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A BRIEF ACCOUNT
OF THE
Results of Granting Compensation
to the West India Slave-holders,
AND THE
Continuation of Slavery under the
Name of "Apprenticeship."

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A Brief Account of the Results of Granting Compensation to the West Indian Slave holders, and the Continuation of Slavery under the name of "Apprenticeship."

IN consequence of the unmistakable mandate of the nation, the British Government, in 1833, introduced a Bill for the Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies, Possessions, and Plantations abroad, except India, Ceylon, and St. Helena.

At that period the West Indians were a very strong political party, whilst the Abolitionists, although in a majority in the House of Commons, had obtained that majority by means of a stringent pledge, adhesion to which had only been acceded to by many members under fear of defeat at the polls. When, therefore, the Government were forced into action, immense pressure was brought to bear upon them by the Slave owning interest, and the Bill was essentially framed in their behalf. Their estates were, in great part, and had been for several years^(a) practically insolvent, and they knew that were Slavery to be extinguished they would, in many cases, by the foreclosing of mortgages, and by other process of law, be unable to stave off bankruptcy. They therefore endeavoured by every means in their power to obtain the best terms for themselves; and in doing so, probably the argument raised by them which carried most weight with the Government and the weaker members of the Anti-Slavery party in Parliament, was that as the Legislature had not directly interfered with Slavery the nation was responsible for its existence in the Colonies, and, consequently, that the whole burden of its removal should not fall upon the Slave owners. They therefore demanded *compensation*. To this plea the Government readily listened, and in their original plan paved the way for it by proposing a loan of £15,000,000 in return for the abolition of Slavery,^(b) coupled with a scheme of so-called "Apprenticeship." As will be seen, this "Apprenticeship" turned out to be really a more vicious and more destructive system than the one which it superseded, for having no vested interest to induce them to keep the negroes alive beyond the term of their servitude, the planters were in many instances indifferent as to their treatment and fate.

(a) *Vide* Report of Select Committee of the House of Commons on Commercial State of the West India Colonies, 1832.

(b) *Vide* Debate, 14th May, 1833.

(a) Minutes of the ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY and *Anti-Slavery Reporter*, 1833.

(b) *Vide* Debate, 14th May, 1833, and Mr. STURGE'S work on "Compensation."

(c) *Vide* Debate, 14th May, 1833.

(a) *Vide* "Life of Sir THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON.

(b) *Vide* Debates on the Slavery Abolition Bill, 1833.

(c) *Vide* "Life of Sir THOMAS FOWELL BUXTON," the *Patriot*, and other contemporary newspapers.

(a) Original documents.

(b) Accounts of Slave Compensation Claims, No. 215, 16th March, 1838, p. 334.

(c) *Vide* Mr. EDMUND STURGE'S work on "Compensation."

(a) *Vide* Reports of Special Justices, etc., in Papers ordered by House of Commons, 1839.

But the Slave owners were not yet satisfied, and soon after the Government Bill had been introduced, the *loan* of £15,000,000 was changed into a *gift* of a sum not exceeding £20,000,000.

Two plans of a really Anti-Slavery character were laid before the Government, one by the ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,^(a) and the other by the late Earl GREY^(b) (then Viscount HOWICK). The latter entered the Government as Under-Secretary for the Colonies, being a strong believer in gradual Abolition—he soon discovered, however, how futile any such scheme would be, and became convinced that immediate Abolition was the only remedy for the evils of Slavery,^(c) resigning office when he saw the inconsistencies and injudicious provisions of the Government measure.

Mr. BUXTON,^(a) and other Anti-Slavery Leaders in Parliament, were of opinion that none but a Ministerial Bill could be passed that session, and that were the one before the Legislature rejected no other would be obtainable; whilst some of them were inclined to fear the outbreak of a servile insurrection were freedom delayed beyond that year. Whilst accepting the Compensation Scheme on these grounds, Mr. BUXTON endeavoured to obtain the withholding of one-half of the money grant until the Apprenticeship had ceased,^(b) but in this he was unsuccessful. He, however, obtained a reduction of the period of Apprenticeship by one half the term proposed. The action of the Parliamentary leaders in accepting the Government Bill did not, however, commend itself to the Abolition party as a whole,^(c) most of whom objected to the Compensation Grant and Apprenticeship System as a violation of principle. They would not have opposed measures of relief to the planters subsequent to Abolition, if injury were proved to result therefrom, but they most decidedly objected to anything like purchase.^(a)

