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TAMIL NADU ARCHIVES

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU

Public — DEPARTMENT

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GOVERNMENT OF MADRAS.
PUBLIC DEPARTMENT.

12th April 1877, No. 490.

Emigration.

Read the following papers:—

No. 69. *Despatch from the Most Honorable the Secretary of State for India.*

Public.

INDIA OFFICE, LONDON,
28th February 1877.

No. 3.

MY LORD DUKE,—In compliance with a request preferred by Her Majesty's Consul at Réunion, I forward herewith to your Grace in Council copy of the general report on the Colony drawn up by that officer in connection with Indian immigration, at the instance of the Government of India.

I have, &c.,
SALISBURY.

His Excellency the Right Honorable
The Governor in Council, Fort St. George.

No. 37

Consul Perry to the Earl of Derby —(Received November 7.)

(No. 46. Consular.)

My Lord,

Réunion, October 7, 1876

Herewith I have the honor to transmit to your Lordship the General Report on Immigration required of me by the India Office, wherein I endeavour to show what laws have been drawn up for the protection of Her Majesty's Indian subjects in this Colony, and what guarantees are offered by the administration that the rights of the coolies shall be secured to them. This is a matter of interest, as the one stereotyped answer of the Réunion Government to all questions or remonstrances concerning the unsatisfactory treatment of our coolies is, that the protection afforded by these laws is all that could be desired or wished for, and much more than is granted to their own people.

The authorities, however, overlook the fact that these laws are of no possible advantage to the Indian immigrants, since their execution is not only not enforced, but evaded in every conceivable way by the very agents appointed to insure their fulfillment. As also that the law of engagement does not concern the colored creoles, they being governed by the "droit commun," and consequently free to work or not as they think fit. Whereas the coolies in this country are bondsmen in every sense of the word.

The greater experience I gain of the principles by which the Colonists are governed, the less hope I see for the Indian in the future; unless, indeed, the Colonists are made to feel their absolute dependence on the Indian Government for their labor supply and their responsibilities towards that Government for the well-being of many thousands of its people.

Over 1,000 Indians have been introduced into Réunion this year, and I regret exceedingly to state that more are expected.

If my report should meet with your Lordship's approbation, and be considered of sufficient use to merit reproduction in print, I would respectfully beg your Lordship to cause copies of it to be supplied to the Governor of Madras and Her Majesty's Consul at Noumea, New Caledonia.

I would also venture to request your Lordship that I myself might be furnished with a copy to serve as a book of reference.

I have, &c.

(Signed) GERALD RAOUL PERRY

ENCLOSURE IN No. 38.

Report by Consul Perry on Indian Immigration in the Island of Réunion, 1876.

The Island of Réunion is situated in the Indian Ocean. Its latitude, taken at the northern extremity is $20^{\circ} 51' 34''$; its longitude, to the east of the meridian of Paris is $63^{\circ} 10'$. Its

Geographical description of Colony.

greatest length is 62 kilom., its greatest breadth 44 kilom., and its circumference 213 kilom. Its form is that of a tortoise.

The liquid and solid substances which the volcanoes have thrown up at various periods have formed the mass of mountains which traverse the island in all its length. The highest of these mountains is the Piton des Neiges which has an elevation of 3,069 mètres; after this comes the Grand Bénard, 2,970 mètres, the Salazes, which have 2,400 mètres; the Cimandel which has 2,284; and the Piton des Fournaises 2,625. One only of these volcanoes is still active.

In the centre of these volcanic mountains are found sources of mineral waters produced by the discharge of gas and vapour which accompany and follow volcanic eruptions.

Those that are found near the Piton des Neiges, at the foot of Gros Morne, contain muriate of lime, carbonate of soda, and lime. The sources which exist at Salazie are composed of carbolic acid, carbonate of lime, magnesia, and sulphate of soda. Those of Cilaos, in the District of St. Louis, are nearly of the same nature as the waters of Volvy, but of less strength. Considerable chalybeate deposits and hot springs exist in the neighbourhood of Cilaos. At the Rivière des Galets, a sulphurous spring has been discovered.

The melted lava thrown up by the volcanoes has formed between the mountains, by which the island is intersected, deep, steep ravines, through which the waters from the heights flow to the sea. The mountains take generally from the sea-coast, and the table-lands are situated in the interior of the island.

The Plaines des Cafres Sables, Palmistes and Cilaos are in the east. On the north lie the Plaines des Chicots and Fougères d'Alouches, and below them that of Trois-Etangs.

These table-lands are covered with forests surrounded by almost inaccessible cliffs, and differ in height as well as in extent. They are uncultivated.

The soil is formed from substances brought up by the volcanoes. The discharge of gas, the decomposition of stones, and the detritus of plants contribute to produce a soil excessively fertile. At first it gave birth to mosses and ferns, and in the course of centuries produced large trees, such as palm, nutte, tucamaka, benjoin, and the bois de fer.

The so-called rivers of the island, none of which are navigable, are in reality only brooks, which become torrents in the rainy season. Eight are reckoned in the windward, and three in the leeward district.

The island is divided into three zones. The highest is the seat of wind, rain, and clouds. Mosses and some ferns only are found here. Lower down a few stunted trees appear.

In the second zone palm and other large trees are met with.

The third zone is under cultivation, but the land in many places is said to be exhausted.

The chain of mountains which traverse the island from north to south, naturally divides it into two parts, viz., windward and leeward.

Prevailing winds.

The prevailing winds are from the east and south-east. There are other winds peculiar to the western coast.

The hurricanes, so frequent in these regions, travel generally like the prevailing winds, from the east, and from the south-east.

Roadsteads.

There are no harbours in this island; only rough and dangerous roadsteads, affording no shelter to vessels from wind or storm.

The most frequented are those of St. Denis, St. Pierre, St. Benoit, St. Paul, and Ste. Suzanne.

The highest temperature of Réunion, at the north-eastern extremity, is $27^{\circ} 44'$ Reamuir, or $34^{\circ} 50'$ centigrade; and the minimum is $12^{\circ} 4'$ Reamuir, or $15^{\circ} 5'$ centigrade.

Temperature.

The mean number of days of wind is, in the east, 309, and in the west, 56.

The year is divided into two seasons of six months each. The dry season, which is the winter of the country, and the rainy season, which is the summer, or "hivernage."

Seasons.

The summer season may be said to begin on the 1st of November, and ends on the 30th of April. During this season the sea is generally smooth, but at the same time it is the period of hurricanes and "ras-de-marée."

Summer or rainy season.

The heat reaches its greatest degree of elevation, and the quantity of water which falls from the sky is nine-tenths of what falls during the whole year.

In the dry season the winds blow from the south-east and south-south-east, with greater force.

