COOLIE INDENTURED LABOUR.

STATEMENT

OF THE

BRITISH & FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY

SHEWING ITS POLICY WITH REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION OF

CONTRACT LABOUR.

PRICE TWO SHILLINGS.

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COOLIE INDENTURED LABOUR.

POLICY OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

The question of the reintroduction of Coolie labour into sugar growing colonies has been lately raised by the French Government, who proposed that the English Government should be asked to rescind the prohibition of the exportation of British Indian subjects to foreign countries.

On this subject the following correspondence has passed between the French Ambassador in London, M. Waddington, and the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society:

(Translation).

Ambassade de France à Londres.
12th December, 1887.

SIR,—The attention of my Government has been called to the letter which you have recently addressed to the Foreign Office in the name of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society relative to the renewal of Indian immigration into Réunion, which letter has appeared in the newspapers.

A decree having been issued on the 27th August last, by M. THE PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC, to control afresh the immigration of free labourers into our colonies, I take this opportunity of addressing to you two copies of the Report on this subject which was printed in the Journal Officiel Français, and of the Decree above noted. I have pleasure in thinking that, being more fully informed by the reading of this document of the conditions made with the Coolies who come into our Colony, your Society, whose aim is eminently philanthropic, will no longer endeavour to influence the decisions of the Indian Government in the sense of continuing the prohibition which now actually prevents the recruiting of Hindoo labourers for our possessions in South America and in the Indian Ocean.

Accept, Sir, the assurance, &c.,

Waddington.

To Mons. C. H. Allen,
Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society.

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.
55, New Broad Street, London, E.C.
14th December, 1887.

To His Excellency M. Waddington, Ambassador Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Republic in London.

SIR,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of letter dated 12th instant, covering two copies of the Report addressed to Monsieur Grévy, President of the French Republic, upon the proposed renewal of Indian Coolie immigration into French Colonies, and the Decree amending the former law relating to immigrant labourers.

I beg to thank your Excellency for so promptly laying these documents before this Society, and promise that they will be maturely considered by the Committee when they meet in January next.

The Committee have a lively remembrance of the great courtesy shown by your Excellency to the Deputation from their body, which visited Berlin, in 1878, during the sittings of the Conference held in that city.

I have the honour to be,

Your Excellency’s faithful servant,

Charles H. Allen,

Secretary.
BRITISH AND FOREIGN ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,
55, NEW BROAD STREET, LONDON, E.C.
1st February, 1888.

TO HIS Excellency M. WADDINGTON, AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND MINISTER
PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE FRENCH REPUBLIC IN LONDON.

SIR,

In accordance with my letter of 14th December, I now have the honour to
state that your Excellency's favour of 12th December last, in reference to Coolie
Immigration into Réunion, was laid before my Committee at their last meeting.

In reply, I am directed to state that a document containing an historical résumé
of the question of the Coolie traffic, with its attendant evils, and of the action taken
by the ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY in regard to it, is in course of preparation at this
office, and when printed will be laid before your Excellency. Therein will be found
the reasons which have compelled this Society always to oppose the importation of
British-Indian subjects into the colonies of any foreign country. Even in British
Colonies where Slavery had once existed—such as Guiana, the West India Islands, and
the Mauritius—it was found that the proper protection of Free Immigrants was
almost a matter of impossibility. Indeed, so great was the opposition in some cases,
that the Indian Government, on hearing the reports of Commissions sent out from
England, peremptorily stopped any further exportation of Indentured Coolie Labour
to British Colonies.

The re-introduction of this labour into British possessions has only been allowed
after the enforced establishment of a rigorous system of inspection by officers
appointed by the Government, and unconnected with the planting interest, by which
means something like a fair treatment of the immigrants could be ensured.

With this long and painful experience before them, your Excellency will scarcely
be surprised to find that the Committee, after examination carefully made, of the
Report presented to the President of the French Republic, and of the Decree signed
by him on the 27th August, 1887, relative to a re-introduction of British Indian
subjects into Réunion, fail to discover any clause calculated to do away with the
insuperable objection always entertained by them to the employment of Indian
Coolies in foreign colonies.

The safeguards asked for by the Indian Government in clauses 2 and 3 of the
reforms quoted in the Report, page 1, are not provided for in this new Decree, as it is
stated that the right of inspection of all estates upon which British subjects are
engaged by duly accredited British agents is contrary to French law, and cannot be
allowed.

Your Excellency will therefore see that the objections always entertained by the
ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY are not removed, and it will be the duty of the Committee to
uphold the views of their predecessors, and to continue their opposition to any fresh
introduction of British Indians into Réunion or any other foreign colony.

With the assurance of my high respect,

I have the honour, &c.,

CHARLES H. ALLEN,
Secretary.
STATEMENT OF THE ANTI-SLavery SOCIETY.

The system of indentured coolie labour appears to have been adopted first in the Island of Mauritius. From about the middle of the last century there had been a considerable emigration from India to Mauritius of a perfectly free nature, although, together with their descendants, a large number of the immigrants were forced into Slavery, a charge of this nature being brought, in 1827, against a Slave proprietor, for having, ten years before, reduced six Indians to servitude.

In 1815, Governor Farquhar obtained a supply of convict labour from India, a system which continued up to the year 1837.

In 1829, the Government of Mauritius favourably recommended to the Governors of Madras and Singapore "a firm of high respect-ability"! who were desirous of "introducing into the colony a number of Indians as hired labourers."

This attempt seems to have been successful, for in 1830 twenty-five Indian labourers left an estate, complaining that they had received no wages for more than three months. The employer referred them to the firm which had imported them. In the end, they were re-shipped to India under a revived proclamation of 1817, which provided that strangers coming to Mauritius should be compelled to procure security for their good conduct during residence in the Island.

So ended the first attempt at contract labour; "men who would not work for no pay being reckoned as vagabonds"!

The next allusion to the subject of immigration from India took place in 1834, when the chief magistrate in Calcutta wrote to the Secretary to Government, acquainting him with the fact that thirty-six hill coolies (a term which simply implied natives from places outside the towns) had entered into engagement with a gentleman in Mauritius for five years, to work on his sugar estates. The Vice-President in Council wanted to know whether any arrangement had been made as to the payment of their return passage, and the chief magistrate sent back a copy of the agreement, of which the following is a short abstract.

Indentured for five years.

Passage to and from Mauritius to be paid by the firm importing
them, unless they left their employ before the expiration of the five years.

Pay—five rupees for men, four rupees for women, both to do the same work. One rupee a month to be deducted for passage money home.

A certain amount of food and clothing was also to be allowed.

Six months' pay in advance, and pay to commence on embarkation.

The Local Government then began to enact laws, which drew forth from Lord Glenelg a statement that "the design of the law might more accurately have been described as the substitution of some new coercion for that state of Slavery which had been abolished; the effect of it, at least, is to establish a compulsory system, scarcely less rigid, and in some material respects even less 'equitable' than that of Slavery itself"; and therefore he disallowed the Ordinance.

At this time the Governor-General of India obtained very important information as regards Indian Emigration to Mauritius, from two members of the Bengal Civil Service, who had interested themselves in the Coolies when on a visit to the Colony. The reports of these gentlemen revealed a startling number of abuses in connection with the traffic, and in November, 1836, the Governor of Mauritius stopped the immigration, the importers of labourers having disregarded a Government notice of the previous February, which required, among other salutary provisions, that the immigrants and Sirdar should have been known to one another prior to the engagement. This measure, however, did not prevent the traffic, for in the three years—1836, 1837, 1838—22,923 immigrants arrived in the Island.

