

THE RAJAH OF THE NORTH — PERCIVAL ACLAND DYKE — PRO-CONSUL OF THE BRITISH IN MID NINETEENTH CENTURY NORTHERN SRI LANKA

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The name of Percival Acland Dyke and his period of office as the British proconsul in northern Sri Lanka has become legendary among the Tamils in northern Ceylon.¹ The older folk continued to recall reminiscences that were transmitted from generation to generation through oral tradition while the younger generation keeps gathering bits of information through conversations with older people. Dyke died in 1867, but his name, anecdotes about him, and tales about his administration have lingered enshrined in folk-memory although in recent years new developments have tended to eclipse these tales of old times.

Yet, strangely enough, it is quite difficult to gain adequate authentic information about the personal life of this one-time charismatic character. During his lifetime Dyke had distanced himself from his subjects in North Ceylon over whom he had lorded over as an almost autonomous administrator so much so that no one appears to have come to know him or of him intimately. Nevertheless, from some records of later days, accounts of contemporaries and also from official sources a reconstruction of his personality seems possible although in a limited but fascinating manner.

Percival Acland Dyke was born in 1805. He hailed from the families of the Aclands of Devon, (a region in England famed for seafarers), and from the Dykes of Somersetshire. In eighteenth century England, Sir Thomas Acland had married an heiress - the daughter of Thomas Dyke of Tetton in Somersetshire. From this union was born Percival Acland Dyke who was to devote the greater part of his life to the government of the Jaffna district, and later to the Northern Province of Ceylon.²

Dyke began his career as a midshipman in the British navy and was appointed to the Ceylon Civil Service on 15 May 1822. His entry into the service makes interesting recapitulation. The mother of William Twynam, successor to Dyke as government agent of the Northern Province in Ceylon, (then Mrs. Hawkins) came out to Ceylon in a man-of-war in which Dyke served as a midshipman. Whenever he encountered any trouble with his colleagues, Dyke ran to Mrs. Hawkins for advice and consolation and it is believed that Mrs. Hawkins urged Dyke to remain behind and to serve in Ceylon.

Percival Acland Dyke began life as a colonial administrator during the governorship of Edward Barnes (1824 - 1831)² and was appointed to a substantive position on 18 January, 1824 as an extra assistant in the colonial secretary's office in Colombo, the capital city of Ceylon. On 1 March 1824, Dyke took up duties as assistant collector in Jaffna and by February 1, 1825, he became the fiscal and sitting magistrate over there. From February, 1827 till October, 1827, Dyke worked in Trincomalee as a provincial judge and collector and then he returned again to Jaffna as collector of the district. Thus began the long and remarkable administrative career of Dyke in north Ceylon which came to an end only with his demise at his station. Except for two short terms of interruption (1843 and 1860-61) Dyke had served throughout in north Ceylon.

It is not merely the length of tenure - forty five years of unremitting devoted service or the death, "in harness", but many other facts, characteristic of his service, which made him leave "behind him a memory which will be fondly cherished..... by the natives whom he so impartially and judiciously governed".¹⁰ The writer had chosen the last word and used it advisedly, for Dyke was "in every sense a Rajah in Jaffna, and the Jaffna people invariably treated him as such."¹¹ The government agent was like 'God Almighty' to the ignorant and illiterate inhabitants of those days and they, realising that they were safe in his care, liked him even though his actions as a disciplinarian shocked them and made them regard him with awe. "It is doubted, if there is or ever has been a Government Agent so thoroughly feared."¹²

This is quite correct and no exaggeration, for later on in the times of Government Agent William Twynam conditions became different because there was a people's representative in the legislative council and even though he was nominated and the powers of this council grew while the powers of the government agent consequently became more restrained; the press grew more outspoken while the people too had grown more literate and aware of their rights; and, more importantly, the isolation of the outlying Northern Province had been more or less broken to a good degree with the provision of better facilities for transport and communication. All of this meant a diminution of the government agent's authority. Naturally, successor Twynam became subject to greater constraints and was not so effectively insulated from central authority as Dyke had been. Hence, Twynam was never treated so distantly and respectfully as had been his predecessor, Dyke. In spite of Twynam's apprenticeship to Dyke and his service under Dyke, conditions in Ceylon had changed so much by the latter half of the 19th century. So much so that he too was compelled to change his form of governance over north Ceylon which had by then become a totally Tamil province since Nuwara Kalaviya had been removed and formed the nucleus of the new North Central Province.

