at the power which the colony, through its constitutional voice, had denied him and endeavour to obtain it by an appeal direct to the people. It is manifest that such a course of action would at once place both governor and legislature in hostile competition for the favours of the masses. The pages of history are full of warnings that such

contests rarely end without blood-shed ; and the present contest in Barbados has unfortunately added one more to the number of such warnings.

Whatever may be the advantages of confederation, it would be dangerous to colonial independence to purchase them at the sacrifice of the right of self-taxation.

The constitution of the Colonial Office, with a permanent under-secretary far too independent of parliamentary vigilance, renders it most desirable that every colony should have the power of making its influence felt in the voting of its supplies. Once let it lose this right, and nothing remains for its security against official domination in all its local affairs, except pathetic and probably fruitless appeal to the mother country. And in that case the colony will soon find out the truth of the view put forward by Bentham in the following quotation from his works :—

“ The Sovereign, at two thousand leagues distance from his subjects, can be acquainted neither with their wants, their interests, their manners, nor their character. Their most legitimate and weighty complaints—weakened by reason of distance, stripped of everything which might excite sensibility, of everything which might soften or subdue the pride of power—are delivered without defence into the cabinet of the prince to the most insidious interpretations, to the most unfaithful representations. The colonists are still too happy if their demand of justice be not construed into a crime, and if their most moderate remonstrances are not punished as acts of rebellion. In a word, little is cared for their affection, nothing is feared for their resentment, and their despair is contemned. The most violent procedures are easily disguised under an appearance of necessity, and the best intentions will not always suffice to prevent the sacrifice of the public to private interests.”

It is possible that some colonies may so mis-manage their public affairs as to necessitate what is called a mild despotism for the maintenance of law and order. In other words the Imperial Parliament might be compelled to intervene, and deprive the colony of its rights of self-government and self-taxation. But the history of Barbados for the last two centuries conclusively establishes its right to retain privileges which have never been abused.

Lastly, it is to be hoped—considering the now redundant and still increasing population of Barbados—that the Imperial Parliament will perceive how essential for the future welfare of the population of Barbados, and of the West Indies generally, is the removal of those causes which restrict the increase of cultivation in our western tropical possessions.

The staple produce of the West Indies is sugar: the cultivation of every estate gives employment to some hundreds of the coloured labourers. But in Jamaica, Trinidad, Grenada, and other islands, as well as in Demerara, large extents of land exist uncultivated because owing to the competition of the slave grown sugar of Cuba, and the heavily subsidised sugar of continental Europe, it does not pay to import the labour necessary to cultivate them.

It is impossible for the employer of free labourers, who only work four or five days in the week, to compete with the Cuban slave owner who compels his slaves to work seven.

It is impossible for British industry to flourish when its produce is forced below the level of free trade prices by competition with the subsidised produce of protected foreigners.

If the welfare of the West Indian colonies, and their large negro population, is of any importance to this country, every effort should be made to set the great sugar industry on the fair level of free trade competition and of free labour production by calling upon France to give up bounties, and Spain to emancipate her slaves.