



Prof. Owen
Shaffolk
GENERAL RESULTS

OF

NEGRO APPRENTICESHIP,

AS SHOWN BY

EXTRACTS

FROM

THE PUBLIC SPEECHES AND DESPACHES

OF

THE GOVERNORS OF VARIOUS COLONIES,

AND OF

LORD GLENELG,

AS SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIAL DEPARTMENT.

LONDON:

MARTIN AND CO., PRINTERS, 26, LONG ACRE.

1838.

res. 7575.12 no. 4

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THESE selections are intended to refer exclusively to the proposition for abolishing Negro Apprenticeship. In contradiction to the extraordinary assertion that the present state of the Negro, if not worse, is and will be little better, than it was under the system of Slavery, they prove, by a few conclusive sentences from the best authority, that the Apprenticeship has operated not only well on the Negro individually, but on the Negro and the White in their mutual relations: that it is in fact an apprenticeship, and a beneficial one, for both. That some abuses still occur, especially in prisons and workhouses, is not denied; but that they are much diminished, and that the development of a new social feeling has begun and is advancing, is here demonstrated. That it is still, though general, only progressive, may be fairly inferred from occasional expressions and particular instances; but it is just and reasonable to believe that the right course has been chosen, and that perseverance in a plan already found so beneficial, affords the best chance of establishing an united Black and White population, which may by possibility be found capable of inhabiting and cultivating the English Colonies, in common, and with equal rights.

It must not be supposed that the Whites, whether proprietors or managers, are at all easy as to the future probability of successfully cultivating their estates, even when the apprenticeship shall have expired *according to the original contract*; but an abrupt termination of that state of probation and improvement would, in their apprehension, most materially increase their difficulties, and be considered by them as a violation of the most formal and sacred engagement. The following passages, while they show that great and solid improvement is effected already, prove it still to be so progressive, and as yet so far short of completion, that the whole of the remaining term of the apprenticeship is indispensable, and will barely prove sufficient, as a preparation for unqualified freedom.

28th March, 1838.

EXTRACTS

FROM THE

“PAPERS RELATIVE TO THE ABOLITION OF SLAVERY.”

Parts III. IV. V. 1836, 7, 8.

[Ordered by the House of Commons to be printed.]

JAMAICA.

*Despatch from Lord Glenelg to the Marquis of Sligo. Dated
Downing Street, 26th Sept. 1835.*

I have received your Lordship's despatches, dated, &c. The reports are in the highest degree interesting and acceptable to His Majesty's Government; nor can I forbear to congratulate your Lordship on the evidence they afford of the success with which, under circumstances of such extreme difficulty, your efforts for the *maintenance of peace and industry* amongst the apprenticed labourers have been attended. III. (1.) p. 53.

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 28th Sept. 1835.

In sending to your Lordship my usual report on the “general state of the island,” I am happy in being enabled to say that every thing is going on in *the most satisfactory manner*, and that there appears to exist at this moment the *most extraordinary quiescence*. *Id.* p. 97.

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 28th Nov. 1835.

I think that a great change has taken place in the feelings as to the management of properties. There does not appear

now to be that anxiety for *corporal punishment* which its prevalence for so many years had caused them at first to think indispensable.

I know of more than one instance of Overseers having been *dismissed*, for cruel and improper conduct, and in short I feel that I am fully warranted in making this report one of a favourable nature, though I think it not at all improbable but that I may not be able to make similar ones on all occasions in future; the balance however I feel assured will be of a pleasant nature. *Id. p. 140.*

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 13th Dec. 1835.

The more agreeable part of this Report [the preceding part having reported the unhealthy appearance of the approaching crop from natural causes,] must be the extraordinary revolution which has taken place all over the island, with particular exceptions, in the *mutual feeling of master and apprentice*. In what this has originated it is hard to say, but the conviction is strong upon my mind, as well from my official reports as from the private conversations I have had during this Session with most of the members, and with other persons well acquainted with the feelings of the country. There has sprung up a *spirit of mutual confidence*, which I hope may be nurtured, and I think it will. Nothing can be so likely to promote the success of the new system, and, in fact, without it none could be expected.