It was hence no wonder that even as late as in 1906 a writer described that "Government in those days in Jaffna meant of course Mr. Dyke,....."¹³, when Dyke appeared, even the most forward youth would subside into awe and since "the great man" always travelled in state. A visit to an outlying part of the province was to be dreaded though appreciated and long remembered.¹⁴ Despite his austere ways, the inhabitants of north Ceylon felt that Dyke was their friend for he took an absorbing interest in local affairs and defended the claims of his people against those of others.

Dyke had become so much an household name that Leonard Woolf, ¹⁵who had served in Jaffna as a young civil servant in the early years of the 20th century in referring to Dyke called him the government agent of Jaffna who was known as the rajah of the North for he had ruled over his province as a paternal despot. In forty years Dyke had gone back on leave to England only once and the story current about his overseas visit according to Woolf was that when he got off the train at Victoria and took a four-wheeler the cabman was rude to him and Dyke had got so infuriated at it that he immediately returned to Jaffna and never left it again. The story may sound apocryphal but it serves to illustrate that British administration in the North had at one time become so synonymous with Dyke that he had come to rule authoritatively without opposition or question.

In January, 1843 contrary to his inclinations Dyke was strongly persuaded by Philip Anstruther⁴, his colleague in the Ceylon Civil Service, to act as auditor general and serve in the executive and legislative councils at Colombo. This was indeed high honour and a prestigious position in the colonial government. But before the end of an year, at his own request, Dyke was allowed to relinquish this coveted office and return once more to the Jaffna kachcheri, the local provincial administrative office in north Ceylon. Dyke also served as acting auditor and accountant general and controller of revenue from February 8, 1843. His second period of absence which we will return to later was that on leave between 1 October 1860 and November 1861.

Therefore, in North Ceylon, Dyke served altogether for four years as collector⁵ of Jaffna and for thirty-four years as government agent, Northern Province, till his death while he was on an official circuit at Kopay, two miles off Jaffna on 9 October, 1867. From 1795, when Jaffna had first passed under British control,⁶ and until Dyke took up office as collector, four administrators and twelve collectors had governed Jaffna. Thereafter, till 1867, the administrator of Jaffna and the Northern Province was Dyke: such a long tenure of service in one province is unique in the history of British colonial provincial administration. Coupled together with his earlier preliminary term of office, Dyke had worked altogether for forty years in northern Ceylon.

No one had anticipated Dyke's sudden demise in 1867. "For sometime past alarming accounts had been received of his health, but yet we were inclined to believe that there was no danger from the fact that he was known to attend to business"⁸ Nevertheless, because of some premonition, Dyke had summoned, his principal assistant, William Crofton Twynam⁹ from the district of Mannar which was under Dyke's supervision to be ready to assist him in case his illness got worse. William Twynam succeeded Dyke on September 15, 1869 after a brief interregnum by H. S. O. Russell (October 23, 1867 to September 14, 1869) and administered the Northern Province as its government agent till 1895. Twynam's long career in the assumes as much as that of Dyke, a singular place in the history of colonial provincial governance, and Twynam is yet another British pro-consul of whom the Tamil inhabitants of northern Ceylon still continue to speak of.

A tablet was erected at St. Peter's Church, Colombo in memory of Dyke, by his colleagues in the Ceylon Civil Service. This bears testimony to the respect they entertained for one who for over fortyfive years served with distinction as a member of their exclusive coterie of high level administrators. The final thirty-eight years of Dyke's life was spent as government agent of the far flung outpost of the large and important, Northern Province. During such a renowned career Dyke had earned extravagant praise from several governors for his untiring devotion to the public service, his extraordinary capacity for administration and his singular zeal in promoting the interests of the people over whom he ruled as government agent. He was buried at St. John's Cemetery at Chundikuli in Jaffna. As a sign of respect for Dyke, the kachcheri, the courts, the customs and other establishments in the northern peninsula remained closed for the unusually long period of five days after his death.