In 1836, the Governor of British Guiana passed a Law for that Colony, having for its object the protection of all articled servants, or labourers under contract for a fixed time, imported into that Colony, and fixing the limit of indentures at three years from the signing of the Contract. This law was allowed by the Secretary of State, but early in 1837, on the application of a large West Indian proprietor, an Order in Council was issued by the Queen, extending the period of service, in the case of East Indian Company's subjects alone, to five years. On the publication of this Order the Anti-Slavery party, headed by Lord Brougham, brought the question forward in the House of Lords, and the Orders in Council were denounced as sanctioning a new form of Slave-trade; but the traffic continued, nevertheless.
To return to Mauritius:—

In 1837, the Government of India passed an Act which provided that no emigrant should embark without a Government permit, granted after the Contract had been examined. The Contract was fixed at five years, unless a free passage were granted back, nor unless the native fully understood the Contract. Only twenty emigrants were to be allowed on one ship, except by permit, to be granted only after the satisfactory state of accommodation, food, medical attendance, had been seen to. Registers were to be kept, fees paid, and a penalty of 200 rupees was incurred for any breach of the law.

This law was, however, repealed at the end of the year, and Law 32, of 1837, substituted. By this law no emigrant under Contract outside the Company's territory was to be allowed to embark without a order from the Government of the Presidency, or some person authorised to act by the Governor in Council of that Presidency, or (if there were no Council) by the Governor, and other safeguards were provided.

After the passing of these Ordinances, only two shiploads of Coolies were allowed to proceed to Mauritius, in August, 1838.

In the summer of 1838, the Deputy-Governor of Bengal suspended, the grant of permits for the further transportation of Indian labourers to the West Indies, as a Parliamentary inquiry was expected. This was confirmed by the President in Council on 11th July, 1838, and the Governments of Madras and Bombay were asked to do the same.

About this time permission to ship Coolies to Bourbon (Réunion) was also refused.

In consequence of the reports of the cruel treatment of the Coolies, which had reached England, there arose a considerable agitation on the part of the Anti-Slavery Society and its branches against what was deemed to be a revival of the Slave-trade, and Lord Glenelg was obliged to withdraw a bill which had been introduced, and which proposed to regulate the traffic. Nor was this agitation confined to England, for on the 10th of July, 1838, at a public meeting held in the Town Hall, Calcutta, a petition was voted, praying the Government to institute a full inquiry into the trade, and to suspend all further shipments "until it is proved that the emigration is fraught with as great advantage to the Indian emigrants as to the exporters and employers themselves." A Committee was appointed by the Government of India, in August, 1838, to make an inquiry into the system of Coolie immigration.
The Committee appointed by the Government of India presented its report in 1839, but it was not until 1841 that that document was published in England. It was appointed for the purpose of making the "alleged abuses of the existing system the subject of specific investigation, with a view to the correction, as far as may be found practicable," and a majority of this Committee reported that it was

"Proved beyond dispute, that the Coolies and other natives exported to Mauritius and elsewhere, were (generally speaking) induced to come to Calcutta by misrepresentation and deceit, practised upon them by native crims, styled duffadars and arkotties, employed by European and Anglo-Indian undertakers and shippers, who were mostly cognizant of these frauds, and who received a very considerable sum per head for each Coolie exported.

"That if the natives in the interior ... had been distinctly made aware that they were to go beyond seas to a great distance, and to remain absent for five years, it is probable that not one, or, at least, that very few would have been induced to take such an engagement.

"That the Coolies seem generally to have been induced by the duffadars, and others employed in that business, to come to Calcutta, by being persuaded that they should find employment as peons under the Company, work on the public roads, or as gardeners, porters, &c.

"That ... the parties were really incapable of understanding the nature of the contracts they were said to have entered into, even when an opportunity of explanation had been afforded apparently sufficient for the purpose."

Kidnapping, too, had prevailed to a very considerable extent, and the Coolies in Calcutta itself were actually in a state of close imprisonment. The hardships and miseries of the Coolies on board ship were very great, even under the most favourable circumstances. Very few women had emigrated, and the result of the emigration to the families of the emigrants up to that time had proved "disastrous."

The Committee further reported, that if the emigration were allowed to the West Indies there would be a mortality which "would not fall much short of ten per cent. on the numbers exported."

This same report stated further:—

"It seems to us that the permission to renew this traffic would weaken the moral influence of the British Government throughout the world, and deaden or utterly destroy the effect of all future remonstrances and negotiations respecting the Slave-trade: and this effect would ensue, however stringent, minute, or restrictive, might be the regulations framed to check abuses. Regulations would be met by other regulations, specious and unobjectionable in form; the difference would be in the execution, and in the good faith of the framers."

On the 7th September, 1838, Government issued an Order in Council on the Contract Laws, whereby it was forbidden in the
Colonies for contracts to be made beyond the Colony, or for more than a very limited period. (Vide Appendix C.)

In consequence of the agitation, and before the report of the Indian Committee, the English Government sent out specific orders to prohibit the traffic, and on the 29th May, 1839, Acts 5 and 32 of 1837, were totally repealed by the Indian Government. By this law (14 of 1839) every person who should make any contract after the following July with any native of India, for labour to be performed in any British colony or foreign colony without the territories of the East India Company, or aided or abetted any native in emigrating, should be, liable to a fine of 200 rupees for each native contracted with, and in default, an imprisonment of three months.

In Mauritius an inquiry also took place; but there was a difference of opinion among the Commissioners, the majority of whom thought some interference necessary with regard to accommodation, medical treatment, and time allowed for meals, and hoped that on the other plantations there were as few grievances as those at Port Louis. But Mr. Special Justice Anderson (one of the Commissioners who had refused to sign the Abstract of Evidence, &c.) considered after a visit to twelve out of thirty-one estates,

That, with a few exceptions, they were treated with great and unjust severity, by overwork, and by personal chastisement; their lodgings either too confined and disgustingly filthy, or none provided for them, and in case of sickness, the most culpable neglect was evinced in withholding the accommodation, advice and attendance which the utter helplessness of the sufferers so urgently required. None of the establishments had sufficient hospital accommodation, and the expense of the public hospital was always urged as an excuse for not sending them there. That the Indians’ prejudices were never considered; their deplorable state of destitution in their own country was always urged as an argument in favour of their improved condition here (Mauritius) without any reference to the change which takes place by their emigration from comparative idleness and indolence, with the full enjoyment of all their natural prejudices, to severe and unremitting labour under many painful restrictions; that they were generally pillaged of the six months’ pay advanced to them in India, and compelled to toil for a recompense which bore no proportion to the work to which they were subjected, as compared with the common value of labour in the colony, or the sum they would have earned had they had the free disposal of their own time.

The Planters, after this, made unremitting efforts to obtain the removal of the restrictions upon Coolie emigration, and in 1840, Mr. Special Justice Anderson went to England, at the instance of the Planters, and recommended a re-opening of the immigration under regulations.
In the Session of 1840 a Bill was introduced into Parliament to extend to the West Indies the English Act for the regulation of the carriage of passengers in merchant vessels, and Lord John Russell stated that he did not propose to allow any emigration to the West Indies, but to relax an Order in Council relating to Mauritius, preventing the importation of Coolies. The Anti-Slavery Society at once entrusted to the care of Sir Eardley Wilmot a Petition, praying that no relaxation might be allowed to take place with reference to Coolie immigration to Mauritius; whilst on the 3rd March a Deputation from the Society waited upon Lord John Russell upon the subject; but the Government persisted in their intention to relax the prohibition.