I am not aware of any exception which I can make to the general report of a favourable feeling existing. *Id. p. 150.*

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 1st Jan. 1836.

With my usual report, I enclose to you the originals of the letters which I have received from the special magistrates

yesterday. I must say that the majority of them have given me the greatest gratification, inasmuch as they confirm almost to the point all those opinions which I have lately given you in my private as well as public despatches, respecting the *improved state of feeling which has lately appeared to exist between master and apprentice*. There is not one, I am happy to say, which announces anything unfavourable in the main, though in some districts the apprentices are less civilized than in others.

I rejoice in the present state of things, because I am persuaded that the planters have become aware of the perilous consequences of harshness; *they have lost their former habits of dominion*, and I think I am not deceived in saying that, with a very few obstinate exceptions, *a totally different manner of treatment of the apprentices, which promises the happiest results, has been adopted*.

I do begin to hope, therefore, that the treatment now adopted by the planters will be found so beneficial to the interests of the island, that it will gradually be ameliorated till the conclusion of the apprenticeship; that the conduct of the apprentices will, in a corresponding rate, improve also, till *at last, in the year 1840*, the change from apprenticeship to perfect freedom will be accompanied by none of those ruinous consequences which are still anticipated by many. There are, however, many here who, though they behave in a perfectly satisfactory manner towards their apprentices, feel an internal conviction that they will not be able to assure to themselves the services of one apprentice after that period; these people, under this conviction, take no steps to prepare for the change they may suffer, and I fear will; but it will be their own faults; *it is, however, time enough for that fault to be remedied*, and I trust that the greatly increased confidence which has lately been very generally exhibited, will extend to them also. *Id.*
p. 161.

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 21st Jan. 1836.

I am happy to say that corporal punishments are daily diminishing: sixteen weekly reports sent in this day contain not a single instance of it.—*Id. p. 217.*

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 2d April, 1836.

I have the honour to enclose to you the usual periodical general reports of the special justices. With the exception of Mr. Baynes's report, nothing can be more favourable than those which I enclose in general particulars. The altered and increased good feeling between the masters and apprentices, which I have before communicated to you, is fully confirmed. *Id. p. 307.*

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 17th April, 1836.

In making to you my usual report, I am happy to say that the account I have to give in no manner differs from that of last month.

The negroes are, I think, quite as much behind hand in their knowledge of agriculture, the use of manures, of implements, or improved modes of saving labour, as they are in moral or religious knowledge. *Id. p. 346.*

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 24th May, 1836.

My usual general report for this packet will contain little more than my former assurances of a favourable nature; in fact, complaints diminish every day, as all parties, apprentices, masters, and specials, understand the law better. *Id. p. 374.*

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 9th April, 1836.

A very improved spirit and feeling now exists in this island.
Part IV. (1.) p. 33.

Lord Glenelg to the Marquis of Sligo. 12th June, 1836.

I have attentively perused your Lordship's despatch, and I entirely concur in the satisfaction which you express at the contrast which is exhibited by the trial and conviction of this person [an overseer found guilty of an act of gross cruelty and oppression] to the former case to which you have referred, and at the determination which I trust it evinces, on the part of the magistracy of Jamaica, to visit with adequate punishment cruelty inflicted upon the apprenticed labourers by their employers, I anticipate the most salutary results from such a proof of the improved state of public feeling on the subject.
Id. p. 35.

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 9th July, 1836.

I have the honour to enclose herewith the usual quarterly reports of the special justices in original; the most striking feature contained in the majority of them is the increased kindness of the managers to the apprentices; they have, in fact, found from experience that the most advantageous manner of managing them is by conciliation; while, however, this is distinctly stated in several cases, I am sorry to say that it is not universal. *Id. p. 56.*

The Marquis of Sligo to Lord Glenelg. 23d Aug. 1836.