While on circuit, visiting districts and divisions, Dyke travelled through the Vanni¹⁶ the outlying jungle area immediately south of Jaffna peninsula, like an eastern potentate in pomp with a retinue of horses, bullocks, carts, palanquins, tents, luggage, carters, coolies, cooks, butlers, torches, messengers and writers. Joseph Grenier,¹⁷ a puisne judge of later times, who when young had seen Dyke, recalls that he was commonly called 'the Rajah of the North'. Grenier, while living in Jaffna, had seen respected local inhabitants slipping hastily into the wide drains in a painfully obsequious manner out of deference to Dyke as the 'rajah' drove through the streets of Jaffna town. Grenier goes on to describe Dyke as a fine type of an English gentleman who looked an aristocrat, every inch of him. The writer adds that the Burgher boys in Jaffna town always doffed their caps to him, and he invariably acknowledged their courtesy with a nod and a kind smile. He ruled the Northern Province firmly, and he certainly was the most successful of all the government agents we ever had in Jaffna,¹⁸ concludes Justice Grenier.

Europeans, either planters or businessmen, who visited Jaffna on no official business often complained of Dyke's hauteur and brusqueness.¹⁹ Available evidence indicates that they had cause to do so. Dyke appeared to have believed in the old Indian theory that "interlopers" were to be avoided; and the conduct of some of these gentlemen it needs to be admitted did make his dislike of their presence greater than it would have been otherwise.²⁰ However, later on, Dyke mellowed and his whole bearing had become more conciliatory. Few of the planting or mercantile community deplored him for his ways since they recognised in him a truly conscientious officer. His character, which made him adopt arrogance towards outsiders appeared to reflect his sense of independence. No wonder that Dyke during his term of office was relentlessly engaged in many a controversy with co-officials whenever he feared that his position or power as provincial pro-consul was in jeopardy.²¹

His intense abiding interest in northern Sri Lanka and its people was made quite manifest when Dyke refused to fill the breach after Philip Anstruther had vacated the post of colonial secretaryship, the highest office a civil servant could have aspired to in Sri Lanka then.²² This obstinate reluctance to accept promotions, which could have secured to Dyke the most coveted position in the Ceylon Civil Service with a large amount of power and patronage and which because of the high esteem held of him in Downing Street²³ could thus have paved the path to even greater colonial honours, was sufficient proof of Dyke's extreme conscientiousness, and his strong sense of responsibility which distinguished him from many another colleague of his day.

His friends were few and among those who had known him for long, the foremost was Philip Anstruther. Anstruther believed that Dyke was fully qualified, to occupy higher positions while his colleagues were equally confident that with his far-seeing views, clear reasoning, and mature judgment, Dyke would have proved invaluable in the higher councils of the colonial government.²⁴ Probably Dyke modestly underestimated himself; but more clearly he loved northern Sri Lanka. That is why when Anstruther, the 'one-armed Rajah', retired after having worked twelve and a half years as colonial secretary Dyke declined to replace him.²⁵ He maintained his retiring disposition, devoting his efforts to a province where he had spent almost all his life, whose interests absorbed his attention and whose wants

he thoroughly understood. No inducements coupled with increased emoluments nor power or patronage could lure him to swerve from the strict line of duty Dyke had chosen to discharge in an outpost of the empire.

Dyke returned home to England only once for the sake of recuperating his health, but he came back to Jaffna even before his time of leave expired. The Colonial Office records this humorously, commenting on Dyke's discomfort in his own homeland, his alienation from it owing to a long period of absence, and his intense attachment to and an importunate desire to return to Jaffna in November 1861.²⁶ But even when he proceeded on furlough on 1 October 1860 Dyke had ensured that only a lieutenant trusted by him would act for him in his absence; thus J. L. Flanderka, a Burgher and Ceylonese²⁷, functioned for the first time in the province as an acting government agent solely because of Dyke's own special and pressing insistence and recommendation. The authorities responded to Dyke's demand thereby even creating an unusual precedent by appointing a Ceylonese to what was then regarded to be an exclusively European seat of authority.