The nation, however, paid a sum of £18,600,000^(b) odd towards the Abolition of Slavery, but it brought to large numbers of the Slave proprietors no relief, for the money found its way into the pockets of the mortgagees and others who had liens upon the estates, and thenceforth the cry was raised that the West Indies had been ruined by emancipation. What ruined the Slave proprietors was the competition of the products of British India and Mauritius, when the home markets were opened to them some years before Emancipation,^(c) coupled with the exhausting system of absentee proprietorship. Had the planters made better terms with the liberated negroes, instead of driving them off the estates, as many did, by exorbitant rent charges and other petty persecutions,^(a) there would not have been so many rinate estates as was the case when, as a boy, I lived in the West Indies.

But the strongest argument against compensation will be found in the fact that when Great Britain abolished Slavery in India, in Ceylon, in the Straits Settlements, on the Gold Coast of Africa, and in Cyprus, no question of compensation ever arose. By simply declaring that equality before the law, to which all her subjects are entitled, Great Britain settled, once and for all, the question of Slavery.

No farther back than the 27th of September, 1896, the French Resident, M. LAROCHE, abolished Slavery with a stroke of the pen in Madagascar. Said the Decree :—

“Tous les habitants de Madagascar sont personnes libres.”

This Decree was reaffirmed on the 1st of October, and the prevailing feeling among the missionaries was one of surprise that the great event had passed off so quietly. Writes one :—

“We used to plan in our minds various ways of bringing about gradual emancipation, and here, by a stroke of the pen, the thing is done, and the fetters are struck from about a million Slaves. The name of M. LAROCHE will be for ever associated with this event.”^o

What can be done in Madagascar can be done equally well in Zanzibar and Pemba.

THE APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM.

THE Apprenticeship System, as established by the Act of 1833, was, briefly stated, as follows :—

Subject to the restraint and obligations specified, the Act declared that the negro should in every other respect be considered in the light of a freeman. His restraints were that he should during the term of such Apprenticeship remain disqualified from holding certain public offices, or exercising certain political and municipal rights. His obligations were that he should labour industriously, but without wages, in the service of his former master, now to be called his employer, for 45 hours per week for the space of six years for agricultural labourers, and in the case of tradesmen, domestics, etc., the duration of servitude was limited to four years.

The conditions to be observed by the master were that during the term of servitude he should be bound to provide a full supply of food to each apprentice, according to existing regulations, failing such regulations they were to be enacted; where the labourer was supported not by the delivery of provisions but by the cultivation of allotted portions of land for his own use, the Act declared that such land should be adequate in quantity and quality, and at a reasonable distance from the labourer's abode, and that a certain portion of time adequate to the proper cultivation of such ground should be allotted out of the 45 hours per week otherwise due to the master.

Any other “maintenance or allowances” to which the Slave was entitled should be continued to the apprentice, who was to be supplied with adequate clothing annually, and with medicine and medical care.

The apprentice was to have the right of redeeming himself on payment of a fair equivalent for his remaining term of servitude, the appraisement to be made by an impartial tribunal.

It was decreed that no employer of an apprentice should be authorised to punish such apprentice by whipping, imprisonment, by adding to the hours of labour, or by any other mode of correction; but that all offences should be adjudicated on and punished by Justices specially appointed for the purposes of the Act. No female apprentice should be liable to the whipping or beating of her person by sentence of any Judge, Court or Justice.

The apprentice was to be allowed the full and free use of all that portion of his

* *Vide* the “Chronicle” of the London Missionary Society, December, 1896, p. 272.

time which was not by law claimable by his master, and lastly he was to be protected from all wrong and injury, fraud, cruelty, or injustice, by the direct supervision of an impartial arbitrator who was to be vested with summary jurisdiction, and enjoy full protection in the discharge of his duties.

Such was the basis on which the apprenticeship system was framed, but the details for carrying into effect the principles laid down were left to the Colonial Legislatures, subject to the proviso that any legislation contrary to the spirit of the Imperial Act should be null and void, and that any colony which refused or neglected to frame enactments should not be entitled to receive any portion of the compensation money.