On the 4th June Lord John Russell brought forward a motion in the House for carrying out the Government scheme, and carried it by a majority of 35; but later on Dr. Lushington, on behalf of the Society, moved, after the third reading of the Bill, that Lord John Russell’s Clauses be omitted from the Bill. The East India Company joined with the Anti-Slavery Society and the Clauses were struck out by a majority of 49; and so the Order was not relaxed.

On January 15th, 1842, however, Lord Stanley revoked, by Order in Council, the law as to emigration of Coolies from India, with regard to Mauritius, and the Society petitioned the House of Commons on the 28th February against any relaxation of the law.

On the 26th July, 1842, the re-introduced Colonial Passengers’ Bill passed the third reading in the Commons, and the immigration became open once more. But the Governor-General in Council came to the aid of the Coolies, devising measures for preventing the exportation of Coolies from India without a certificate signed by the Agent of the Government of Mauritius, and countersigned by a protector of immigrants appointed in India. The Anti-Slavery Society again protested, in a Memorial to Lord Stanley, against the immigration of Coolies to Mauritius on the grounds of kidnapping, fraud, and immorality. This document was referred to the Governor-General of India.

In January, 1844, on the proposal to allow emigration from China to the West Indies, sanctioned by Lord Stanley, the Anti-Slavery Society again memorialized that Minister in opposition to any such scheme.

In the same year Lord Stanley instructed the Governor-General of India to remove the restrictions on the export of labourers from
India to the West Indies, and allowed the Local Government of British Guiana to raise loans to promote immigration. This scheme the Society opposed, on the grounds of justice, humanity, and morality; but Lord Stanley allowed the Bill passed by the local legislature. On the 26th October the Anti-Slavery Committee memorialized Lord Stanley, and entreated that the Crown would suspend its sanction to the Local Ordinances until all parties affected by them might be fully heard in relation thereto.

On the 12th November, 1844, the Anti-Slavery Society adopted a most elaborate memorial on the general question of emigration, which, after being signed by Thomas Clarkson, was forwarded to Sir Robert Peel, the Premier. In this document were set forth the reasons upon which the Committee based their objections, not to a spontaneous emigration, but to the system of Contract Labour, which had hitherto been productive of most terrible abuses.

In reference to the above memorial, a Deputation waited upon Sir Robert Peel (who was accompanied by Lord Stanley) on the 25th November, 1844. At this interview Lord Stanley announced that it was the intention of Government to disallow the Ordinance, which proposed to throw the expense of immigration upon the general taxation. This burden, being intended for the benefit of the producers, should be borne by produce.

Early in 1845 the Committee, through Thomas Clarkson, petitioned the House of Commons, setting forth their objections to the immigration schemes then in force in the Colonies, and praying the House to take their representations into early and serious consideration, and refuse to sanction any scheme for raising loans to supply the emancipated Colonies with Asiatic and African labourers, or any other measure of colonial immigration which was not based on the unfettered choice of the emigrants, and the expenses of which were not borne out of the private funds of those intended to be benefited thereby.

In 1846, the Society presented a remonstrance to Mr. Gladstone against the system of Coolie immigration, on the ground of the immoral tendency of the traffic, and backed up their memorial by a Deputation on the 16th February, and the matter dropped.

In June the Committee, however, received the satisfactory news that Her Majesty's Government had arrived at the conclusion that it was not advisable that the British Parliament should be invited to
authorize a guarantee by the State of any loan which the West Indian Colonies might raise for the purpose of promoting the immigration of labourers into those Colonies. The Government had also decided that the Contract Law of 1838 should remain untouched, so far as Africans and Coolies imported into the Colonies were concerned.

In the following month the Whigs came into office, under Lord John Russell, who proposed, in conjunction with a measure for the introduction of Slave-grown sugars into the British markets, to relax the Orders in Council, and the Ordinances and Laws founded upon them in force in the Colonies which related to contracts for labour, and to permit indentures or engagements for labour to be made, for a period not exceeding twelve months, with the natives of Africa and Hindostan, in their respective countries.

A protest from the Committee of the Society followed up this reversal of the policy of the former Government, with a memorial to Lord John Russell, and by petitions to Parliament, but these were of no avail.

Great complaints were made, in 1846, of the inadequate supply of labour in the Mauritius, of the wholesale extortion practised by the labourers, and the immoderate rate of wages. The mouthpiece of these complainants was the Committee of Merchants and Proprietors, who, about the middle of the year, waited on the Governor, and urged the introduction of 12,000 men from Madras, in addition to the annual 6,000 from Calcutta. They subsequently pronounced the immigration a failure, and addressed a petition to the Governor for the remission of the export duty on sugar.

Earl Grey sent out, on the 29th September, 1846, ten heads of an Ordinance which were adopted, and, subject to amendments, became the Immigration Law of Mauritius.

In November, 1847, the Committee memorialised Lord John Russell (Premier) against the emigration of Africans to various colonies, which system, introduced on a small scale in 1840, had proved to be of a decidedly pro-Slavery tendency. His lordship merely acknowledged receipt of the Society's letter.

In the following year, 1848, the Society petitioned the House of Commons against the system of introducing Kroomen into the colonies, on the ground of the cost, mortality, and immorality which had hitherto attended the importation of foreign labourers into British Colonies.
In 1850 the Court of Policy, and the leading planters of British Guiana, proposed to renew the system of Coolie immigration into that Colony under new regulations. On the 22nd March, the Anti-Slavery Society memorialised Lord Grey against this scheme, and again in October.

The Ordinance passed by the Local Government was simply a modified Slave Code, but Earl Grey allowed it. In the following year, however, the immigration was suspended for a time in British Guiana, pending the consideration of an objection entertained by the East India Company, to one of the provisions of the Guiana Ordinance.

In 1852, M. Waleuski, in a despatch to the Governor of Réunion, prohibited the traffic in negroes from the East Coast of Africa.

In 1853, March 5th, the Anti-Slavery Society waited upon the Duke of Newcastle, by depedation, and called his attention to the evils of the emigration from the Kroo Coast to the British Colonies, pointing out more especially the extensive mortality, and the oppressive nature of the forced contracts for labour.

In Mauritius the system of Coolie labour became a constant source of abuse, as proved by the numerous laws passed by the Government. A most important proclamation was issued in 1855, by the Governor, to the effect that the proportion of females was to be "one for every three males." Mr. Labouchere, the Secretary for Colonies, laid down as a rule "that the number of males introduced for 1856 and 1857 must not exceed, under any circumstances, three times the number introduced in 1855.

Act No. 19, of 1856, permitted the Governor-General of India in Council, to suspend the operation of certain Acts relating to the emigration of native labourers, whenever he deemed it necessary to do so, in consequence of proper protection not being afforded to the Coolies.

In 1856, the state of the Chinese who had emigrated into Cuba occupied the attention of the Society. During the ten years—from 1847 to 1856—11,586 Chinese had entered Cuba under indenture, all of whom had been absorbed into the Slave population. The English Consul affirmed that they were treated with hardly more consideration than the Slaves, and that not more than one half would outlive their eight years' term of service.

In June, 1857, the attention of the Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society was directed to the scheme set on foot, by the
French Government, to obtain so-called "immigrants" from Africa, and they took an early opportunity of bringing the subject under the notice of Lord Brougham, who put a question to the Government, towards the close of the month, and again on the 6th July. On the 17th of the same month, his lordship moved that an address from the House of Lords should be presented to Her Majesty, praying her to withhold her countenance from all such schemes on the part of her subjects, and to use her best endeavours with her allies to discountenance similar projects.