Climate.

thermometer its minimum. A heavy swell or sea frequently breaks in the coasts, and often interrupts the communication with the ships in the roadstead. It is, however, the safest season for traders.

From the formation of the island, it results that the farther one goes from the sea-shore the fresher becomes the temperature, the more frequent the rains and the heavier the night dews, and the climate sensibly modifies at the distance of 5 or 6 miles from the shore.

Réunion at one time had a reputation for salubrity, whereas now it can no longer claim an advantage over other tropical countries, for although the yellow fever does not prevail here its place is well supplied by a malignant typhoid, and other fevers which carry off their victims in an equally short space of time.

Insalubrity of climate.

Chronological table of hurricanes.

1800.	February 7.	Hurricane.
1806.	February 4.	Do.
1806.	March 11.	Do.
1807.	March 14.	Do.
1814.	April 19.	Do.
1815.	February 6.	Do.
1815.	February 13.	Do.
1817.	February 14.	Do.
1818.	March 1.	Do.
1819.	January 25.	Do.
1823.	March 5.	Do.
1824.	February 26.	Hurricane, which lasted 24 hours; eleven vessels are thrown upon the coast of St. Denis.

I shall now give a chronological table of hurricanes which have occurred since 1800, taken from the records of the Academy of Sciences:—

1829. February 10. Hurricane. Fifteen vessels, from those which stood out to sea, disappeared.
1830. January 15. Do. Three vessels on the coast of Ste. Marie lost.
1830. March 27. Do.
1830. April 3 and 4. Do.
1832. March 4. Do.
1836. March 5. Do.
1844. February 21. Do.
1845. March 8. Do.
1847. February 7 and 8. Hurricane, which lasted 36 hours.
1848. March 8. Hurricane.
1850. March 2. Do.
1851. May 25. Do.
1852. Hurricane, which lasted 20 hours.
1858. January 16. Hurricane, lasted 10 hours.
1859. March 10. Do.
1860. February 25. Do., which lasted 24 hours. Eight vessels left St. Denis and were lost on the coast of Madagascar; three others, of heavy tonnage, were never heard of again.
1861. February 15 and 17. Hurricane, which lasted 48 hours.
1863. February 2. Hurricane, which lasted 24 hours, with frightful sea. Ten vessels were lost with all on board, and four others returned in such a disabled state as to necessitate their being condemned.
1868. March 12 and 13. Hurricane.
1871. January 5 and 6. Do.
1872. February 16. Do.
1873. Hurricane.
1874. March 28. Hurricane. The quantity of rain which fell was excessive. All the ravines and rivers overflowed, and great damage and loss were occasioned thereby.

The Island of Réunion is a producing country, yielding sugar, coffee, cloves, cacao, tobacco, and spices. For home consumption maize, imbrevides, beans, and Cape peas (pois du Cap),

maniac, songes, potatoes, vegetables, &c., are raised.

The sugar-cane is alleged to have been brought here from Mauritius in the last century.

A fermented liquor called "Frangourin" was first made from it, which was afterwards converted into "arrak," and subsequently into sugar. The Madagascar cane has never been employed with advantage in this Colony. There was another variety known as the "Canne du pays," introduced from the West Indies. It was cultivated until the manufacture of arrak and sugar began.

The Batavia cane (white, yellow, or green) is the most cultivated since 1807. It was originally brought from Otaheite, and is of the best quality. There are three other varieties known under the name of Batavia, because they flower like the preceding one. This cane is red, less juicy, and yields but a small quantity of sugar.

The Otaheite cane is red, juicy, grows tall, and yields well. Its sugar is generally colored.

When, in 1846 and 1847, a disease till then unknown attacked the white cane of Batavia, the products of this species were diminished by one-third, one-fourth, and very often completely destroyed.

The cane called Otaheite was then resorted to for cultivation, but it did not thrive.

The "Diard" cane owes its name to a French physician of Batavia, who, on his way to France, introduced into Réunion nine species of the most valued canes of the former island, but of these nine species three only seem to have been retained.

It was only towards the year 1820 that the sugar plantations acquired any importance.

In order to extract sugar, mills of every variety were used at first. Steam-power was afterwards introduced, which increased the prosperity of the country.

In this same year of 1820, when only two steam mills were in operation, 4,541,000 kilog of sugar were produced, representing a value of 2,951,650 fr.

In 1821, 4,926,000 kilog. were obtained, estimated at 3,201,900 francs.

In 1823, 6,951,000 kilog.

In 1826, 10,000,000 kilog.

In 1827, 15,000,000 kilog.

The development given to this cultivation increased the sugar crops of the years from 1834 to 1837 by an average of 25,620,000 kilog.

	Kilog.
In 1841	30,606,909
In 1844	33,066,533

Of the value of 17,691,793 francs.

Previous to the year 1867, the island produced more than 60,000 tons of sugar annually. Since then this produce has been reduced by droughts, hurricanes, and the exhaustion of the land to an average of from 30,000 to 35,000 tons yearly, or about one-half the amount of former years, in spite of greater care having been given to its cultivation.

The following is the extent and approximate value of lands devoted to the cultivation of the sugar-cane.

In 1845 it covered in area of 23,584 hectares, valued at 43,742,821 fr. (One hectare is equal to 2.4712 English acres).

On the 31st December 1847, there existed in the Colony 108 sugar estates, with their buildings and working materials to the value of 11,495,670 fr.; 122 mills, of which 98 were worked by steam, 20 by water, 1 by air, and 3 by horse-power.

There were then 27,142 slaves employed in the cultivation of the cane.

1874.—There are now 46,271 hectares under cultivation, producing—

	Kilog.
Sugar, in its rough state	38,024,602
Refined sugar	1,219,625
	Litres.
Syrup and molasses	4,293,380
Tafia or rum	1,262,575
	Francs.
To the gross value of	21,823,491
Approximate amount of expenses of cultivation	14,548,994
Nett Value	7,274,497

I have thought it advisable to enlarge upon the different products of sugar-cane, as it is the chief staple of the Island of Réunion.

Coffee formed for a long time the principal revenue of the Colony. The excellence of its berry has obtained for it a well-deserved reputation in the European markets. Since the extended cultivation of the sugar-cane, its produce has only been considered as secondary.

There are several varieties of coffee trees in the island. The Le Roy coffee, which was introduced some fifty years ago from the coast of Africa, does not possess all the qualities which

distinguished the coffee of Arabia, and is less delicate in flavor. Since 1851, the revenue from coffee has steadily increased.

Extent of cultivation in 1874.

The number of hectares under cultivation is, 4,163.

Number of rural plantations, 380.

Quantity produced, 305,560 kilog.

Gross value

554,224

Approximate amount of expenses of cultivation

282,112

Nett value

282,112

Cacao.

Cacao is also raised in small quantities, two hectares only being under cultivation.