In making my usual report, the last which, in all probability, it will be my duty to make to you in the character of Governor of this Colony, it is my pride and satisfaction to be able to say, that I leave the administration of affairs in the hands of my successor in as easy a state as can be well imagined. *Id. p. 172.*

Sir Lionel Smith, K.C.B. (now Governor of JAMAICA,) to Lord Glenelg. 4th May, 1837.

With reference to the latter part of your Lordship's despatch, I have to acquaint your Lordship, that I am very sensible of the advantage of bringing under the notice of the proprietors or attorneys of properties, the occasional misconduct or intemperance of their subordinate agents, and that I have never appealed to their good offices in such cases, without finding a ready disposition to interpose their authority in the manner pointed out. *Id. p. 122.*

Sir L. Smith to Lord Glenelg. 11th May, 1837.

I beg leave to enclose an abstract of punishments inflicted by the magistrates from the month of August 1835 up to February last, and I am happy to have it in my power to state, that while the average amount of punishment is now considerably less than at any period since the commencement of the apprenticeship system, the planters throughout the country, with the exception of the districts of two special magistrates, appear contented with the quantity of work which they obtain, and that a general good understanding exists between them and the labouring population. It is, indeed, to this satisfactory state of things, that the extraordinary decrease of offences, and consequently of punishments, must be mainly attributed. *Id. p. 282.*

Lord Glenelg to Sir L. Smith. 28th Oct. 1837.

It is very gratifying to me to receive the proof, supplied by the enclosure to your despatch, of the *impartial administration of justice* in a case in which there may have been room for the influence of local prepossessions, to the prejudice of the party by whom the action was brought. *Part V. (1.) p. 132.*

Sir L. Smith to Lord Glenelg. 24th August, 1837.

These instances [having reported two] of *successful prosecutions against cruelty and violence* have been very gratifying to me, as examples of useful influence. *Id. p. 133.*

Lord Glenelg to Sir L. Smith. 12th Oct. 1837.

I participate in the satisfaction which you express at the proof which is afforded by these proceedings, of the *equal administration of justice* in cases where local influences might be supposed to have been most unfavourable to such a result. I cannot avoid adding, that I ascribe this result in no small degree to the moral impression of the even-handed justice which the local government dispenses to all parties. *Id. p. 133.*

Lord Glenelg to Sir L. Smith. 2d Oct. 1837.

I have received your despatch enclosing the reports of the special magistrates. These reports are, upon the whole, favourable and encouraging; they assure me of a *decrease of complaints and an increase of confidence* between masters and apprentices.

I have read these reports [those for the following quarter] with attention, and, upon the whole, with satisfaction. Mr. E. D. Baynes gives, indeed, a discouraging account of the state of feeling subsisting between the apprentices and their employers in his district; but I am happy to observe that in this respect his report forms *a contrast with the rest.* *Id. p. 276.*

Sir L. Smith to Lord Glenelg. 17th Jan. 1838.

I have great pleasure in reporting to your Lordship that the Christmas holidays have passed over in perfect tranquillity,

and in *the best understanding between masters and apprentices on all well regulated properties.*

Above all, it is with sincere pleasure I point your Lordship's attention to the great *diminution of complaints* in the apprenticeship reports. The *almost general disuse of flogging*, and also a milder system of treatment towards the apprentices is in progress by those who are entitled to their services. *Id. p. 326.*

BRITISH GUIANA.

Sir J. C. Smyth, Bart. K.C.B. to Lord Glenelg. 26th Sept. 1835.

I have great pleasure in being able to report to your Lordship that throughout the whole of this Colony the most perfect tranquillity, happiness and industry prevail. It is also to be observed that the number of the planters and managers of whose conduct I have to express my disapprobation is diminishing fast: they can be named and counted. *Part III. (2) p. 56.*

Sir J. C. Smyth to Lord Glenelg. 13th Nov. 1835.