In assessing the service of Dyke in north Ceylon, it needs to be noted that he had administered a province which was among the earliest to be formed and which remained the largest in extent until 1873, when Governor William Gregory (1872 – 1877) reduced its size by dismembering it to create the new North Central Province.

Contemporary accounts of Government Agent Dyke furnish an insight into and an explanation of the unique nature of his provincial administration. Thomas Skinner,²⁸ who usually had little good to say of government agents and their assistants, in a memorandum which was tabled before a Select Committee of the House of Commons, appointed soon after the rebellion of 1848,²⁹ stated that; "In the case of the Northern Province we have an example of the extent to which the good of an agent's influence may be made to every class and portion of a province; how the general improvement and good order of a people may be made to progress by the influence of one individual....."³⁰ This testimony came from an official with whom Dyke had waged a "running battle" disputing the former's authority over the management of the construction of public works undertaken within the Northern Province.³¹

Neither could later writers forget the image that Dyke had carved out for himself as an exceptional administrator. One of them, describing his tenure of service, spoke of it as the inauguration of "a memorable administration" and that it was most unique among provincial administrations, as it had lasted for nearly forty years and earned for Dyke the title of 'Rajah of the North'.³²

That Dyke really merited such distinctive recognition and special reference is amply demonstrated by his record of work. The Ceylon Civil Service never attracted the best of talent. Compared with the service in India the prospects of promotion in Ceylon were poorer and salaries lower; and naturally a rare administrator like Dyke was outstanding. A few examples of his singular activity alone testify to the exceptional quality of this colonial civil servant.

When the civil service in Ceylon had deteriorated following the introduction of the Colebrooke-Cameron reforms,³³ and the service was at a low ebb, the government nominated the two leading members of the service to investigate comprehensively the causes for this decline in the quality of the service and to suggest measures for improvement. These two officials, Philip Anstruther and Percival Acland Dyke, concluded in their report that the principal causes which accounted for the deterioration of the service could be discovered in the practice of promotion according to seniority and not merit; in the payment of poor salaries; in the abolition of pensions; and in the abandonment of the rule that promotions should be made from within the service which naturally had contributed towards a demoralisation among the existing the personnel³⁴ who feared that interlopers could supersede them. The colonial secretary corroborated these views.³⁵ Anstruther and Dyke had indeed made an accurate diagnosis, and following the introduction of the reforms of 1845³⁶, pensions were restored; salaries were increased; the principle of an exclusive civil service was accepted and merit instead of seniority was made the basis of promotion. Thus, all the defects discovered by Anstruther and Dyke were remedied. The appointment of Dyke to this fact-finding committee was a tribute to his singular knowledge and ability, and the acceptance of the recommendations again testifies to his exceptional intelligence and understanding.

The head of the colony, the Governor was one of the best assessors of provincial administration. Henry Ward, (1855 – 1860), one of the better governors of nineteenth century Ceylon, made a comparative estimate of the management of the Eastern with that of Northern Province;³⁷ both were predominantly Tamil areas. In the Eastern Province, a combination of the judicial and revenue duties had led to neglect and corruption. Consequently, the administration had become lax and officials of the *kachcheri* and headmen had done whatever they liked to do. The area had not been inspected for thirty years, and as a result, fraud and maladministration had taken place.

On the other hand, Governor Henry Ward observed that Government Agent Dyke's energetic and efficient management of the Northern Province was an example of the achievements of an active official. It really gratified the governor, while he was on circuit, to discover "proofs, among all classes of the warm and grateful sense expressed by all classes of the benefits they enjoyed under British rule."³⁸ It was clear that the civil servants who most impressed the local inhabitants as public figures happened to be martinets such as Dyke. It was known that Dyke voluntarily spent the greater part of his term of service in Jaffna, even though he had to suffer financially. He confessed, "I was and continue to be so much attached",³⁹ to the Northern province.