The Act of Parliament came into force on the 1st August, 1834—Bermuda and Antigua voluntarily dispensing with the Apprenticeship Clauses of the Imperial Act—and in all cases the event passed off quietly.

Rumours of hardships and gross cruelties perpetrated upon the apprentices reached England early in 1835, and inquiries were at once forwarded by the ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY to the West Indies.* A Parliamentary Inquiry would have taken place but for the assurances of the Colonial Secretary as to the intentions of Government. Reports from missionaries and others, however, tended to increase the anxiety of the friends of the negro, and particularly Mr. JOSEPH STURGE, who determined to appeal to the country at large upon the question of Apprenticeship. He therefore summoned meetings in Birmingham to consider the condition of the apprenticed negroes, at one of which a memorial to Lord MELBOURNE was adopted, protesting against the attempts of the West Indian planters to defeat the Emancipation Act, and expressing the conviction that nothing but the abolition of the Apprenticeship would even materially alleviate the oppressions of the system.†

The local Act in aid of the Imperial Act passed by the Jamaica Legislature expired in December, 1835, and the House of Assembly refused to renew it unless certain clauses, which had been previously disallowed by the Crown, were inserted. The Government, however, stood firm and insisted on the execution of the Act.

In February, 1836, Mr. STURGE summoned another meeting at Birmingham with respect to the Apprenticeship; and at this gathering he gave copious extracts from the letters which had been received from the colonies, revealing the cruelties perpetrated upon the apprentices, and a series of resolutions urging the abolition of the system were passed.‡

Mr. BUXTON, too, in the House of Commons, obtained a Select Committee¶ to inquire into the whole subject, but the Committee limited its inquiries to Jamaica, and whilst it confirmed the principal allegations of the abolitionists, reported that the apprenticeship was working not unfavourably.

But Mr. STURGE, whose intimate acquaintance with many of the missionaries, and other well-informed individuals in the West Indies, had given him peculiar opportunities of receiving accurate information, resolved to take practical steps for arriving at the truth of the matter, and set sail in

* Minutes of ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

† Report of the Meeting held on the 14th October 1835, printed by R. HUDSON, Birmingham.

‡ "Life of JOSEPH STURGE," by H. RICHARD.

¶ "Mirror of Parliament," 1836.

October, 1836, in company with THOMAS HARVEY, JOHN SCOBLE, and Dr. LLOYD for the West Indies.^(a) Arriving in the new world at the end of the year, Messrs. STURGE and HARVEY visited Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Jamaica and Barbados (calling also at Martinique and Barbuda), receiving in most of these places the aid of Government officials and other persons qualified to give evidence. Messrs. SCOBLE and LLOYD visited British Guiana. On the return of Mr. STURGE, in 1837, he was examined for several days before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, the reappointment of which Mr. BUXTON had obtained. The Committee, however, came to an end, in consequence of the death of the king, without arriving at any definite conclusion.

(a) "Life of JOSEPH STURGE."

Petitions to the QUEEN from the ladies of the United Kingdom were also resolved upon, and duly carried out by the Ladies' Negro Friend and other Societies. The main work, however, of arousing the country fell upon the shoulders of Mr. JOSEPH STURGE. Mr. BUXTON was no longer a member of the House of Commons, whilst none of the Parliamentary Anti-Slavery veterans were desirous of re-opening the question. Mr. STURGE knew that his only chance of success lay in the awakening of the moral and religious feelings of the country, and to those feelings he appealed. In the month of June, 1837,^(b) the citizens of Birmingham entertained him at breakfast in the Town Hall, and here he gave his first public account of what he had seen and heard in the Colonies. His speech on this occasion made a great impression, and, taken in conjunction with the narrative of a redeemed Jamaica Apprentice, whom STURGE had brought back with him, did much to arouse the nation. Town upon town was visited by Mr. STURGE, and his example was followed by many others, including the well-known orator, GEORGE THOMPSON.

(b) *Ibid*, also Fourth Report of Glasgow Emancipation Society.

In view of the amount of public feeling which had been awakened, the ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY held a meeting in Exeter Hall, on the 11th July, 1837, under the presidency of H.R.H. the DUKE OF SUSSEX,^(c) and a series of resolutions were adopted, calling upon the provincial Anti-Slavery Societies to reorganise, and send to London the delegates who in 1833 had pledged themselves never to relax their efforts till Slavery had been extinguished in the British Colonies. An Address to the Electors was also issued, calling for the return of an Anti-Slavery House of Commons.