1874. Quantity produced, 450 kilog.

Vanilla.

For several years serious attention has been paid to the cultivation of vanilla, which was introduced by cuttings brought from Mexico.

Number of hectares under cultivation, 671.

Quantity produced, 50,695 kilog.

Extent of cultivation in 1874.

Gross value

7,604,250

Approximate amount of the expenses of cultivation

1,267,375

Nett value

6,336,875

Cloves.

The cloves plant was imported from Molucca Islands in 1772.

The greater part of the planters have destroyed their clove plantations (owing to the cheapness of the commodity) to make way for the sugar-cane.

Number of hectares under cultivation, 72.

Quantity produced, 8,300 kilog.

Extent of cultivation in 1874.

Gross value

4,150

Nett value

2,767

Tobacco was the first staple cultivated in this Colony. The small proprietors possessed plantations which at first yielded abundantly

but the system of excise, license, and rent-

charge, which came later, and the power given to persons to send for tobacco from foreign countries, soon diminished this production. Its cultivation to-day is free.

Number of hectares under cultivation, 702.

Quantity produced, 513,265 kilogs.

Extent of cultivation in 1874.

Gross value

513,265

Nett value

307,959

Approximate amount of expenses of cultivation

205,306

Total number of hectares under cultivation in Réunion

79,533

1874.
Distribution of land
in Réunion, culti-
vated and unculti-
vated.

Plains

18,749

Woods and forests

42,393

Uncultivated lands

57,277

General Total

197,952

Yielding a nett value of 13,013,064 francs.

Number of rural plantations	8,115
Number of workmen employed on the plantations	65,915
Francs.	
Gross value	33,485,759
Nett value	16,272,464
Value of land under cultivation	85,253,400
Value of buildings and working materials.. .. .	27,973,500
Value of beasts of burden and cattle	10,834,675
General Total	124,061,579
1875. Value of land under cultivation	113,503,200
Value of buildings, &c.	34,256,000
Value of beasts of burden	11,027,895
Total	158,787,095

Principal towns.

The principal towns of the Island are—
St. Denis, the seat of Government, St. Pierre, and St. Paul. The rest are mere villages.
Trade is chiefly concentrated in St. Denis, where are to be found all the most inferior articles purchaseable in France, designated here

Trade.

“Pacotille,” and which are retailed at preposterously high prices.

The market or bazaar is inferior to any I have ever visited in a town of the size of St. Denis. Were it not for the industry of our coolies—a

Market.

small number of whom turn their attention to market gardening—there would be nothing cultivated is the potato.

The island is devoid of oranges or lemons, and, so to speak, of fruit generally, except in small quantities, although the climate in the different altitudes is favorable to the production of fruits of all sorts.

Absence of fruit.

Beef and mutton (which latter article is generally represented by old goat) is exorbitantly dear, and nine times out of ten unfit for consumption.

Beef, &c.

The only eatable portion of the beef, viz., the fillet, costing as much as 1s. 8d. per lb.

Poultry.

Fowls, ducks, and turkeys, although produced in large quantities, are high-priced, and very inferior in quality.

Game.

No game of any kind is procurable.

Fish abounds, but is not always to be obtained on account of the heavy sea and surf. The price is in proportion to everything else.

Fish

Historical sketch of Bourbon.

The island was discovered as far back as 1513 by the Portuguese, who called it first Santa Apollonia, and afterwards Mascareignas.

It was taken possession of by the French for the first time in 1638, and again in 1642, in the name of Louis XIII, and finally in 1671, and was called Bourbon.

The French retained possession of the island until 1810, when it was surrendered to the English, who held it until the Peace of 1814.

Since that period it has continued a French Possession.

The Colony, at its outset, was conceded to the French East India Company, who governed it until 1764, when the island was given up to the King of France.

The first settlers were French refugees or invalids from Madagascar (where France, previous to her taking possession of Bourbon, had a Colony or Settlement), and some Malagash slaves, men and women, whom the settlers brought with them.

Afterwards, they were joined by a great number of pirates, considered, at that time, with just reason, the scourge of the Indian Ocean.

The attention of these first inhabitants having been turned towards the cultivation of the land, and their essays in that direction having been found highly satisfactory, they soon experienced the want of strong able-bodied men, accustomed to agricultural labor under the scorching sun of the tropics, and they looked to Africa and Madagascar for their supply. Hence the origin of the Slave Trade and slavery in those unfortunate regions.

The slaves were brought to the island in vessels belonging to the French East India Company, who, besides other monopolies, reserved to themselves that of the Slave Trade in particular, and this traffic, except during the short space of the English occupation, was allowed and countenanced until 1832, when it was prohibited.

Slavery, although in a modified form, if compared to what it was before, continued until 1848, when it was abolished by law, but in reality it has never ceased, as up to the present day, notwithstanding the existence of the Convention of 1861, it has been carried on with the approbation of the French authorities.

From this brief historical sketch, it is easy to trace out the origin of the several sections of the population of the island, which consists of the following classes:—

Origin of the several sections of population.

First section.

Second section.

1. The European and creole whites of French extraction.

2. The colored creoles, who are the issue of the connections of the former with the slaves or with the

First category, of whom composed.

Second category, of whom composed.

Third category, of whom composed.

Those of the first category, are chiefly planters, the higher officials, merchants, shopkeepers, medical men, the gendarmerie, and the troops.

Those of the second category are to be met with in every class of society, from the highest to the lowest.

Those of the third category are the agricultural laborers, servants, &c.

As regards the first-class, enumerated above, it is to be regretted that the planters and merchants are so illiberal and opposed to all progress, and that the authorities are not chosen from a superior order of men, whose aim would be the improvement and welfare of the Colony, rather than their own aggrandizement, for I attribute the demoralization and apathy which exists in this Colony to the long-continued negligence and weakness of the administration.

Independently of this, the whole of this class may be said to form a network of family relationships.

The second and most numerous class, the colored creoles, are to a still greater extent devoid of all moral feeling, and little regard for truth.

Want of veracity and moral feeling among colored creoles. As a class, they are averse to work, and the lower orders of this body consider it derogatory to soil their hands with agricultural labor, and prefer vice and idleness to gaining an honest livelihood.

Their idle habits.

Inferior quality of work.

Some of them are mechanics by trade, but their sole object is to extort the highest possible price for the most inferior work.

The third or immigrant class is scarcely removed from a position of slavery, owing to the disorganization of the Immigration Department, which is rotten to the core, and the lax administration of justice.

Unsatisfactory condition of immigrant class.

The negro is allowed to remain in a semi-barbarous state, and the coolie is treated as if he were a beast of burthen.

The Chinese (who are few in number) are principally petty traders and keepers of grog-shops.

Census.