Government Agent Dyke's authoritarianism was, however, tolerated for more than one reason. Dyke devoted his remarkable abilities to the task of increasing the prosperity of his province with commendable success. He was strictly conscientious, travelling on circuit twice a year through all parts of the province, and prided himself on the tents in which he lived while working on such tours: "I have an establishment of tents and I believe I am the only Agent that has. On the adjoining continent of India such provision is obligatory and liberal allowances are made for it."⁴⁰

Government Agent Dyke could exercise untrammelled power within his province because of the remoteness of Jaffna from Colombo, the capital city of Ceylon. Distance prevented effective central office supervision and this gave Dyke additional scope to exercise authority in north Ceylon as he wanted to: a journey by road from Jaffna was like a safari in those days and travel to Colombo was easier by sea.⁴¹ It was no wonder then that Dyke came to be called 'King Dyke' since he could from his distant outpost conduct, as he indeed did, British rule at its best and it was no surprise his name became a household one.

Nevertheless, Dyke did have his own faults: "That he was unbending to a fault- even obstinate - we are constrained to confess: that he seldom or never deserted a hobby, and that he frequently missed golden opportunities, we admit: but the enterprise he exhibited himself and to which he stimulated others, the interest in native welfare, the open hearted charity he displayed threw all these faults into the shade."⁴² In the 1870s, Governor Sir William Henry Gregory referred to this unusual government agent describing his tenure of service as a long and patriarchal administration which ended with his death in his tent at Kopay. Years after, people spoke respectfully of him as Dyke Esqr., illustrating, how respected Dyke was even after death.⁴³

Folk rumour perpetuates an account of Dyke having lived with a mistress in the almost desolate and distant northern outpost of Ceylon. Naganatha *adigar* (b. 1851), had informed E. W. Perera that he had known Dyke, who had lived in Jaffna and died in Kopay, who though not married had maintained a Tamil mistress, living and travelling with palanquins, attendants and other accoutrements of pomp.⁴⁴ This could well have been true and shows that he had not been entirely a '*brahmachari*' type of bureaucrat. Another interesting facet of his little known personal life was that he bequeathed his lavishly built private residence along with its well provided park, known even today as "Old Park", to his successors in office to be occupied free of rent.⁴⁵ The government agent, Jaffna, lives even today free of rent in an old-world-style mansion on the benevolence of Dyke.

A critical recount demonstrates that Dyke's administration in North Ceylon illustrated his belief that the performance of one's duty was something intrinsically good in itself. He performed his work in his own way resenting encroachment on his authority. He quarrelled with the postmaster general and the commissioner of roads,⁴⁶ heads of departments at the centre, whenever their actions impinged on his authority as provincial deputy postmaster general or as chairman of the provincial and district road committees. Independent, imbued with a sense of detachment, and possessing a questioning spirit, Dyke was unwilling to accept without investigation or scrutiny whatever the centre prescribed for his province; he was at odds with the introduction of village councils into the Tamil areas even though the governor had desired it: Dyke wanted to be decision - maker in his domain.

Dyke was responsible not to the people over whom he wielded authority but to the governor and the secretary of state and the Parliament in Westminster. Hence he used his authority in the light of what he believed to be correct; as the man on the spot Dyke knew best what was tactically or strategically prudent for his province. He believed that the people of the Northern Province needed guardianship. Naturally, he emphasised equal

justice for all, peace, a better economy and a healthier society. As a guardian, Dyke tended to be conservative, was suspicious of innovations and seldom encouraged sudden or radical change within his province. It was no wonder then that he opposed some of the changes proposed by governors from the administrative capital of the colony who were remote from experience of his own province.

Throughout his management of north Ceylon, Dyke extended care and protection to the subjects of his province; but not liberty. He emulated the old system of direct human rule of one man supplanting the authoritarian rule of a past potentate; in his lonely isolated province he was more a monarch as the proconsul of the British rulers on the spot. But Dyke's despotism was tempered by a paternal benevolent attitude; he gave people what was good for them instead of what they wanted. Dyke's record as an administrator shows that he was intelligent and industrious with a high sense of public duty and a desire to promote the weal of his wards. Authority was wielded in the interest of maintaining order, tranquillity and the common good; and his overriding concern was to be "minutely just, inflexibly upright".

According to the practice of the time, the British sovereign's authority had been delegated to the colonial governor who in turn had delegated his authority to their provincial administrator, Dyke. Dyke himself delegated the authority under his direction and control to his assistant agents in districts like Mannar, Vavuniya and Nuwara Kalaviya districts and to headmen in the different divisions to get through the day's work but he alone accepted responsibility for whatever was done. This practice enabled economy in the number of supervisory and managerial officials utilised, particularly from the superior civil service, and also was least troublesome to an alien administration, foreign to the ways of a colony.