The good conduct, industry, and subordination of the labourers throughout the whole of this province cannot be exceeded by the same number of people in any part of the world. The happiness and cheerfulness prevalent throughout the Colony, together with the quantity of sugar and other produce manufactured and daily exported, are irrefragable proofs of the prosperity of this province, and of the complete superiority and triumph of mild measures, over the harsh, degrading, and revolting conduct formerly judged indispensable. *Id. p. 99.*

Lord Glenelg to Sir J. C. Smyth. 22d Jan. 1836.

I have read with peculiar satisfaction the highly favourable report which you have conveyed to me of the progress in British Guiana of the system established there, under the Act for the Abolition of Slavery. The general good conduct of the apprenticed labourers, the growing confidence of the attorney and managers in the efficacy of the new laws, the prevailing cheerfulness of all classes in their relation to each other, and the increasing productiveness of the Colony, are results which no man can contemplate without the most sincere pleasure. *Id. p. 104.*

Sir J. C. Smyth to Lord Glenelg. 28th Jan. 1836.

There is a general appearance of happiness and content, and a marked improvement in the dress and in the comforts of the apprentices and of their families most gratifying to behold, and which are too evident not to be apparent to the most careless observer. I have the pleasure of being able to report to your Lordship that nothing can be more favourable than the present state or the future prospects of this Colony, as far as I am enabled to judge. *Id. p. 122.*

Sir J. C. Smyth to Lord Glenelg, 14th April, 1836.

I have only respectfully to congratulate your Lordship upon the continued decrease of punishment, and increase of produce; in short, upon the peace, happiness, and content which prevail throughout every part of this extensive Colony. *Id. p. 162.*

Sir J. C. Smyth to Lord Glenelg. 6th Nov. 1836.

These documents show, in the most satisfactory manner, the rapid advances which this colony continues to make, under

every head, and in every particular that could be wished or desired. My thoughts are now, (in the anxious discharge of my duty,) consequently directed more towards the future state of this magnificent province, and employed more in the consideration of what measures it may be advisable to adopt with a view to the ensuring the continuance of our prosperity *after the 1st of August, 1840*, than in devising the means of maintaining the public tranquillity, which, based (as I firmly believe it to be) upon the confidence entertained by the labouring population in His Majesty's Government will, I have very little doubt, remain undisturbed. *Id. p. 502.*

* * * *See also infra, p. 18.*

BARBADOS.

Lord Glenelg to Sir E. J. Murray McGregor. 28th Nov. 1836.

His Majesty would not be disposed to sanction this Act, unless the objections to which I have adverted were obviated by the necessary amendments; but even if so amended, His Majesty would be unwilling to confirm this statute at present, but would suspend his decision until *the arrival, or the near approach of the time appointed for the close of the apprenticeship*. I shall best explain the motives for this hesitation, by the following extract of the Report presented to the House of Commons by the Committee which was appointed, during the last Session, to enquire into the execution of the law for the abolition of Slavery. They express their opinion, "that such enactments as are intended to come into operation after 1840, should, as much as possible, be delayed till that period shall arrive; and, at all events, be postponed till the time which more immediately precedes it." *Part IV. (1.) p. 353.*

ST. CHRISTOPHER.

Sir E. J. M. MacGregor, Bart. to Lord Glenelg. 2d Feb. 1836.
(Enclosing Reports in detail.)

I have the honour to forward reports from the stipendiary Magistrates of St. Christopher's, in the hope that the success of the apprenticeship system in that island may prove satisfactory to H. M. Government. *Part III. (2.) p. 327.*

TOBAGO.

Lient. Governor Darling's Speech to the Council and Assembly.