The Census for 1875 shows the following population:—

White and free population	115,635
Immigrants of various nationalities	67,894
Total	183,529

The Colony forms an integral part of the French National State. Its inhabitants are French citizens, and enjoy, save some slight exceptions, which are due to the differences of climate, manners, exceptional interests, and the distance which separates them from the mother-country, all the rights and privileges belonging to their continental brethren.

The Head of the State, the Legislative Assembly, the Council of State, and the Ministers, exercise their own sphere, have full jurisdiction over the administrative, marine, military, judicial, and ecclesiastical affairs of the Colony.

The general command and high administration of the island is entrusted to the Governor, placed under the direct authority of the Minister of Marine and Colonies.

Position and duties of the Governor.

The Governor is appointed by the Head of the State, whom he represents and with whose authority and prerogatives he is invested.

He enacts rules and by-laws in administrative and police matters, and for carrying into effect laws, rules, and decrees framed by the National Government and promulgated in the Colony. His ordinary powers extend themselves over all and every part of the service, though the Chiefs of Departments, with the advice of his Privy Council, which advice, however, he is not obliged to follow.

The Governor also possesses extraordinary powers, for the exercise of which he consults the Privy Council, whose opinion does not affect his responsibility, and he can take any decision he likes concerning the exclusion from the Colony of suspected persons, and also suspend and send back to France functionaries of the judicial class.

The Governor can be prosecuted for treason, "corruption," abuse of authority, and disobedience, but not at the instigation of his subordinates, nor in the Colony during tenure of office.

The Governor is assisted in the administration of the Colony by the following officers, or Heads of Government, viz:—

1. The Director of the Interior, who, subject to the approval of the Governor, is entrusted with the internal management of the Colony, the supervision of Custom-houses, public instruction, public charities, direct and indirect taxes, the police, Colonial finance, crediting the expenses of the local service, keeping accounts of the revenues and expenses of the same service, and the control of all accounts, which depend on the vote of the Conseil Privé.

In case of absence, the Director of the Interior is represented by the Secretary-General.

2. The Ordonnateur, who is charged under the orders of the Governor, with the administration of the marine, war, treasury, maritime police, pilotage, fisheries, quarantine service, and all expenses connected with his Department, and with the various services whose agents are answerable to the Cour des Comptes.

3. The Procureur-Général, who is at the head of the Judicial Department, and a Member of the Privy Council, and who, under the direction of the Governor, prepares and submits to the Council drafts of Colonial decrees, laws, rules, and instructions concerning judicial matters, reports on disputes, appeals to mercy, measures to be taken against functionaries belonging to the judicial order in certain cases, disputes between members of the Courts of Law, respecting their functions, ranks, and prerogatives, and all matters to be submitted to the Privy Council.

He has the special control over the Law Courts, the Curator of Vacant Estates, the criticism of law papers on judicial matters intended for publication, the drawing up of the judicial budget and the verification of all treasury accounts, countersigning Colonial decrees, as well as laws, regulations, and decisions of the Governor, or any other acts of the Local Authority respecting the judicial administration and the appointment of officers attached to Courts of Law, whose salaries are under 1,500 fr. per annum.

The administration of the Colony also rests with the Privy Council and the Conseil-Général.

Composition of "Conseil Privé."
Its duties and prerogatives.

The Conseil Privé is presided over by the Governor, and is composed

The Governor.

The Ordonnateur.

The Director of the Interior.

The Procureur-Général; two non-official Councillors or substitutes, and the Secretary.

Archiviste, who acts as clerk.

The Bishop assists whenever matters concerning public worship or instruction are discussed.

The Privy Council can constitute itself a Commission of Appeal.

In such cases two Magistrates appointed by the Governor are added to it, and the Procureur-Général's substitute acts as "Ministère Public."

The Conseil-Général is composed of twenty-four members, who are elected by the Colony according to universal suffrage. They are

Composition of "Conseil-Général."
Its prerogatives.

appointed for six years, one half to be renewed after three years, the same members being eligible.

The Conseil-Général votes all expenses of a local interest, the necessary taxes for meeting those expenses, the disposal and management of all properties, movable and immovable, belonging to the Colony, Custom-house duties or tariffs, and decisions upon loans, recruitment and protection of immigrants, levying of taxes, contributions of all kinds, as well as the discussion and voting of the yearly budget.

It meets once a year in ordinary session, and is convoked by the Governor, who opens the Assembly in person. Its sittings are not public.

Sessions.

The Conseil-Général has the right of communicating directly through its President with the Minister of Marine and Colonies at Paris,

Right of communicating direct with French Government.

regarding any claim it may have to make in the interest of the Colony, and also to submit its opinion on the condition and requirements of the various departments of the Public Service of the Colony.

The general law administered in the Colony is the Code Civil, the Code of Civil Procedure, the Code of Commerce, the Penal Code, and

General law administered.

the Code of Criminal Procedure, as they exist

in France, save some slight modifications required on account of the difference of place and race.

Distribution of judicial staff.

The administration of justice is divided as follows:—

The "Cour d'Appel," which is composed of a President, five Judges or Councillors, the Procureur-Général and a Substitute, a Registrar, and Sworn Clerks. There is an appeal

from this and other Courts to the "Cour de Cassation" in France.

The Court of "Première Instance," which is composed of a President and two Judges, the Procureur de la République and a Substitute, Clerks, &c.

"Cour de Première Instance."

The Judges of the Cour d'Appel, of the Court of Première Instance, the Procureur-Général, the Procureur de la République and their Substitutes, are all advocates, regularly admitted as such by one of the law faculties of France, and their appointment rests with the Home Government.

They are, however, nearly all creoles.

The Juges de Paix, or Magistrates, as well as their substitutes, are also nominated by the Home Government, and cannot enter upon their functions before having been duly sworn before

Magistrates, or "Juges de Paix."

the Court of "Première Instance" of Réunion.

Upon them devolved the duty of settling disputes between masters and servants.

They are generally chosen from the old employés of the judicial staff, such as clerks of the Procureur-Général or Registrars, and in most cases their legal knowledge is not extensive.

From whom chosen. Their unsuitability.

The assistant "Juges de Paix" or "Suppléants," as they are designated here, are still less qualified for the position, and have no knowledge of the law they are called upon to administer.

Both the "Juges de Paix," and their substitutes are, as a rule, creoles, and if not actually planters themselves, are intimately connected with the latter by family ties or by interests in the profits of the plantations, and they are, therefore, most improper persons to pass judgment in disputes between master and servant.

A "Juge de Paix" resides in each canton of the island.

By the "Arrêté" of the 23rd of March 1872, the Police Department is divided into three sections, viz., Municipal, Administrative, and Judicial, which, however, form one and the same service, and are dependant upon the Direction of the Interior from an administrative point of view; but the Commissaires of Police are answerable to the Maires, the Director of the Interior, and the Procureur-Général for matters which concern their respective departments.