This was carried. In the meanwhile, a Deputation from the West India Body, headed by Lord Shaftesbury, had gone up to Lord Palmerston with a memorial, soliciting his assent to a scheme of the same nature, viz:—To supply the West Indies with labourers, by concluding what were styled "Immigration Treaties" with the native chiefs, the African Coast being thrown open to all nations. This they considered as being likely to lead to the abolition of Slavery and the Slave-trade. The Anti-Slavery Society regarded such a scheme as a new mode of re-opening the Slave-trade, and they also addressed Lord Palmerston on the subject. Lord Palmerston heartily assured the Deputation which waited on him that Her Majesty's Government would not countenance any plan for obtaining "immigrants" likely to lead to a renewal of the Slave-trade. Towards the close of the year, the Committee having obtained additional information of the proceedings of the French on the African coast, memorialised the Earl of Clarendon, and on the 24th November, 1857, a Deputation of the Committee, with representatives from various parts of the country, attended at the Foreign Office and presented an address. The Secretary for Foreign Affairs gave the Deputation an assurance that it was the determination of the Government to dissuade the French Ministry from prosecuting an enterprise which he did not "hesitate to designate as the Slave-trade unmitigated and undisguised."

On the 11th December the Earl of Shaftesbury (at the request of Lord Brougham, who had been asked by the Anti-Slavery Committee to bring the question forward in the House of Lords), interrogated the Government on the subject of the decree, in virtue of which the French were understood to be still prosecuting their nefarious enterprise. The question elicited a remarkable testimony against the scheme from the Earls of Derby, Grey, and Clarendon, the latter of whom spoke against it in the strongest terms, but held out hopes of its abandonment.
During the year 1857 M. Savy, an advocate, brought charges against the system of Coolie immigration into Mauritius in a letter to the Governor-General of India. In this document he stated that impartial justice was wanting. He admitted the general good treatment, though there were unfortunate exceptions, but he maintained that the law against abuses was a dead letter; that there was a want of independence in the magistrates; that there were great arrears of wages; the local Government rotten; and a Commission was requested. This document was sent by the Governor-General to the Governor of Mauritius, who appointed a Committee of officials and two members of the Legislative Assembly. This Committee reported that, notwithstanding instances of erroneous conduct discovered against some few of the magistrates, the letter contained a false and groundless libel against the stipendiaries in a body and the Government responsible for their selection. This report was transmitted by the Government of India to Lord Stanley, who passed some severe comments upon the practice of allowing wages to be in arrear, which seemed to be, if not general, by no means uncommon, and to the evils and injustice of which he thought the Committee of Investigation did not seem to be alive, as they justified, in far too general terms, the conduct of the stipendiaries in granting delays to the masters to enable them to make payment. His Lordship expressed it as his opinion, that, as a rule, no arrears of wages should be allowed, an opinion in which Lord Carnarvon entirely concurred, and desired Governor Stevenson at once to issue such instructions as would ensure a punctual compliance, on the part of the planters, with regulations in this respect. On a change of Governors great abuses were found to exist, and various reforms were carried out.

In March, 1858, the Anti-Slavery Committee received precise information of the proceedings of the French vessel "Stella" on the coast of Africa, where she shipped 950 Africans, male and female, to convey them to Guadeloupe. Of these one-third died on the passage of thirty days, and the greater part of the remainder were drowned after their arrival off the coast, in consequence of the foundering of the small vessel on board of which they had been transshipped. The Committee of the Anti-Slavery Society immediately petitioned Parliament, setting forth a statement of the facts concerning this virtual Slave-trade, and praying that the subject might receive that consideration from the House which its importance deserved. In addition to this petition, the Society, on the
2nd August, waited upon the Earl of Derby and addressed him on the question of the Slave-trade generally, but with reference specially to the French "Free Labour Immigration," as it was speciously called.

Lord Derby stated that he concurred in the main with the views of the deputation, and that Lord Carnarvon was about to introduce a Bill to put a stop to the carrying of Coolies from India to any foreign possession, and that Government were pouring in evidence of the real nature of the traffic upon the French Government to induce them to put a stop to the trade. On the 30th October, 1858, in consequence of this continued denunciation, the Emperor, addressing his cousin, the Minister for Algeria and the Colonies, said in his letter:—

"If, in truth, labourers recruited on the African coast are not allowed the exercise of their free will, and if this enrolment is only the Slave-trade in disguise, I will have it on no terms, for it is not I who will anywhere protect enterprises contrary to progress, to humanity, and to civilization."

He therefore instructed him to authorise the Minister for Foreign Affairs to resume with the English Government those negotiations which were entered upon some time before, to allow the substitution of Indian Coolies for the negroes, and early in the following year the traffic on the East Coast of Africa was prohibited by the Emperor.

The Earl of Carnarvon rendered conspicuous services to the cause of humanity by vetoing a Bill passed by the Jamaica House of Assembly, containing clauses which tended to abridge the free action of the immigrants brought into the Island. This was the result of the action of the Anti-Slavery Committee, who had enlisted the services of Lord Brougham in the cause.

During this year, 1858, fresh tidings were received of the gross cruelties practised upon the Chinese Coolies in Cuba, whilst the mortality of these unfortunates during their passage was very great, and, in 1859, the Society published a pamphlet against Chinese immigration into Cuba, which received much attention.

On the 25th January, 1859, a deputation from the Society waited upon Sir E. B. Lytton, to present a memorial against the system of Coolie immigration practised in the West Indies, and to urge special objections to the Immigration Bill recently passed by the Jamaica Legislature, and which was then awaiting the assent of the Crown. The Minister promised to consider their objections, and, in
March, the Committee, by motion in the Commons, obtained papers on the subject of emigration.

In April the Society petitioned Parliament for a Select Committee to inquire into the question of the alleged deficiency of labour in the West Indies. In support of this prayer the Committee waited upon the Duke of Newcastle, and urged the appointment of a Committee of the House of Lords for the West Indies, and at the same time protested against the emigration of Chinese Coolies to Cuba at the instigation, and by the aid, of British subjects. The Duke of Newcastle declined supporting the appointment of a Select Committee for the West Indies, but promised to send out a series of queries, drawn up by representatives of the Anti-Slavery Society, to be sent to persons in authority in Jamaica. It was also agreed that the Colonial Office would appoint a gentleman to take the evidence of persons in England on the question.

The Society also held a large meeting in London against Coolie immigration, at which Lord Brougham presided.

The programme of the Colonial Office not having been carried out, owing to unforeseen difficulties, the Committee resolved to address the Duke of Newcastle, setting forth their case in general terms, and challenging the Colonial Office to disprove their allegations, and requesting him to favour the appointment of a Select Committee of the House of Lords. This was done, but the Duke of Newcastle declined to undertake the promotion of a Royal Commission or Parliamentary Committee.

During this year, Lord John Russell suggested that Coolie immigration from China to Cuba, under certain regulations, might put a stop to the Slave-trade.

On 3rd February, 1860, Sir Charles Wood stated in the House of Commons, that when he came to the India Office he found that a treaty was being negotiated with the French Government, for the purpose of allowing the exportation of Coolie labourers to those Colonies in the same manner as the exportation had been legalised in regard to the British Colonies, it being hoped that by that means an end might be put to the system of Slavery which had been carried on upon the Eastern Coast of Africa. The question, he stated, was not concluded, but very great care would be taken to promote the comfort and advantage of the Coolies. Subsequently, Lord John Russell announced that a treaty had been drafted, and would be gone
1860-1861

on with as soon as the French Government had agreed to certain proposals suggested by the English Foreign Office—and this document was signed on the 25th July, 1860.