It is highly gratifying to me, in concluding this address, to be able to congratulate you on the continued tranquillity and good order prevailing throughout the island. The special Magistrates, to whose zealous services I continue to be much indebted, have in fact but little to do. The happy results of the good understanding which appears now to be fully established between the apprenticed labourer and his employer, are clearly shown in the trifling nature of the complaints preferred to the magistracy; and I think I am not over zealous in considering the general good character of the apprenticed labourer in the Island of Tobago so fully established, as to render it unnecessary that I should again publicly advert to it. *Id. p. 398.*

TRINIDAD.

Sir G. F. Hill, Bart. to Lord Glenelg. 14th Nov. 1835.

It is with much real pleasure that I am enabled to forward to your Lordship the enclosed letter and report, which I have received from Capt. Peacocke, the chief superintending Special Justice of the Northern division of this island; and I feel persuaded that your Lordship will be as much gratified as I am at the diminution of punishment which appears thereby, as compared with former returns. It is a marked proof, not only of the improvement in the conduct of the apprentices, but also of the prudent and conciliatory maxims that are adopted by those who are in authority over them.

ST. LUCIA.

Lord Glenelg to Sir Dudley Hill. 30th Sept. 1835.

The reduction made by you in the police force of St. Lucia, regarded merely as a question of finance, would have afforded me great satisfaction; but this feeling is much enhanced when I consider it as an evidence of the peaceable conduct of the apprenticed labourers, and of the successful operation of the new system in the Colony under your government. It cannot fail to be a source of gratification to H. M. Government to receive from you those assurances of the tranquil state of the island, which alone could have justified the course you have adopted. *Id. p. 472.*

BAHAMAS.

Lord Glenelg to Lieut. Governor Colebrooke. 15th Sept. 1835.

I am commanded to express to you the satisfaction with which His Majesty has received information of so highly favourable a nature, as to the intelligence, industry, and good feeling of the apprentices in the Bahamas.

No object can be more important, or more conducive to the interests of all classes of the inhabitants, than the extinction of those prejudices of caste and colour which were produced by a state of slavery; and I am much gratified to learn that, in several districts within your government, rapid progress is making towards this most desirable end; I trust that you will be able to report, at no distant period, that the same spirit pervades the whole of the Colony.

 CIRCULAR DESPATCH

of Lord Glenelg to the Governors of the West India Colonies, dated 6th Nov. 1837.

The 1st of August, 1838, and the 1st of August, 1840, will form important eras in the history of the British West Indies. Hitherto the results of the great experiment of the abolition of Slavery have been such as to justify the most sanguine hopes of the authors and advocates of that measure. When every fair deduction is made for the abuses which may have hitherto attended the administration of this law,—abuses which appear to me to have been the almost necessary result of the Colonial System as it previously existed, and for which therefore no person acquainted with human nature, and the history of

Slavery, could have been unprepared,—I feel myself entitled on satisfactory evidence to assert, that within a comparatively very short period, there has been an improvement in society and an accession to the sum of human happiness, of which history furnishes no other example. *Part V. (1.) p. 3.*

BRITISH GUIANA.

Extract from the Speech of the Governor, Sir J. Carmichael Smyth, to the Court of Policy, on opening the Session, 3d Feb. 1838. (Received subsequently to the production of the last volume of the Parliamentary Papers.)

I am in the first place desirous of offering to you my sincere congratulations upon the happy, contented, and prosperous state of this province. I challenge comparison with any county of Great Britain; and I affirm that fewer crimes and fewer breaches of the peace will be found to have been committed in British Guiana, during the year 1837, than in any part of her Majesty's dominions of the same extent, possessing two sea-ports, and containing an equal population.

3. When I reflect upon the good conduct of the apprenticed labourers; upon their anxiety for religious and moral instruction; when I see new churches, chapels, school-rooms rising rapidly in every district throughout this province, it is impossible not to be sanguine in the expectation that after the expiration of the apprentice system, this Colony will be blessed with a religious, moral, and industrious peasantry, and continue to flourish accordingly.