(c) Minutes of the ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

The Government, however, and the Parliamentary leaders still remained silent, but Mr. STURGE held on his way, utilising the great volume of public opinion which he had awakened. In the month of October^(d) a large gathering took place at Bath, at which he was present, and resolutions were passed condemning the system of Apprenticeship as but another form of Slavery, and the meeting pledged itself to use every legitimate means for its overthrow. Birmingham followed with a meeting of representatives from various counties, and resolutions similar to those passed at Bath were come to.^(e) Mr. STURGE then proceeded to arouse the Metropolis, and, armed with

(d) *British Emancipator*, 1837.

(e) Official Report of Meeting.

the resolutions passed in the provinces, appealed to the country associations to send delegates to London for the purpose of considering the best means of extinguishing the Apprenticeship. To this summons the response was prompt, and on the 14th November 140 gentlemen assembled at Exeter Hall, from every part of the kingdom.^(f) Every religious and political creed was represented, and most of the delegates remained in town till the great meeting, held nine days after.

(f) Official Report in *British Emancipator*.

In view of the activity of the abolitionists, but unknown to them at the time, the Government became alarmed, and on the same day on which the Anti-Slavery Delegates assembled the Colonial Secretary sent out a despatch to the Governors of the Slave Colonies, recommending the Colonial Assemblies and Councils to settle the question of Apprenticeship by voluntary emancipation on the 1st August, 1838.^(g)

(g) *British Emancipator*, March 21st, and June 13th, 1838, also referred to in Return 15th August, 1839, 107 (5) p. 113.

(h) *British Emancipator*.

On the 17th November^(h) the Delegates proceeded in a body to Downing Street, where they were met by some 30 Members of Parliament, and laid their views before the Premier (Lord MELBOURNE). The deputation was assured that due weight would be given to their views, representing as they did the amount of feeling in the country. On the following day the delegates waited on Lord GLENELG, the Colonial Secretary, who guardedly avoided giving any encouragement to the deputation, which retired under the conviction that only the pressure of public opinion would produce any effect upon the Government. On the 23rd November a large meeting was held by the Delegates in Exeter Hall, under the presidency of Sir EARDLEY WILMOT—and resolutions adopted demanding the abolition of the Apprenticeship system.⁽ⁱ⁾ A Committee to sit in London, under the style and title of the

(i) *Ibid.*

(j) Official Report of Meeting, 1837.

Central Negro Emancipation Committee,^(j) was also formed by them to actively carry on the work which had been so favourably started by Mr. JOSEPH STURGE. Of this Committee the official organ was *The British Emancipator*, which appeared at frequent intervals during the agitation. Having sat for ten consecutive days the delegates, on the 24th, dispersed, and, three days after, Lord GLENELG's reply to the Memorial of the Delegates was received, declining to interfere with the Apprenticeship System, but offering not to oppose the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into the matter.^(k) This meant delay, and was not acceptable to the abolitionists. It was therefore resolved to send agents through the country holding meetings and obtaining Petitions praying for the Abolition of the Apprenticeship. GEORGE THOMPSON, JOHN SCOBLE, and Dr. PALMER (an ex-Special Justice for Jamaica, who had been dismissed for carrying out the spirit of the Act of 1833, and who was now Secretary of the Central Negro Emancipation Committee), were appointed lecturers, large numbers of meetings being held in the course of a few weeks. The appearance in January, 1838, of "The West Indies in 1837," by JOSEPH STURGE and THOMAS HARVEY, in which the true condition of the Apprentices was clearly and impartially set forth, proved a powerful weapon in the hands of the

(k) *Vide Papers ordered by House of Commons, 9th March, 1838, Part V., pp. 7-8.*

Anti-Slavery lecturers, and tended to swell the rising tide of public opinion against the system of Slavery known as Apprenticeship.