Article 16 provided that each shipment of emigrants should include a proportion of women equal to at least one-fourth men. After three years, this proportion to be one-third; after two years more, to be one-half; and after two years more, the proportion to be the same as fixed for British Colonies.

Article 24 extended the Convention to emigration to Réunion, Martinique, Guadeloupe and its dependencies, and Guiana; and it might be afterwards applied to other Colonies where British Consular Agents were established.

Article 26 provided that the Convention should begin to take effect on the 1st of July, 1862, duration three and a half years, to remain in force, if notice for its termination were not given in July of the third year, and then notice to be given only in July of each succeeding year. To cease eighteen months after notice of termination.

In this treaty it was expressly provided that the Governor-General of India in Council should have the power, under Act of 19th September, 1856, to suspend, at any time, the emigration to one or more of the French Colonies, in the event of his having reason to believe that in any Colony proper measures had not been taken for the protection of the immigrants immediately on their arrival, or during their residence in the Colony, or for their safe return to India, or to provide a return passage to India for any such immigrants at or about the time at which they were entitled to such return passage. Should the Governor-General of India exercise this power, the French had the power to immediately terminate the Convention. Should the Convention terminate from any cause, the stipulations relative to Indian subjects in the French Colonies should be maintained in force in their favour until they had either been sent back to their own country, or had renounced their right to a return passage to India.

On the 5th May, 1861, the Anti-Slavery Committee passed a minute and resolutions, partly in consequence of a statement which had been made, that they were unfavourable to all kinds of immigration:

**Minute.**

"At a General Meeting of the Committee of the ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY, held the 5th of May, 1861, the continued Minute upon the subject of Immigration from India and China into the British West Indian Colonies..."
and the Mauritius, was resumed, when the following resolutions and preamble were unanimously agreed to, and the Secretary was instructed to give them publicity.

**PREAMBLE.**

"This Committee, having for many years had under their notice, from time to time, the subject of Coolie Immigration, and having closely watched the course of public opinion, and the tendency of legislation, both at home and in the Colonies, in relation thereto, deem it desirable formally to record their views upon this important subject in the form of the following

**RESOLUTIONS.**

"That the consistent opposition of the Committee to the system of introducing foreign labourers into the Colony aforesaid, which has been designated by the term 'immigration,' has not arisen from any objection to see such labour attracted into them, but from the radical viciousness of the legislation framed to promote that object.

"That the Committee are of opinion that no proportion of the cost of any system of immigration ought to be defrayed out of the general taxation, but should be sustained entirely by the parties who demand the services of the foreign labourers. Hitherto immigration has not been conducted upon this principle. Even the most recent legislation renders the employer of foreign labour liable to the extent of only two-thirds of the cost of its introduction, leaving the remaining third, with numerous collateral expenses, a charge upon the Colonial funds.

"That the Committee consider that the mode of providing for any proportion of the cost of immigration, by the imposition of a tax upon exports, is unfair to the small coloured freeholders, non-employers of immigrant labour, and is contrary to sound principles of political economy. The tax falls not upon sugar alone, but upon various other products, raised almost exclusively by the small freeholders.

"That the Committee entertain a similar objection to the taxation of imports for the same purpose. It is levied upon commodities of which by far the largest proportion is consumed by the labouring classes, who are thus forced to contribute unduly to a revenue not employed for their benefit; and the Coolies themselves are also thereby mulcted in a proportion of the cost of their own introduction, which is manifestly unjust.

"That the inequality of the sexes is a grossly immoral element in the present system of Coolie immigration, the preponderance being still greatly on the side of the males; and that the domestic customs of the Chinese being adverse to the emigration of women, has produced an insuperable obstacle to a wholesome system of immigration from China into our Colonies.

"That, apart from the objectionable means which have been resorted to, and which are even at present practised to induce Indians and Chinese to emigrate, the mortality out and home, and during acclimatisation and industrial residence in the Colonies, is a serious objection to the present system."
"That the insufficiency of the means of affording religious instruction to the Coolies introduced into our Colonies constitutes another evil of extreme magnitude, which it is of the utmost importance to obviate.

"In recording these opinions, formed after many years' careful attention to the subject, the Committee nevertheless believe and have always maintained, that an influx of the labouring element into our sugar Colonies, provided it be induced by legitimate means, would not only benefit them, but the immigrants themselves. The Committee entertain the conviction that a comprehensive and an unobjectionable system of immigration might be devised, but that no such system is likely to be satisfactory which is not preceded by a full, free, and unimpartial investigation of the evils and abuses incidental to the one in actual operation."

In 1863, a labour traffic sprung up between Polynesia and Peru, and on the 4th September the Committee memorialised the Foreign Secretary against the traffic, and in reply, Lord John Russell stated that the Governments were doing all that they could to prevent its continuance.

In the same year reports of the deplorable state of the Coolies in Jamaica reached England, and met with a protest from the Anti-Slavery Society.

During the same year the principal ports of China were placarded with warnings to Chinese against emigrating from their country, presumably by the Chinese authorities.

In March, 1868, the Society protested, in a Memorial to the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, against the proposed introduction of Coolies into Queensland.

Steps were also taken by the Society to induce the Government to prohibit emigration from China to Peru, and Lord Stanley stated that the Government had invited certain Powers to unite in coming to an understanding with China on the subject of emigration.

On the 23rd May, 1868, the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos was memorialised by the Anti-Slavery Society against the new Labour Traffic which they considered to be only another form of the Slave-trade, in Queensland, protesting against the Act of the Queensland Legislature authorising that traffic.

On the 17th December, 1869, a joint memorial from the Anti-Slavery Society, the Aborigines' Protection Society, and the Social Science Association, was presented to Earl Granville, against the Chinese emigration from Hong Kong, to Peru, Surinam, and Cuba; and
instructions were, in consequence, sent to the Governor, to prohibit for the future all emigration from the Colony to foreign countries, and to allow it only to places within Her Majesty's Colonial Possessions.

In 1870, Earl Granville sent out despatches, imposing stringent rules, with regard to the deportation of the South Sea Islanders, to the Governors of the Australian Colonies, and also a despatch to the British Consul in the Fiji Islands, requesting him to forward suggestions for the regulation of the traffic, and, if that were impossible, for its suppression.

In consequence of the charges brought against all the classes (except the lowest) in the colony of British Guiana, by Mr. Des Vœux, Administrator of St. Lucia, with respect to the treatment of the immigrants, Lord Granville appointed a Commission of Inquiry, which proceeded to Demerara to inquire into the truth of those charges. The Anti-Slavery Society, in conjunction with the Aborigines' Protection Society, sent out a legal representative to watch the proceedings on their own behalf and on that of the immigrants. In the end, the Commission reported the prevalence of such abuses as Mr. Des Vœux had pointed out.

On the 17th April, 1871, two deputations, one of which was from the Anti-Slavery Society, waited upon the Marquis of Normanby, Governor of Queensland, and presented an address against the Polynesian traffic. His Excellency said, in reply, that he would consider all the subjects brought under his notice by the Deputations, and declared that he would be no party to anything akin to Slavery and the Slave-trade.

In July, 1871, news having arrived in England that an attempt would be made to obtain free labourers for Natal, from other portions of Eastern Africa, an address was forwarded by the Anti-Slavery Society to the Governor of Natal condemning the project.