Although Percival Acland Dyke began his administrative career as an amateur despot-expert in nothing or everything – answerable mainly to himself, and alien to the province he governed, he gradually transformed himself into a seasoned civil servant, becoming indigenous to his area, and demonstrated throughout his administration a feeling that he was answerable for his people although still not to them. Therefore, Dyke's principal task was to preserve law and order; to keep chaos at bay, and to administer with justice to everyone.

Yet within the limits available to a provincial administrator of a British crown colony Dyke developed the economy of the province in regard to agriculture, he stimulated industry in regard to salt production and in addition initiated social improvements. The type of management under Dyke provided for an effective and economic control of a province in a British crown colony which did not have settler subjects as in Australia or Canada; it was a form of economical imperialism.

As the principal representative of the central government, Dyke was the pivot of British colonial administration in the large Northern Province of Ceylon. He was an "omnicompetent generalist" at a time when the British governed the crown colony of Ceylon mainly through civil servants: all authority was concentrated in the hand of the British civil

servant. The governor was usually a political appointee but the other functionaries were civil servants; the chief secretary (later the colonial secretary) the government agents (earlier collectors) and the assistant agents. Dyke was not only a collector of revenue but he was also a judicial officer and thus he discharged two of the most important functions of provincial administration during the early years of British rule in an Asian crown colony. In the eyes of the British subjects of North Ceylon real power lay with Dyke, and he was the undisputed and unchallenged sole executive as far as they were concerned.

REFERENCES

1. During the nineteenth century since Sri Lanka was called Ceylon the country will be referred to as Ceylon throughout.
2. For an account of Dyke and his background, see, J. P. Lewis, *List of Inscriptions on Tombstones and Monuments in Ceylon*, Colombo, 1913, pp. X, 21, 233–235.
3. Mary Cecilia Twynam, wife of Thomas Holloway Twynam, master attendant at Trincomalee, 1822 and at Galle, 1825. She was earlier widow of Lieutenant Hawkins of the Royal Navy. She came to Ceylon in a man-of-war in which Dyke, (then a “little boy”) was a midshipman. See, J. P. Lewis, *ibid.*, pp. 171–172.
4. Philip Anstruther was colonial secretary, the highest administrative official below the rank of governor.
Sir Edward Barnes is known as a great road-builder in colonial Ceylon.
5. At the beginning of British rule there was an assistant superintendent of revenue for Jaffna. Later, the title of the official was the collector of revenue. But there was no consistency in the use of a designation in the early years for the administrator was subsequently called the agent of revenue and commerce. The designation, collector of revenue, came into use again in 1807 and was replaced by that of government agent (GA), on October 1, 1833 and is used even today. see C. Rasanayagam. *The British Period of The History of Jaffna* Colombo, 1934, pp. 27–28 and 29–30.
6. About the British control of Jaffna, see de Silva, Colvin R. *Ceylon Under the British Occupation, 1795–1833*, Volume One Colombo, 1953 p. 34.
7. For the designations and names and periods of service of these administrators and collectors, see, C. Rasanayagam, *op.cit* pp. 27–28.
8. Lewis, J. P., *op. cit.*, pp. 233–235.
9. William Crofton Twynam, later government agent Northern Province was the son of T. H. Twynam and the first Mrs. Twynam, see J. P. Lewis *op. cit.*, pp. 171–172, 233–235.