In February and March, 1838, the Petitions from the Ladies of England (449,000) and Scotland (135,000) were presented to the Queen at Levées by Deputations, while that from Ireland was presented later in the year.^(b)

^(b) *British Emancipator.*

The effect of the agitation was first felt in the West Indies in the Island of Montserrat, where the abolition of the Apprenticeship was unanimously carried by the legislature on the 18th January, 1838, and promulgated on the 20th February, decreeing the Abolition of the Apprenticeship on the 1st August ensuing.^(c) The movement received considerable impetus by the adhesion of Lord BROUGHAM and the MARQUIS OF SLIGO, late Governor of Jamaica, who in his place in the House of Lords announced his intention of liberating all his apprentices on the 1st August. A union of all sections of the Abolition party was brought about, and Parliamentary action determined on. A petition from the old Anti-Slavery Committee praying for the abolition of the Apprenticeship was presented to both Houses, and the publication of pamphlets on the Colonial Laws was undertaken.^(d) Notices of motion on the question were given by Lord BROUGHAM and Sir E. WILMOT. The former brought forward a series of resolutions on the Slave-trade and the Apprenticeship, but the division was only taken on those dealing with the Slave-trade, and they were defeated.^(e)

^(c) President HAMILTON to Sir W. G. COLEBROOKE *British Emancipator*, March 21st, 1838, and Official Papers presented 1839.

^(d) Minutes.

The Government at length were forced into action, but this action merely took the form of a Bill in the House of Lords for amending some of the most glaring defects of the Abolition Act. Lord BROUGHAM also introduced a Bill for the abolition of the Apprenticeship, but this was dropped, in view of proceedings in the Lower House. A large meeting was, however, held, under his presidency, in Exeter Hall, on the 14th and 15th March, when a resolution appealing to the Royal prerogative was carried with acclamation.^(f)

^(e) *British Emancipator.*

^(f) *Ibid.*

The Anti-Slavery Committee, through Mr. BUXTON, requested an interview with Lord GLENELG for the purpose of demanding the abolition of the Apprenticeship system, on the 1st August, on the ground of its violation, and the passage of a Code removing any Colonial enactment which might interfere with the negroes on their release, but they obtained nothing definite from Lord GLENELG at the interview.^(g)

^(g) Minutes of ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

^(h) *British Emancipator.*

The Central Negro Emancipation Committee, in view of the projected discussion in the House of Commons, summoned the delegates again to London, and on the 27th March some 400 gentlemen assembled in Exeter Hall, under the presidency of Mr. W. T. BLAIR, of Bath.^(h) Deputations were at once appointed to wait upon the Premier and Colonial Secretary with a Memorial, whilst to others was deputed the task of soliciting the support of Members of Parliament in the coming debate. Illness prevented Sir EARDLEY WILMOT proceeding on the 27th, and the motion was brought forward two days later by Sir GEORGE STRICKLAND. In the interim the delegates continued their sittings, receiving the friendly support of Mr.

⁽ⁱ⁾ *Ibid.* BUXTON.⁽ⁱ⁾ On the 28th the delegates proceeded to Downing Street, where they were received by Lords MELBOURNE, GLENELG, and JOHN RUSSELL; but they retired much dissatisfied, and a petition to the House of Commons was adopted, protesting against the policy of the Government in meeting the resolution of Sir GEORGE STRICKLAND by proposing the second reading of Lord GLENELG'S Bill for Amending the Abolition Act.

On the 29th, Sir GEORGE STRICKLAND moved :—

“That the House is of opinion that the Apprenticeship in the British West Indies as established by the Act of Abolition passed in the year 1833 shall cease and determine on the 1st August in the present year.”

Mr. JOSEPH PEASE seconded the motion, and then Sir GEORGE GREY (Under-Secretary for the Colonies) proposed the Government amendment above referred to, and the second reading of Lord GLENELG'S Bill was carried, on the following Friday, by 269 votes to 215.

In consequence of this defeat, the delegates at their sitting on the 31st March at once resolved upon a public meeting at Exeter Hall, and the Central Negro Emancipation Committee at once arranged for meetings in the provinces. Adjourning over Sunday, the delegates sat again on the 2nd and 3rd April, transacting formal business, and on the 4th, under the presidency of the MARQUIS OF CLANRICARDE, a large public meeting assembled in Exeter Hall, and resolutions denying the existence of any contract which might restrain the British public from seeking the immediate abolition of the Apprenticeship system were adopted.^(j)