4. You are aware, gentlemen, that in a despatch dated so far back as on the 19th March, 1836 (now nearly two years ago), addressed by me to the Right Honorable the Lord Glenelg, I

deprecatd the idea of shortening the period of the apprenticeship. The sentiments I expressed in that despatch I still entertain. *I consider the continuance of the present system until the 1st of August, 1840, as identified with the future welfare of this magnificent province.* It appears to me that if, in British Guiana, we are allowed to continue as we are, there is every prospect of our being enabled to slide almost imperceptibly into a state of perfect freedom. Excepting in cases of theft, the degrading punishment of the lash is unknown. Females are not permitted to be sent to the treadmill. The advantages resulting from labour are becoming daily more understood, and better appreciated by the apprentice. He is moreover fast acquiring a knowledge of the rights and duties which, as a freeman, he will hereafter have in the one case to enjoy, and in the other to perform. The proprietor, on his part, is daily preparing to meet the coming change. A kind and a good feeling between the employer and the labourer is everywhere rapidly gaining ground. It is no longer the master and the slave having opposite interest; but the husbandman who cannot effectually till his ground without the willing aid and the extra work of his apprenticed labourers; and the apprenticed labourer, who looks to the husbandman for that money, in payment for his extra labour, which he requires to enable him to take care of his wife and family, and to provide himself and them with those articles of comfort and luxury to which they have become habituated. When things are going on so well as in British Guiana, it appears to me that it would be little short of an act of folly to offer any interruption to the present system.

The Despatch, of which the following is an Extract, was addressed by the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg, to the Marquis of Sligo, as Governor of Jamaica; and was by the latter communicated to the House of Assembly, as appears on their Votes and Proceedings of the 24th May, 1836. It is dated Downing Street, 31st March, 1836, but is NOT included in the series laid before Parliament.

The abolition of slavery, and the subordinate measures required to render it effectual, present a course of events altogether peculiar and anomalous.

THAT GREAT ACT WAS NOTHING LESS THAN A NATIONAL COMPACT OF WHICH PARLIAMENT WAS AT ONCE THE AUTHOR AND GUARANTEE: binding the people of the United Kingdom to the payment of a grant of unequalled magnitude, it also bound the emancipated slave to contribute compulsory labour for several successive years, while it imposed upon the Assemblies the obligation of reconciling by proper laws the duties of the negro population, as apprenticed labourers, with their rights as free men.

On the part of the British Treasury, as on that of the emancipated slaves, the agreement has been carried into complete execution. It follows, Parliament is therefore at once entitled and bound to enforce by its power, the performance of any part of the duty of the Assembly of Jamaica towards the apprenticed labourers, which that body may themselves have failed to fulfil.

* * * *A Petition, of which the following is a copy, was presented on the 29th of March, 1838, to the House of Lords by His Grace the Duke of Wellington, and to the House of Commons by Lord Stanley:*

*To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and
Temporal in Parliament assembled.*

The humble Petition of the undersigned
West India Planters and Merchants

SHEWETH,

That your Petitioners are interested in plantations situated in the West India Colonies, either as owners, or as entitled to mortgage and other incumbrances upon the same.

That by the Act of the imperial Parliament for the “Abolition of Slavery throughout the British Colonies, for promoting the industry of the manumitted slaves, and for compensating the persons hitherto entitled to the services of such slaves”—Compensation for the labour of such slaves thereby manumitted, was secured to your petitioners and others by a money payment amounting in the whole to twenty millions sterling, and by a right to the services of the emancipated slaves as apprenticed labourers during a limited period. That period in the case of the prædial apprentices will not expire until the first of August one thousand eight hundred and forty.

That such right to the services of the said apprentices is part and parcel of the compensation, in consideration of which your petitioners were compelled to resign their property; and that the right to the said services of the apprentices is declared by the Emancipation Act to be transferable property, and on the faith of that law has been made the subject of sale and purchase, and of testamentary and other legal disposition.