The Police force comprises 17 Commissaires, divided into five classes, with a minimum staff of 3 adjutants, 55 brigadiers, 156 gardes, and 50 "agents de vagabondage."

How divided.

Inefficiency of Police.

The Police, considered as judicial machinery, is far from satisfactory in its workings, and inspires no respect.

It is composed of men not only incompetent, but stigmatized by the creoles themselves as open to bribery and corruption and totally inefficient.

Such a class of men are naturally oppressive and insolent in their dealings with the poorer classes, and lenient and cringing to the higher or richer ones.

Mounted gendarmes.

In addition to the creole police, there is a fine body of mounted gendarmes, under the command of a "chef d'escadron."

All these troops are Frenchmen, and paid by the French Metropolitan Government, and have the reputation of being respectable men.

They perform the duties of rural mounted police, and act as escort to prisoners, &c.

Réunion has not, as in the French West India Islands, an immigration fund, and, therefore,

Financial basis of immigration.
How the cost is met.

persons in need of coolies must apply for them to a commercial house. When a number of coolies sufficient to form a convoy have been

ordered, the merchants inform the Governor, and request an authorization for the recruitment of the immigrants in India. The requisition is forwarded on to the Governor at Pondicherry, and the commercial firm instruct their agent, or representative at that place, to defray all expenses in connection with the recruitment, and embarkation of the coolies. On the arrival of the immigrants at Réunion the nett cost of their introduction is estimated, and paid by the persons who had applied for them to the commercial house.

The transport of coolies from Pondicherry to Réunion is generally effected by ships belonging to, or chartered by the commercial house, who undertake their introduction.

Since September 1875, this system has been changed in so far as concerns the applications for immigrants.

Now, all such demands must be addressed to the Director of the Interior, who, after receiving the Governor's approval, transmit them to the Governor of Pondicherry.

The intervention of this latter functionary is limited to insuring the recruitment of the laborers, and the payment of all expenses by the agents of the commercial house referred to.

Coolies who consent to emigrate to Réunion contract and sign an engagement with the Administration at Pondicherry and Karikal

Contracts made in India.

in the presence of the French Immigration

Agent, the Government Commissaire of Immigration, and the British Consular, or Immigration Agents.

re bound to serve th

allotted by the Administration of Réunion, &c., and I will give examples of the contract.

"Contrat avec l'Administration de la Colonie de la Réunion.

"Nous soussignés, émigrants de Karikal (Pondicherry) pour la Colonie de la Réunion, nous engageons par le présent, à servir les personnes auxquelles nous serons respectivement distribués par l'Administration de la Colonie de la Réunion, tant pour les travaux de culture et de fabrication sucrière, que par tous autres d'exploitation agricole et industrielle, auxquels nous pourrions être employés, et généralement pour tous les travaux de domesticité, aux termes et conditions du règlement de travail de la Martinique, en date du 10 Septembre, 1855, et moyennant les gages indiqués vis-à-vis de notre nom, au change de '2 fr. 50 c. par roupie.' Le logement et les soins médicaux nous seront également accordés, ainsi que deux rechanges par an, et quatre jours de congé par an à l'occasion de la célébration de la fête, dite Pongale."

Copy of contract.

"Nous reconnaissons avoir reçu, au moment de notre engagement, de l'Agent Français d'Emigration 'trois mois d'avances' de solde, d'après les fixations portées en regard de nos noms, et dont le montant total devra nous être retenue par douzième sur les salaires à gagner du jour de notre placement après arrivée à destination."

On the arrival at St. Denis of a ship with immigrants, she is at once ordered off to the lazaret, where the coolies are landed, and detained, for ten days, previous to distribution, although the ship and her crew are admitted to free pratique, unless a contagious disease may have broken out during the voyage.

Arrival of coolies at St. Denis.
Detention of the immigrants at "Lazaret."

The day of the landing a medical officer is despatched from St. Denis to the lazaret as

Medical attendance for the newly landed.

Government Commissaire and Physician to take

charge of the coolies during their detention

there, and this official is supposed to submit at once to the Administration all complaints made by the immigrants.

The lazaret, although a roomy building, is unfortunately situated at the foot of a long and deep ravine, and the newly arrived immigrants are exposed to the dangerous effects of the cold mountain winds, which during the cool season (at which period the immigrants are invariably introduced) are very penetrating, and frequently produce fever, besides laying the germs of other illnesses. This evil might in some measure be guarded against by warm suits of clothing being served out to the coolies on boardship some few days before their arrival at Réunion.

The lazaret is likewise nearly inaccessible by land and sea, and the landing is only effected with danger to life and limb.

The immigrants receive the food prescribed by the regulations, as well as fresh vegetables, and I have never heard of any complaints on this head. When the coolies are sick they are attended by the doctor. Soap, cotton clothing of the simplest kind, coconut oil and tobacco, is distributed to the immigrants during their detention at the lazaret.

The stock of medicines stored is poor and very insufficient, and the hospital accommodation incomplete.

No inspection of ship at Réunion.

The Medical Officer in charge of the coolies on board the emigrant ship is allowed so much per head (7s. or 8s.) for every adult he lands alive, and is provided with a free passage back to Madras by the Mail Steamer. He furnishes reports of the voyage, &c.

At the expiration of the ten days' quarantine, if no contagious disease is broken out in the meanwhile, the immigrants are inspected by the Consul, who inquires of them, severally and collectively, through the Consular Interpreters, and in the presence of the Commissaire d'Immigration, whether they have any complaints to make against the captain, officers, crew, or the doctor of the ship that brought them, or any other subject. If they have complaints to offer, the Consul would draw the attention of the Governor to the matter, and ask for an inquiry, and endeavour to see that justice was done.

Should it be proved that the captain and officers have failed in their duty, they might be summoned before a competent tribunal.

If it is a question of illegal cutting of rations during the voyage, the money value should be reimbursed to the immigrants through the Consul, and the names of the captain and officers may be sent to the Minister of Marine and Colonies, who, it would seem, has the power of inflicting a penalty.

After the Consul has counted and inspected the newly arrived immigrants, he withdraws, and the work of distribution by allotment is carried on by the immigration officers, who subsequently furnish the Consul with lists of the Indians forming the various lots, and the names of the persons to whom each batch has been assigned.

Until within a few months these Consular inspections were held at the Lazaret, when I refused to proceed thither any more, and insisted that the immigrants should be brought to St. Denis. They are now inspected by me in the yard of the House of Correction, as there is no building of any kind in Réunion (except the workhouses and prisons) for the reception of immigrants.

Refusal of Consul to inspect coolies at Lazaret. Non-existence of building for reception of Indians.

Those among the coolies, who, at the time of distribution, are ill and unfit for work, should

Sick coolies sent to Colonial Hospital.

be sent to the Colonial Hospital at the expense of those to whom they have been allotted.