^(j) *Ibid.*

On the 5th April the Delegates issued a strong protest against Lord GLENELG'S Bill, on the ground of its unconstitutional character, its injudicious policy, and danger to the peace, stability, and prosperity of the Colonies. The majority then returned to the country, the others remaining in town to take immediate action, if necessary. Meetings were also being held throughout the kingdom by the various local Anti-Slavery Societies, important gatherings taking place at Liverpool, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Leeds, etc. At a large town's meeting at Birmingham, under the presidency of the High Bailiff, the cause of the negro was again forcibly pleaded by Mr. STURGE.^(k)

^(k) *Ibid.*

Now that the country was thoroughly aroused, the Central Negro Emancipation Committee resolved upon further Parliamentary action, and to Sir EARDLEY WILMOT was entrusted a motion for the 22nd May, to the effect :—

“That the Negro Apprenticeship in the Colonies shall immediately cease and determine.”

^(l) *Ibid.*

Prior to the discussion, some 300 of the delegates returned to town,^(l) in order to await the result of the motion, which, after a short, but spirited, debate, was carried by ninety-six votes to ninety-three. Mr. C. P. VILLIERS, who seconded the motion, is still a member of the House of Commons.

Lord JOHN RUSSELL at once announced the intention of the Government to move that the resolution be rescinded, and it became necessary that it should be known in the West Indies that the House of Commons had resolved on the abolition of the Apprenticeship system before the tidings of a second, and possibly hostile, division should be received there. Dr. PALMER therefore immediately despatched letters to all the ports from which vessels were likely to sail, and some of these reached their destination in the West Indies several days previous to the receipt of the Government despatches.^(m)

^(m) Memoir
of RICHARD
ALLEN.

On the 25th May a crowded meeting, under the presidency of Lord BROUGHAM, took place at Exeter Hall, at which it was declared that Lord JOHN RUSSELL's threatened hostility loudly called for the renewed and continued exertions of the friends of the negroes—exertions which would never be relaxed until the negroes in the Colonies were released, and made equal before the law.⁽ⁿ⁾

⁽ⁿ⁾ *British
Emancipator.*

On the 28th May, Sir GEORGE GREY moved :—

“ That in order to prevent the injurious consequences which may follow from the intentions of Parliament being left in doubt, and in order to maintain the peace and welfare of the Colonies, it is necessary to declare that, in the opinion of the House, it is not advisable to adopt any proceeding for the purpose of giving effect to the Resolution of the 22nd May.”

Sir E. WILMOT moved as an amendment :—

“ That it is the opinion of this House, that the Resolution passed on the 22nd of May should be carried into effect by means of a legislative enactment, due provision being made to secure the peace of the Colonies, and to promote the welfare and good conduct of the Negro Population, on their attaining the full enjoyment of their entire freedom.”

On a division, the Government triumphed by 250 to 178 votes.

On the following day the delegates protested, in a series of resolutions, against the action of the Government and their supporters,^(a) and declared that as the recent decision of the House of Commons, by disappointing the hopes of the negro, had placed in imminent peril the safety of the Colonies, it was necessary to declare their solemn conviction that, should any disastrous consequence ensue, the responsibility would rest upon Her Majesty's Ministers, and that the nation having appealed in vain to the justice of her representatives on behalf of the oppressed, an additional obligation was created to continue with increased energy the use of every lawful means, both in the country and the Colonies, until Slavery in reality, as well as in name, was utterly abolished. They therefore determined upon largely increasing the number of Anti-Slavery Societies.

^(a) *British
Emancipator.*

On the 9th June^(b) the Anti-Slavery Committee waited upon Lord GLENELG, urging the abolition of the Apprenticeship by the Imperial Parliament on the 1st August, but to this his lordship would not agree, neither would he

^(b) Minutes
of ANTI-
SLAVERY
SOCIETY.

accede to the appointment of a Commission to investigate the working of the Colonial Laws, consequent upon the Act of 1833.

But whilst the Government in England were hostile, the local assemblies were in no mood to face another Anti-Slavery struggle, and one after another, on becoming alive to the seriousness of affairs, especially after the vote of the House of Commons in favour of abolition, passed local Acts abolishing the Apprenticeship on the 1st August, 1838, thus shortening by two years the duration of the system as enacted by Parliament in 1833. Mauritius alone took no action, and the Imperial Government were compelled to issue an Order in Council, abolishing the system in March, 1839.