During this year great complaints of the ill-treatment of the Coolies in Mauritius reached the Anti-Slavery Society, and a "petition from the old immigrants" of the Island was presented to the Governor, Sir Arthur Gordon. In the preparation and presentation of this petition the Coolies were assisted by a M. De Plevitz, whose action was vigorously supported by the Anti-Slavery Society. On the presentation of this document the employers of Coolies petitioned the Governor to expel De Plevitz.
from the Island, on the ground that he had interfered with the safety of the inhabitants, and that his conduct and principles were contrary to good order and public tranquility, and that he had not shown becoming respect to the Colonial institutions. With this request of the planters the Governor, of course, refused to comply, and appointed a Police Commission to inquire into the truth of the allegations of the petition of the old immigrants. This Commission reported in 1872, and, in the main, bore out the statements of M. De Plevitz. In the middle of the same year the English Government sent out a Royal Commission to inquire into the condition of the immigrants.

A deputation from the Anti-Slavery, Missionary and other Societies waited upon Lord Kimberley, early in 1872, to urge the necessity for adopting immediate and energetic measures for the suppression of the system of kidnapping men, going on in the South Pacific Islands, for the purpose of supplying labour to Queensland and the other Australian Colonies. The Colonial Secretary promised that a law should be passed rendering the crime of kidnapping a felony, and an Act was passed by Parliament, which, to a great extent, answered the object for which it was introduced.

The abuses connected with the traffic in Chinese Coolies to various places, was brought before the House of Commons in the Session of 1872, by Mr. R. N. Fowler, who moved for papers on the subject, which were promised by the Foreign Secretary, who also promised that the Foreign Office would not relax its efforts to bring about the cessation of those cruelties which had so shocked the feelings of Englishmen.

In the same year the Dutch Government received the consent (by Treaty) of Great Britain to recruit free labourers in India for transmission to Surinam. Against the carrying out of this Treaty the Anti-Slavery Society protested to Earl Granville in October, 1872.

In 1872 the planters in Jamaica proposed to charge certain expenses, incurred under the system of Coolie immigration, to the public revenue, and the Anti-Slavery Society protested against this proposal, in a memorial to Earl Kimberley, in September.

The Colonial Office, during the year 1872, sent out a draft Immigration Bill, founded on the recommendations of the Commission
of 1870, to British Guiana which, whilst it contained some good
features, also had some very objectionable ones.

News arrived in England, in 1873, of the formation of a Society
in Havanna, for the importation of Coolies from Macao, professedly
as immigrants, under an eight years’ contract. In Macao, and the
neighbouring seaports, agencies had been established for obtaining the
Coolies, and kidnapping prevailed largely in order to get them. On
reaching Cuba they were bought from the Company at an enormous
profit, and taken to the estates, where their hardships and sufferings
were such that it was calculated that 75 per cent. died during their
eight years’ service. Very few that survived could be persuaded to
renew their contracts, but most severe laws were enacted to force
them to labour, either for their masters or for the Government.

In February, 1873, the Society again memorialised the Colonial
Office against the “Slave-trade carried on in the South Seas, under
the licence of the British flag.”

On the 23rd of May, Sir Charles Wingfield, at the request of
the Anti-Slavery Society, brought the question of the Chinese
Coolies traffic to Cuba and Peru before the House of Commons, and
although he could not, under the rules of that House, move any
resolution, he succeeded in drawing from Government a promise that
the Foreign Office would do all in their power, by friendly representa-
tions to all those Powers who had a voice in the matter, to put a
stop to the trade.

In 1873 Consul Segrave made a series of charges against the
French planters of Réunion, for their treatment of the Indian Coolies
in that Island.

During the year the Chinese Government, after communications
had passed with the British Minister at Pekin, appointed Special
Commissioners to proceed to Peru and Cuba to inquire into the
treatment of the Chinese Coolies in those countries. The Anti-
Slavery Society at once memorialised the Foreign Office, asking
that her Majesty’s Consul-General in Cuba might be instructed to
render such aid to the Commission as should be consistent with his
official position, and should facilitate their labours in examining into
the real condition of the Chinese Coolies in Cuba, and Lord
Granville at once replied that such instructions had already been
sent out to Cuba.
Owing to their inability to obtain copies of the Labour Laws of Surinam, the Committee, during the year, memorialised the India Office to suspend all immigrations between India and Surinam, until the laws of that Dutch Colony, under which British-Indian subjects would be placed, had been perfected and approved.

In consequence of the continued abuses in connection with the Coolie traffic from Macao to Peru and Cuba, on the 27th December, 1873, the Portuguese Secretary for the Colonies, Senhor Corvo, prohibited the traffic from the 27th of the following March.

In 1874 the Chinese Government entered into a Treaty with Peru, in which emigration to that country was permitted. This was believed to have been brought about mainly under the advice of the Secretary of the Commission, which had been sent out to Peru, in 1873, by the Emperor of China to inquire into the condition of the Chinese immigrants in that country. Immediately on receipt of the intelligence of the signature of this Treaty, the Anti-Slavery Society applied to the Foreign Office to obtain for them a copy of the document. With this request Lord Derby courteously complied, and at the same time stated that copies of all despatches received by the Foreign Office from Consuls and others, bearing upon the question of Chinese Coolie emigration to Peru, would be forwarded to the Society. Instructions had also been sent to the Minister and Consuls in Peru to render every assistance to the Commissioners.

In 1874 the Government of India passed an Act empowering the Governor-General in Council to either prohibit or permit, under certain conditions, the recruiting of labourers for Foreign States. Any violation of the prohibitions imposed involved a penalty of imprisonment for seven years, or a fine of any amount the Court should inflict.

Early in 1875, the Report of the Royal Commission which had been sent out to Mauritius in 1872 was presented to Parliament. It showed that the Coolies were subject to great oppression; that the measures adopted for their protection were ineffective; whilst the most unscrupulous means were employed to deprive those who had served out their term of their free agency, and to compel them into fresh indentures.

On the 11th May, 1875, the Society, by Deputation, waited upon Earl Granville at the Colonial Office, to protest against the system of immigration still carried on in the West Indies. In reply to the
Deputation, Lord Granville said that he believed it to be the duty of the Government to give assistance to Coolie immigration, provided that system could be administered under proper safeguards.

In 1875, in consequence of the shocking cruelties perpetrated upon the Chinese in Peru, the Anti-Slavery Society issued a notice in the native language, warning the people against emigration to that country, with which the walls of the principal seaports of China were placarded, and which had the effect of stopping the traffic.

On July 18th, 1876, a Deputation of the Anti-Slavery Society waited upon Earl Carnarvon, to protest against a Bill passed by the Legislative Council of Jamaica, to appropriate from the revenue of the Island another £20,000 for immigration. This would raise the cost of such immigration into Jamaica to more than half a million sterling since 1860, of which the sugar estates employing Coolie labour had contributed less than £80,000. Earl Carnarvon promised to look into the matter.

In the same year, the report of the Chinese Commission to Cuba was received, revealing a dreadful state of affairs in that island, with respect to the treatment of the Coolies.

On April 20th, 1877, another Deputation waited upon Earl Carnarvon, at the Colonial Office, to protest against the system of Coolie immigration in Jamaica, especially as to the financial portion of that system. The end of the matter was, that further immigration was prohibited by Earl Carnarvon, in a most masterly despatch to the Governor of Jamaica.

In the same year, 1877, the Governor-General of India in Council passed an Act, making stringent regulations as to the carrying on of the Coolie traffic to the Straits settlements (British possessions).

The Spaniards, in 1877, endeavoured to promote a Company for importing Coolies into Cuba, and as this would have been the establishment of a virtual Slave-trade, the Anti-Slavery Society protested against it. A treaty between Spain and China, permitting the immigration to Cuba, was, however, signed, and the Anti-Slavery Society endeavoured to prevent its ratification.