10. J. P. Lewis, *ibid.* pp. 233-235.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*
13. J. M. Hensman, in *St. John's College Magazine*, 1906 Jaffna, 1906 quoted by J. P. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
14. J. P. Lewis, *ibid.* pp. 233-235.
15. Leonard Woolf, *Growing*, London, 1961, pp. 105-247.
16. John H. Martyn, *Notes on Jaffna—Chronological, Historical and Geographical etc., with an appendix*. Tellipalai, 1923, p. 256; also *Jaffna Catholic Guardian*, March 3, 1894, Jaffna, 1894.
17. Joseph K. C. Grenier, *Leaves from my life Ceylon*, 1923, p. 6.
18. *ibid.*
19. Lewis, J. P. *op. cit.*, pp. 233-235.
20. *ibid.*
21. Dyke's dispute with Thomas Skinner, commissioner of public works, Ceylon and with the Government when the salary of the government agent, Northern Province, was reduced are but two examples to illustrate this trait. See discussions in the pages that follow.
22. J. P. Lewis, *op. cit.* pp. 233-235.
23. *ibid.*
24. *ibid.*
25. Aastruther was thus described in view of his strict and able supervision of the administration.
26. The writer, while studying the despatches relating to the period 1872-1877 in Ceylon at the Public Record Office, London, came across a minute to this effect made by a colonial office official on a despatch from Sir William Gregory to the secretary of state for the colonies.

27. Sri Lanka National Archives (SLNA) 20/891 No. 284, letter of Colonial Secretary to J. L. Flanderka, 18.12.1860: also J. H. Martyn, *op. cit.*, p. 207.
28. Thomas Skinner, *Fifty Years in Ceylon*, London, 1891, p. 232.
29. For an account of this rebellion see, *University of Ceylon, History of Ceylon*, Volume Three, Colombo, 1973, pp. 252–258.
30. Skinner, Thomas, *op. cit.*, p. 232.
31. See the pages that follow for a discussion of this conflict.
32. John H., Martyn, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
33. For a discussion of this see, K. M. de Silva, *Social Policy and Missionary Organisations in Ceylon, 1840–1855* London, 1965 p. 14.
34. See an account of this in Lennox A. Mills, *Ceylon under British Rule, 1796–1932*, London, 1964) p. 78 and n. 3., also, J. R. Toussaint, *Annals of the Ceylon Civil Service* Colombo, 1935, p. 12.
35. J. R. Toussaint, *ibid.* pp. 12–13. The colonial secretary was Sir Emerson Tennent.
36. Lennox A. Mills, *op. cit.*, pp. 81–82, 85–87,
37. See Sir. H. G. Ward, *Speeches and Minutes, 1855–1865* Colombo, 1864 p. 48.
38. *Ibid.*
39. E. F. C. Ludowyk, *The Modern History of Ceylon*, x966 pp. 105–107.
40. *Ibid.*
41. *Ibid.*
42. J. R. Toussaint. *op. cit.*, 80–83.
43. W. Gregory, *Autobiography* ed. Lady Gregory, London, 1994, p. 294.
44. See note made by E. W. Perera in his private papers on 4 July 1944, in the possession, of James T. Rutnam of Colombo.
45. The writer was informed of this by Wimal Amarasekera, one time government agent Jaffna.

46. For details of the controversy with the postmaster general see for example SLNA 6 832- No. 147- Government Agent to Colonial Secretary, 28 May 1845. Dyke submits copies of the correspondence between him and the postmaster general George Lee, who by his letter of 22 May 1845 had alleged that Dyke's letters were discourteous and that Dyke probably signed, without reading, letters prepared by his clerk. He added "official correspondence loses nothing of its effect, by being conducted in courteous languages." But Dyke denied this discourtesy and wanted the Colonial Secretary to judge the tone of his letters. There is a whole lot of letters from 1839 onwards upto the death of Dyke to the colonial secretary and from Thomas Skinner, the commissioner of roads to the colonial secretary centred around their quarrel See for example SLNA - 7/506-No. 78, Colonial Secretary to Government Agent 17 October 1839; also 7/545-No. 317/1 Colonial Secretary to Government Agent 27 November 1841; 20/145-421 No. 169 Government Agent to Colonial Secretary 23 May 1862; 20/1435-n87 Nos 191 and 106, Colonial Secretary to Government Agent 31 July 1862 and 4 August 1862 and enclosures. The letters between these two senior officials were so many and the conflict so protracted that at one stage Edward Cardwell wrote from the office of the secretary of state that the controversy may be terminated "without having produced any want of cordiality between yourself (Dyke) and an officer (Skinner) to whom the Colony is so much indebted" see SLNA 20/989 -293 No 36 Colonial Secretary to Government Agent 3 March 1866 and enclosure Cardwell to H. G. R. Robinson, Governor, 3 March 1866.