Work required of new immigrants immediately after distribution.

After distribution, the immigrants are conveyed to the plantations of their respective "engagistes," and I fear, as a rule, put to work at once.

It is asserted that the labor required of the outset is of a lighter nature than that assigned to the old immigrants. Unfortunately, I have grave reasons for doubting this allegation, and for supposing that very few planters allow the coolies sufficient time to become acclimatized before allotting to them heavy daily tasks.

In the event of an immigrant refusing work, unless unquestionably incapacitated by sickness, he is immediately taken before a Juge

Punishment for refusing to work.

de Paix of the district, and by that functionary

the immigrant is at once sentenced to a fine varying from 5 to 100 frs. a high penalty being almost always imposed. In default of payment, this fine is convertible into an equal number of days of hard labor at the "Atelier de Discipline" (Macadam). Should the coolie fall ill whilst undergoing his punishment, he is supposed to be sent back to his "engagiste" to receive medical care. The days passed at the macadam have to be made up to his master at the expiration of the immigrant's engagement.

Illegal absence from work is punishable by fine, or an equal number of days at the macadam,

Illegal absence, how punished.

and for each day's illegal absence, the immigrant owes two days' work to his employer.

I have known instances where even the days at the macadam have been counted two for one.

Every Indian without an engagement, or who absents himself (even for a day) without leave,

is looked upon as a vagabond, and is liable to arrest and punishment at the macadam. Time-expired coolies desirous of returning to India

are treated as vagabonds.

All Indians without an engagement, etc., treated as vagabonds.

is looked upon as a vagabond, and is liable to arrest and punishment at the macadam. Time-expired coolies desirous of returning to India, faring no better, if they object to a detention of some months at the commune, the duties of whose members are to clean the streets and remove the filth of the town.

The Commissaire of Immigration, or Chief of the Immigration Department, subordinate to the Director of the Interior, may be looked upon as the Protector of Immigrants, and he

The organization of the Immigration Office in all its branches, and the duties of the several officers.

corresponds not only with the Maires and

Commissaires of Police, but also with the planters and other "engagistes," and the Syndics, on all subjects connected with the duties of his position.

The Commissaire of Immigration shall visit the plantations on tours of inspection. It is his duty to see that the rules and regulations concerning the immigrants are everywhere faithfully executed, that the engagistes fulfil their engagements towards their Indian laborers, and that the latter carry out the conditions of their contracts.

He is also bound to assist with his advice and counsel all the immigrants who wish to pay into the Treasury sums destined for their families in India.

He has, however, no right to exercise over the Indians, on his own responsibility, any police or judicial authority.

In conformity with Article 36 of the Decree of March 1852, a Protectorate of Immigrants shall be established in the chief town of each "arrondissement." This Protectorate shall be composed of the Procureur de la Republique, or one of his substitutes, as President, of an Advocate chosen each year, and Municipal Councillor appointed by the Governor. An Interpreter may also be added.

The Protectorate is intrusted with the care and direction of the immigrants in all matters which concern law suits they may wish to institute. Its members alone, or their delegates, have the right to appear in Court on behalf of the Indians.

The Protectorate, on the notification of the Commissaire of Immigration, approved by the Director of the Interior, can, in virtue of its office, prosecute before the tribunals for the cancelling of engagements when the conditions of the contract regarding the health and well-being of the Indian have not been observed. The demand for the rupture of an engagement is preceded by a notification from the Commissaire of Immigration to the engagiste, warning him either to fulfil his obligations before the expiration of a given time, or to abandon his contract.

A Syndic is appointed wherever there is a Juge de Paix. He is the delegate of the Protectorate for that district.

From these Syndics, and the Commissaire of Immigration, the Procureur de la Republique receives all complaints which are likely to lead to an action in the Courts of Law, and the Procureur, with his staff—decides whether a suit shall be instituted—in which case, he constitutes himself legal attorney; and the Protectorate, according to the nature of the case, either conducts the suit itself, or causes it to be conducted by the Syndic of the Canton.

All Indians under engagements are entitled to judicial assistance gratis.

Quarterly returns shall be sent in to the Director of the Interior and the Procureur General, showing the number, nature, and result of actions or complaints decided by the Protectorate.

The Syndics shall assure themselves that each immigrant, on arrival at his engagiste, has in his possession his matriculation papers. The Syndics are also intrusted with the delivery to the immigrants, within a month, of the contracts of their engagements (Brets) which have been deposited at the Bureau of the Commissaire of Immigration. They shall likewise see that the engagistes furnish their Indians every week with a copy of their account.

This account shall be drawn up on the record-book of the engagiste, and shall show the

The Syndics shall also assure themselves that the wages due to the Indians are regularly paid, according to the conditions and manner indicated by their contracts or established by law.

Immigrants have always the right to prefer their complaints or claims directly to the Syndic in person, who cannot refuse to transmit them to the proper authority.

Every complaint or claim of an Indian against his employer, should be laid before the Syndic of the Canton.

The Commissaire of Immigration can delegate to the Syndic of the Canton the right of visiting estates whenever circumstances shall require it, and the Syndic shall make such inspections in order to verify the truth of the complaint preferred by master or man.

The Syndic shall visit the passports of Indians who have occasion to present themselves at Courts of other districts, or before the Commissaires of Immigration.

When deductions are made from the wages of immigrants on account of alleged illegal absence from work, the Syndics shall investigate the case, in order to prove the justice of the deductions. His decision shall, however, in no wise prevent the case from being submitted to the Juge de Paix if desired.

The Syndics shall immediately inform the Commissaire of Immigration on the discovery of any fictitious engagements or reprehensible transfer of contract, as well as of any other action contrary to the rules of immigration which may come to their knowledge.

The Syndics shall send monthly returns to the Bureau of Immigration of all complaints which have been addressed to them, and the result of their intervention with the engagistes.

The Syndics shall settle disputes between planters and their engagistes, reserving always their right, as delegates of the Protectorate, to bring an action before the Juge de Paix in favor of the Indian.

The Syndics are expressly forbidden, on pain of suitable punishment, to receive payment of any kind from either the Indian, or his engagiste, on any pretext whatsoever.

Every act of transfer of engagement shall be submitted by the engagiste to the Syndic of his district within ten days of its date, for his visa.

Any engagiste who neglects to obey the foregoing rules, shall be subject to a fine, varying from 15 to 100 fr.

Disregard and non-enforcement of the foregoing rules.

It will be remarked that the foregoing rules are admirable. Unfortunately they are never adhered to or enforced.

The wages of Indians under first engagement are defined in India, and specified on the contracts drawn up in the presence of the

Wages of Indians under first engagement

British Consular Agents at Pondicherry and Karikal.