Accordingly, in 1878, a Deputation from that Society waited upon the Chinese Ambassador, Kuo Ta Jen, and laid before him their insuperable objections to the system of indentured immigration into countries where Slavery still existed. The Ambassador received
the Deputation very courteously, and promised to lay the views of the Society before the Emperor of China. About the same time the Report of the Chinese Commissioners to Cuba was issued, and bore out completely the statements which had been received by the Anti-Slavery Society.

During this year the British and French Governments received reports from a Joint Commission which had been sent out to Réunion, as to the deplorable condition of the British-Indian Coolies in that island.

Again, in the following year, 1879, on a rumour of the proposed ratification of the Hispano-Chinese Convention by the Chinese Government, a Deputation from the Anti-Slavery Society, waited upon the Marquis Tseng, to present him with a summary of what had occurred on the occasion of their interview with his predecessor, Kuo Ta Jen. The Ambassador promised to at once send a despatch to China, advising that the Convention should not be carried out, unless there were very great modifications made in its provisions. The treaty consequently fell through.

In 1879, reports came to hand of great cruelties perpetrated upon the Coolies in the French Colony of Cayenne, and the Society drew the attention of the Foreign Office to the question. The Marquis of Salisbury replied that he would cause inquiries to be made into the condition of the Indian Coolies in that Colony.

On the despatch of Envoys from Brazil to England in the same year to negotiate, through the Marquis Tseng, a convention for the importation of labourers from China, the Society warned the Chinese Ambassador against concluding any treaty with Brazil. In reply to the Memorial of the Anti-Slavery Society, the Marquis Tseng asked for further information, from time to time, and expressed his willingness to co-operate with the Society in their benevolent exertions.

Again, in December, 1879, after receiving a copy of a speech made in the Chamber of Deputies in Brazil, the Society sent a copy of the speech, together with a memorial, to the Marquis Tseng, imploring him to do his best to prevent his fellow subjects from being treated as they had been in Peru and Cuba.

The Marquis Tseng replied that, owing to the representations of the Society, and also to the investigations of a Commission which had been appointed to inquire into the condition of labourers under
contract in foreign countries, the Chinese Government had absolutely refused to discuss the question of introducing its subjects into Brazil. The Government of China were satisfied that whenever Chinese were properly paid and well treated, they had always gone of their own accord to the various countries.

The policy of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines' Protection Societies has also been successfully carried out with reference to Réunion, and in 1882 it was announced by the Secretary of State for India that the Governor-General had expressed his opinion that emigration of Coolies to that island must be stopped from the following October, unless the French Government at once made certain concessions specified in his despatch.

The principal concession demanded was that all sugar estates, on which British subjects were employed, in Réunion, should be open to the inspection of duly accredited English officials. This, and other concessions, not having been made by the French Government, all further export of Indian Coolies to French Colonies was suspended. France is now seeking to re-open the traffic. A report, signed by the Minister of Marine and of the Colonies, has lately been addressed to the President of the Republic, enclosing the project of a new decree regulating the re-introduction of Coolie labour. This decree was signed by the President, M. Grevy, in August, 1887, and is the document referred to in M. Waddington's letter to the Anti-Slavery Society (page 3). (Vide also Appendices, A. B.)

In 1882, when it was proposed to introduce Coolies into Queensland, the Society protested against the proposal in the columns of The Times and other journals; and in the Session of 1883, Sir George Campbell, at the request of the Anti-Slavery Society, put a question in the House of Commons with reference to an importation of Cingalese into that Colony. The Colonial Secretary replied that the Department for the Colonies had always looked upon free Chinese labour, and the indentured labour of the Indians, as distinct, and had never made the allowance of the one to depend on that of the other.

In April, 1883, the Anti-Slavery Society learnt that the Chinese Government were sending an envoy to London en route to Brazil, to conclude a treaty for supplying Chinese under contract on a very large scale. On the arrival of the Envoy, Mr. Tong King Sing, the Society waited upon him, and warned him against sanctioning any scheme of indentured labour from China to Brazil. Mr. Tong King
Sing promised to bear in mind the suggestions of the Committee, and proceeded to Brazil. On his return to England he thanked the Anti-Slavery Society for their advice and information, and stated that he would recommend the Chinese Government not to allow the emigration, because he found it impossible to obtain any adequate security for the protection of the labourers when scattered over the distant plantations of the Empire. Although Mr. Tong King Sing was chairman of a Chinese steam-ship company, which would have benefited by the transport of so large a number of emigrants, he did not allow that to override the objections which he saw to the scheme on humanitarian grounds. In this movement the Society received the warm support of the Foreign Office, and was thus mainly instrumental in preventing the Brazilian planters from obtaining what had been justly designated by their own press as "yellow in place of black Slave labour."

The above document, taken from official reports and from the Society's published records, is intended to show that the action of the Anti-Slavery Society, and of those bodies which preceded it, has always been opposed to the introduction of indentured labour into sugar-growing colonies, whether British or foreign. Even in those possessions over which Her Majesty bears rule, the difficulty of obtaining impartial and effective supervision of the labourers employed on plantations is so great, that the Anti-Slavery Society has never found that the safeguards necessary to secure protection to the Coolies can be adequately enforced.

In foreign Colonies, supervision by British officials has almost invariably been peremptorily refused, and so long as this state of things exists, it will be the duty of the Society to oppose every attempt to induce labourers to emigrate to sugar-growing colonies under indenture made in the country to which the emigrant belongs.

By the Order of Her Majesty in Council, of 7th September, 1838, it was strictly provided that no indenture should be valid unless made in the Colony itself, and should in no case exceed the term of one year. (Vide Appendix C.)

Experience has shown that where the safeguards contemplated in the above Order in Council have been relaxed, the labourers have suffered in person—physically, morally, and pecuniarily.
APPENDIX A.

COOLIE LABOUR IN RÉUNION.

The following correspondence, relating to a rumoured re-introduction of Coolies from India into Réunion, has passed between the Anti-Slavery Society and the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G. (vide Times, 23rd Nov.):

"British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society,

10th November, 1887.

To the Right Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., &c., Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

"My Lord,—Reports having reached the Anti-Slavery Society that the question of re-introducing Coolie labour from India into the island of Réunion has been raised by the French Government, I am desired by the Committee to call the attention of your lordship to the abuses which existed under the former system of Coolie labour in that island, and against which it seems difficult, if not impossible, to obtain any secure guarantee in a foreign colony.

"I may be permitted to lay before your lordship what the Society has always considered are the true principles which should govern a system of immigration, especially into countries where Slavery has formerly existed. These principles are:—

"That immigration is properly the object of Government supervision, but not of Government assistance in any pecuniary sense.

"That contracts for labour be only recognised, or enforced, which are made by the labourer with a full knowledge of the work to be done, and in the country where such labour has to be performed.

"That where such immigration is permitted, something like an equality in the respective numbers of both sexes be maintained.'

"In former immigrations into Réunion from India, the contract has invariably been made in India; and we have no statistics showing that the relative proportion between the sexes was ever maintained. The obstacles always thrown in the way of personal investigation of the condition of the Coolies on the plantations by a duly authorised English official have always appeared to the Committee to form an insuperable objection to the introduction of British subjects as labourers in French plantations.

"The Committee have heard, incidentally, that the report presented by Sir Frederick Goldsmid some few years ago (which report was, unfortunately, never published) revealed a deplorable condition of the Coolie population of Réunion. Unless guarantees of a kind hitherto steadfastly refused by the French Government are obtained and rigorously enforced, the Committee fear that a re-introduction of contract labour from India would result in a similar distress to the immigrants; and they would earnestly call upon your lordship to refuse to allow a system of immigration to be renewed which has always been attended with such disastrous results.