That your petitioners have learnt with astonishment that a

bill has been introduced into your Lordship's House, entitled "An Act for putting an end to the apprenticeship of those who were formerly slaves in the British Colonies," by which it is proposed to terminate the apprenticeship on the first of August, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight, without providing an equivalent indemnification to your petitioners and others for the loss of that portion of the compensation secured to them by the Act, and of which they would thus be deprived.

That any measure of that nature would be a direct violation of the Emancipation Act, which has been emphatically styled "a national compact of which Parliament was at once the author and the guarantee," would be contrary to all the rules of British legislation, and opposed to the eternal principles of justice.

That although it has been alleged as an excuse for this measure, that adequate protection has not been afforded to the apprenticed labourers, and that they have experienced cruel and oppressive treatment from their employers, yet your petitioners, lamenting that there should appear to be any foundation for such charges, respectfully represent to your Lordships that at present they chiefly rest upon ex-parte evidence, and your petitioners confidently assert that even if proved they are the rare exception, and not the general practice of the colonies. In corroboration of this assertion your petitioners refer to the following extract from a circular despatch from Lord Glenelg to the Governors of the West India Colonies, dated sixth of November, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-seven.—
 "Hitherto the results of the great experiment of the abolition of slavery has been such as to justify the most sanguine hopes of the authors and advocates of that measure."

That whilst your petitioners protest against the abridgement of the period of apprenticeship, they are not opposed to any

measure which may be found requisite for securing the due performance, by both masters and apprentices, of the several duties and obligations imposed upon them by the Emancipation Act, your petitioners confidently trusting in the justice and wisdom of your Right Honourable House that any measure for that purpose will be framed in conformity with the true spirit and meaning of the said Act.

That the assertions made by the enemies of the Colonists, to the effect that no loss has resulted to the planters from the emancipation of their slaves, are sufficiently disproved by the fact that whilst the quantity of produce made is greatly diminished, the expenses of cultivation have been increased by large payments for extra labour.

That the proposed abridgement of the period of apprenticeship would not only be an act of gross injustice and a violation of the rights of property, but would materially endanger the final success of the great experiment of emancipation, and the maintenance of the Colonies as valuable and productive possessions of the Crown, inasmuch as no provision has yet been made for the new state of society in which the Colonies will be placed upon the expiration of the apprenticeship.

That the currency in the Colonies does not rest upon any sound basis, and that even under existing circumstances it is found difficult to keep in the Colonies an amount of coin sufficient for the wants of the population. That this will be materially increased upon the expiration of the apprenticeship: when the labourer will have to supply himself with those articles of food and clothing with which he is at present supplied by the master, and the weekly payment of wages in money will require an increase of the circulating medium.

That the establishment in the Colonies of a sound monetary

system, and the enactment of proper laws for the support of the infirm and aged poor, the suppression of vagrancy, the summary adjustment of disputes between master and servants, and for regulating the militia, the elective franchise, and qualification of jurors, ought to precede the termination of the apprenticeship. No legislation on these important subjects has yet taken place, for reliance was placed upon the enactment that the apprenticeship should continue until the first of August, one thousand eight hundred and forty; and further, it was the opinion of the select Committee of the House of Commons on Negro Apprenticeship in one thousand eight hundred and thirty-six, and of Her Majesty's Government, that it would be most expedient that such "enactments as are intended to come into operation after one thousand eight hundred and forty should as much as possible be delayed until that period shall arrive, and, at all events, be postponed until the time which more immediately precedes it."

That there is no precedent in the history of the world of so large a proportion of the population of a country being suddenly raised from a state of slavery to the enjoyment of all the civil rights possessed by the rest of the community; and that the remaining period of apprenticeship affords but a short time for the deliberate preparation and enactment of those precautionary laws which so momentous a change in the state of society imperatively demands.

Your petitioners therefore humbly pray your Right Honourable House that the Bill entitled an "Act for putting an end to the apprenticeship of those who were formerly slaves in the British Colonies" may not be passed by your Right Honourable House, and that your petitioners may be heard at the bar of your Lordships' House by their counsel or agents.