On re-engaging, or contracting a new engagement in the Colony, the Indians receive from 7 fr. 08 c. to 15 fr. per month, with or without

Wages of Indians under second engagement.

a premium, as the case may be.

Should a premium be offered, it is said to be from 25 to 80 fr. according to the number of years of the prolongation of the engagement and the amount of monthly wages.

Premium on re-engagement.

Domestic servants receive wages varying from 7 fr. 50 c. to 20 fr. per month, exclusive of food. The average money-wage is 12 fr. 50 c.

Wages of domestic servants.

per month, and 2 fr. 50 c. per week, food allowance.

There is, however, no law which regulates the amount of wages to be given to domestic servants. I have heard of coolies working merely for their food. The immigrants can

Regulated by no law.

only claim the amount stipulated on their livrets or contracts.

According to law, a record should be

Record books on estates.

wages due.

This book should be made up every month and verified by the Syndic or his deputy, in whose presence all payments of wages should be made.

Duties of Syndic in this respect.

Regulations never adhered to.

Immigrants paid at option of planter.

It is scarcely necessary for me to say that these regulations are never complied with.

On large estates the laborers are said to be paid monthly, quarterly, half-yearly, or, in fact, at the caprice of the planter.

Should a proprietor refuse to pay his men the wages due to them, the Protectorate of Immigrants should instruct the Commissaire of Immigration to bring the case before the tribunals.

Non-payment of wages should be brought before tribunals.

The immigrants may be withdrawn from such a master who can be forbidden to engage others. This right, I believe, has never been

Immigrants may be withdrawn for non-payment of wages. This right never exercised by local Government.

used, even under the most aggravated circumstances.

Domestic servants should be paid monthly.

Domestics, or house servants in the towns, are supposed to be paid monthly.

Ordinary cases settled by the "Juges de Paix."

In ordinary cases the "Juges de Paix" have the power to compel the payment of wages or cancel the engagement.

Advances of immigrants' wages to be acknowledged before Syndic.

According to law, when a proprietor advances any amount of an immigrant's wages, it is necessary that the Indian shall acknowledge the debt in the Syndic's presence.

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It is forbidden a proprietor to withhold any portion of an immigrant's wages as punishment. Such a deduction should be disallowed by the Syndic on pay day.

Withholding of Indian's wages.

Duty of Commissaire of Immigration to recover wages of Indians.

It is the duty of the Commissaire of Immigration to recover the wages of Indians on just claims.

Difficulty of comparing the wages of Indians with those of other classes.

It is difficult to compare the wages of Indian immigrants on estates with those of other classes of immigrants or creole laborers.

Reasons for making the foregoing assertion.

The creole laborers are few in number, and the Africans and Malagashes are unintelligent, half savages, and virtually slaves.

The price of their (Africans and Malagashes) introduction and the expenses connected with their subsequent sale, amount to double the expenses of the recruitment of an Indian brought into the Colony by way of Pondicherry.

Price of Africans and Malagashes.

The negroes, however, notwithstanding their acknowledged inferiority, receive nearly as much money-wage as the Indian.

Wages of Africans nearly the same as those of Indian immigrants.

The wages of an able-bodied negro are estimated at 10 fr. per month, or rather that is the amount specified on the livret, whereas the wages of an Indian (during his first five years) are 12 fr. 50 c. per month.

No portion of wages paid in form of rations.

No portion of the money-wage is ever paid in the form of rations.

At the expiration of the immigrant's engagement the "engagiste" shall, within forty-eight hours, give to the Syndic the livret of the immigrant, and to the latter a duplicate copy, certifying that his engagement is terminated.

The whole process in connection with re-engagement and "rapatriement."

In case these papers should be lost the employer shall replace them by a double declaration giving the name and surname of the immigrant, his number on the matricule générale, and the date of the expiration of his engagement.

The employer who fails to perform these requirements shall be considered responsible by the Administration for the immigrants not discharged by him, and shall be liable to a fine of 25 fr. for each infraction of this law.

The Syndic shall be held responsible if he neglects to report such infractions.

Within the above mentioned day of forty-eight hours the immigrant, furnished with his "certificate of discharge," shall present himself before the Syndic to declare whether he chooses to re-engage, or to be sent back to India.

If the immigrant desires his rapatriement, his declaration shall be made and received according to the form prescribed by Article 65 of the Arrêté of the 30th of August 1860.

He shall then be placed at the dépôt, unless he prefers to work his last engagiste (providing the latter will receive him on such terms) until the moment of embarkation. (Arrêté, 30th August, Article 66-67.) If he wishes to re-engage with his old master his contract may be drawn up at once. If not he will be allowed three days in which to seek a new engagement.

This permission may be renewed once if the Syndic shall deem it advisable. It is only good for the commune in which he resides.

The immigrant who may wish to contract an engagement in another commune, shall receive from the Syndic a "laissez-passer" proportioned to the number of days he will require to reach the commune in question, viz. one day for every two myriamètres. He must present himself before the Syndic of the new commune, who will give him a "permis" of three days to seek an employer.

At the expiration of this term, the Indian who shall not have succeeded in procuring employment, and whose "permis" has not been prolonged, shall be placed at the dépôt by the Commissaire of Police or Syndic.

Previous to the drawing up of contracts with the Indian laborers, the contracting parties shall present themselves before the Syndic of the commune where the employer resides.

This latter may act by proxy, a statement of the conditions of the contract, being all that is required of him.

The Syndic, as guardian of the immigrants of his district, shall identify the Indian and his position, examine the terms of the contract and the worth of the guarantees offered.

Should the Syndic see no obstacle to such a contract, he may prepare and sign the necessary documents, for which he becomes responsible. He may refuse his consent should he have reason to believe that the Indian will not be properly treated.

The contracts drawn up by the Syndics are submitted to the Maire, and are only considered valid when his signature is attached.

In conformity to the existing law, these contracts are drawn up in duplicate. The livret to be given to the engagiste and the duplicate to the Indian—(Arrêté 30th August 1860, Article 40.)

The Maires cannot sanction engagements without or against the advice of the Syndic.

Should the Syndic refuse his consent, or should he not agree with the Maire, the parties can appeal to the Director of the Interior or the Governor in Privy Council.

Such is the law. But the real manner in which the majority of re-engagements are conducted, is as follows:—

An Indian is induced, while under the influence of drink, or by the tempting of ready-money, and not unfrequently by threats, to re-engage with his old master, months, and even years before the expiration of his contract.

Some Syndics, however, I am told, have slightly modified this abuse by refusing to sanction re-engagements, except within the six months preceding the expiration of the immigrant's engagement.

Of course there are Indians who resist all advances and choose their own masters, but the generality do not enjoy the liberty guaranteed them by the law.