"I have the honour to be. your lordship's faithful servant,

CHARLES H. ALLEN, Secretary."

(A memorial in similar terms was also forwarded to the Secretary of State for India).

REPLIES.

"Foreign Office, 21st November, 1887.

Sir,—I am directed by the Marquis of Salisbury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant, protesting against the introduction of Coolie labour into the island of Réunion, and I am to acquaint you that his lordship has caused this communication to be referred to the India Office, as all decisions upon that subject rest exclusively with the Indian Government.—I am, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

T. V. LISTER.

The Secretary, Anti-Slavery Society."
"India Office, Whitehall, S.W., 14th December, 1887.

Sir,—I am directed by the Secretary of State for India in Council to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 9th inst., intimating that the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society are averse to the renewal of emigration from India to Réunion.

In reply, I am desired by Lord Viscount Cross to state that the decision in this matter rests with the Governor-General of India in Council, to whom a copy of your letters to the Foreign Office and this Department will be transmitted.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

J. A. Godley.

To Charles H. Allen, Esq.,

"Secretary, British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society."

Appendix B.

(Translation.)

Report to the President of the French Republic.

27th August, 1887.

Monsieur le Président,—In 1882, on account of complaints made by the English Consul at Réunion as to the manner in which Indians were treated, the Government of India suspended the recruiting of immigrants for this Colony, and declared, after long negotiations, that it would only remove this interdict upon the following conditions, viz.:

1. The expenses of immigration are to be inscribed amongst compulsory expenses.

2. Contracts of re-engagement are not to be made before the expiry of the first Contract, and they must be subject to the ratification or visa of the English Consul.

3. The Consul shall have the right of visiting and inspecting all properties in the Colony upon which the immigrants are employed.

As the first of these reforms would modify the "Senatus-Consulte" of the 4th July, 1866, it could only be carried out by a special law. It does not seem necessary to take so radical a measure. It is equally impossible to accept the pretensions of the Government of the Viceroy upon the third point, for it is contrary to French laws of property.

As for the right of visa, this formality has been practised in Réunion ever since 1877, contracts of re-engagement only being valid after the visa of the Consul. This functionary can always address his observations to the local administration, to whom it appertains to authorise or not, the re-engagement of the labourers.

But as a means of conciliation, the Administration of the Colonies believes that it can obtain from the Indian Government a renewal of immigration, by giving it the assurance—in exchange for conditions which it is impossible to accept—that the immigrants will be thoroughly protected by the French Administration.

It is with this aim that the following project of a Decree has been prepared and adopted in its main provisions by the Council of State, and in which has been inserted every clause necessary to secure the welfare of the labourers.

I have consequently the honour to beg you to invest this project of a Decree with your signature.

I have the honour, &c.,

(Signed) E. Barbey,

Le Ministre de la Marine et des Colonies.

The Decree above alluded to received the signature of the President (M. Jules Grévy) on the 27th August, 1887.
APPENDIX C.

SUMMARY OF THE PRINCIPAL CLAUSES OF THE ORDER IN COUNCIL ON CONTRACT LAWS.

7th September, 1838.

CHAPTER I. Repealed all existing contracts.

CHAPTER II. On the Formation or Entering into of Contracts of Service.

Sec. 1.—No contract of any force unless made within the limits and on the land of the Colony.

Sec. 2.—Nor for more than four weeks, unless reduced to writing, with prescribed formalities.

Sec. 3.—Nor unless it should be signed with the name, or, in case of illiterate persons, with the mark, of each of the contracting parties, in the presence of a Stipendiary Magistrate; nor unless such Stipendiary Magistrate should subscribe the written contract, in attestation of the fact that it was entered into by the parties voluntarily, and with a clear understanding of its meaning and effect.

Sec. 4.—Nor for more than one year.

Sec. 5.—Every such written contract to expire without notice.

Sec. 6.—And to specify, as accurately as might be, the general nature of the employment in which the servant was to be engaged.

Sec. 7.—When for work by the time, it should specify, as precisely as might be, the number of hours of daily labour, and the hours of the day at which such labour was to commence and to be suspended, and to re-commence and to terminate.

Sec. 8.—When remuneration was to be made in kind, the contract must specify, with all practicable precision, the nature and amount and quality of the articles to be supplied to the servant, and the time when, and the places or places at which, such articles were to be delivered.

Sec. 9.—No servant’s wages, if contracted for in kind, or, if contracted for in kind, might be paid in money, or in any other than the stipulated kind, except by the express consent of the servant.

Sec. 10.—Prescribed the formalities of the contract.

CHAPTER III. Related to the apprenticeship of children.

CHAPTER IV. On the Enforcement of Contracts of Service.

Sec. 1.—Stipendiary Magistrates to have exclusive jurisdiction under this Order.

Sec. 2.—Jurisdiction to be exercised in a summary manner.

Sec. 3.—Governor to prepare Forms of Proceeding, to be approved by the chief Civil Judge, and used in all proceedings under the Order.

Sec. 4.—Forms might be revised, amended, or repealed by same authority.

Sec. 5.—No sentence, award, or order made by any Stipendiary Magistrate in the execution of the jurisdiction so vested in him should be liable to be reversed, set aside, appealed from, or questioned by any Court of Justice, in any of the said Colonies, except on the ground of an unlawful assumption of power, or other illegality on the part of such Stipendiary Magistrate; but the same, when consistent with law, should, to all intents and purposes, be binding, final, and conclusive.

Sec. 6.—Magistrate entitled to the same indemnity for acts done under the Order as for all other acts.

Sec. 7.—On complaint and proof made that any servant had neglected to perform his stipulated work, or that he had performed it negligently or improperly, or that by negligence or other improper conduct he had injured the property of his master entrusted to his care, the magistrate might, in his discretion, adjudge the servant to any one or more of the following penalties: that is to say, a pecuniary penalty for the benefit of the master, not exceeding one month’s wages, or the commitment of the servant to prison, with or without hard labour, for any term not exceeding fourteen days, or the dissolution of the contract of service.
Sec. 8.—On complaint preferred and proof made by a servant before any Stipendiary Magistrate, that his master had not paid the servant's wages, or delivered to him the articles stipulated for, or that the articles so delivered were not of the prescribed amount and quality, or that by the negligence or other improper conduct of the master the contract of service had not been faithfully performed, or that the master had ill-used the servant, the Stipendiary Magistrate might make order for the payment of the wages in arrear, or for the delivery of the stipulated articles, or for compensation to be made to the servant for any injury by him sustained by such negligence or improper conduct of the master, or by his non-fulfilment of the contract, or by his ill-usage of the servant; and if such order be not complied with, according to the exigency and tenour thereof, the magistrate should and might issue a warrant for the seizure and sale of the goods of the master, or so much thereof as might be requisite for making such compensation; and, failing any sufficient distress, the magistrate should and might make order for the commitment of the master to prison, for any time not exceeding one month, unless compensation be sooner made. The magistrate might also, in any of the cases aforesaid, if he should see fit, order the contract of service to be cancelled, either in addition to, or in substitution for, any such order as aforesaid.

Sec. 9.—Order not to prevent proceedings before ordinary tribunals, if the Stipendiary Magistrate should decline to entertain any such case, and should see fit to refer the same to the ordinary course of law.

Sec. 10.—If questions arise, magistrate, on application of either party, might arbitrate between them; and his award to be final.