I am of opinion that no re-engagement, as I have already submitted to Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, should be allowed without the sanction of the Consul or be permitted to take place at all until three days after the expiration of the immigrant's contract.

There are many evils in connection with the Indian immigrants in this Colony, but I think that under discussion is, perhaps, one of the greatest, as it has the effect of making them bondsmen for a series of years.

Present system a great evil.

The tax paid on re-engagements is as follows:—

	Fra.
For 1 year	2
„ 2 years	4
„ 3 „	6
„ 4 „	8
Above 4 „	10

By the Code Civil of France it is enacted that if, after the expiration of the delays for drawing up an inventory, &c., no one presents himself to claim the succession, or if no known heir, or heirs, exist, such succession, is deemed vacant.

By the local law, an officer styled "le Curateur aux successions et biens vacants" is appointed to take charge of such estates and to administer them according to law, for the benefit of the parties interested.

Interference of Her Majesty's Government, necessary.
Suggestions as to what should be done.

He is further bound to deliver up such estates to the parties entitled thereto, if they can prove the validity of their claim. Should it be disputed, the Courts of Law are to be resorted to.

By the provisions of the local law above mentioned it is also enacted that at the end of five years from the date on which the estate was taken charge of by the Curateur the State will be entitled to claim the provisional possession of such succession. And if within five years from the date of the provisional possession by the State, no one presents himself to claim the succession, or fails to support his claim, the inheritance passes to the State, by right of prescription or limitation.

It is in virtue of these laws that the property of Indian immigrants, subjects of Her Britannic Majesty, who have died in the Colony intestate, or without known or acknowledged heirs, is taken possession of by the Curateur of Vacant Estates and afterwards by the State.

In such cases it is almost impossible for the relatives of the deceased parties to establish their claims to the satisfaction of the Curateur or of the Courts, the law prevailing in India as regards successions and inheritances being totally different from that in force in this Colony. No claim to such inheritances would be admitted here, unsupported by legal documents, duly authenticated and legalized, certifying the birth of the claimant, the marriage and death of his relatives, and clearly establishing his relationship to the deceased. No verbal evidence or affidavits being admitted to replace or complete the civil documents called Acts of Civil Status.

It is clear that no such written or complex proof can be procured from India, where civil status registers are unknown, and where the laws as regards inheritances are quite unlike those of the French Code Civil.

The natural consequence of such a state of things is that the hard-earned property of Indian immigrants passes into the coffers of the State, instead of reverting, after the death of the immigrants, to the children and relatives. Such a system is undoubtedly most unjust and demoralizing to the Indians, and seems to be contrary to the spirit of the Convention, which has created for the coolies an exceptional position in French Colonies.

The immigrants are here temporarily for a special purpose, and are governed by special and exceptional laws.

They do not, like the rest of the population, enjoy all the benefits and advantages conferred by the general law; and why, therefore, should their hard-earned savings pass into the hands of the State, instead of those of their natural heirs. Under these circumstances, it is no more than reasonable to ask that the law concerning the administration of the estate of deceased Indians be amended, and that all monies and property coming from such successions shall in future be handed over to Her Majesty's Consul, for transmission to the Indian Government, to be disposed of as deemed advisable.

Such a course could not be objected to by the French Government, inasmuch as in Mauritius, where the Indians enjoy all the rights of British subjects, the measure alluded to above, I am told on good authority, has been in execution for many years.

This question relating to the property of deceased Indians, is closely connected with that of Indian marriages.

Indian marriages.
Severity of French laws in this respect.
Suggests a partial remedy.

As the matter stands at present, all monies belonging to deceased Indians, whether immigrants or Indians working on their own account, are invariably confiscated by the Curateur, on the ground that the deceased had no heirs, even if during life he has been acknowledged as the father of children born in the Colony, or as the brother or relative of other Indians.

To put a complete stop to this undesirable state of things, I would venture to submit that before leaving the depot in India the immigrants be asked to point out their wives, children, and relations.

Such declarations should be inscribed on the engagement list certified to by the Consular Agent at Pondicherry, and the French Commissaire d'Immigration there, and a copy of this document transmitted to Her Majesty's Consul in Réunion.

On landing here, moreover, the declarations referred to should be repeated before the Immigration Commissaire and the Consul (who should both certify the lists); and a distinct understanding come to that all such marriages and relationships shall ever afterwards be considered good and valid before the law in Réunion. Now no marriages among Indians seem to meet with recognition here, except those that have taken place in the Colony according to French law before the Maires in the different communes.

The arrangements made for the return passages of immigrants are nearly the same as those for the voyage from Pondicherry to Réunion;

but as the Administration discourages the departure of Indians, it is seldom that the Consul is called upon to exercise his functions in this respect.

The impending departure of a ship with coolies is never advertised in the newspapers, or

otherwise, and it is only after repeated inquiries from the Consul as to whether any time-

expired immigrants are likely to be sent off,

that this local Government, "to satisfy the

Emigrant ships for India not advertised.
Unwillingness of Administration to facilitate departure of time-expired Indians.
Wretched condition of those sent.

Consul," collect together a few Indians who are getting importunate, and fill up the gaps with the refuse of the Indian population, such as prisoners, the aged, paupers, maimed, the halt and the blind.

When these miserable creatures are assembled, the Consul inspects them, which event generally takes place a day or two before the sailing of the vessel. The Consul inquires of the coolies one by one, through an interpreter belonging to the Consulate, whether they wish to make any complaints. This question having been put, and which is invariably answered in the negative, for fear of detention in the Colony, the well-to-do coolies are requested to state privately to the Consul how much money they have in their possession.

Subsequently the Commissaire d'Immigration furnishes the Consul with lists of the various coolies about to embark, and these lists, after being signed by both the Consul and the Commissaire d'Immigration, are forwarded, one to the British Consular Agent, and another to the French authorities at Pondicherry.

Although the foregoing process is related in a few words, it takes a long time to carry it into execution; as the Consul has to supervise everything, and cannot place the slightest confidence in the Immigration Department.

When I first came to Réunion, over two years ago, I found that no attempt was made to conduct these inspections with even a pretence of regularity or accuracy, and it is only by insisting on a proper fulfilment of every requirement that I have succeeded in enforcing some sort of order—which, however, cannot be considered fairly established, as long as the immigration service remains in its present disorganized state.

According to law, the Indian immigrant is placed under the "régime du droit commun."

The Commissaire of Police receives his complaint for "coups et blessures," and takes down the preliminary depositions, and forwards them on to the Procureur de la République, who opens proceedings in the Law or Police Courts against the party or parties accused.

The Indian has also the option of appealing to Her Majesty's Consul, who transmits his complaint to the Commissaire d'Immigration, or the Governor, if he thinks proper.

I regret, however, to state, that if an Indian complains to a Commissaire of Police that he has been ill-treated by his master, he incurs the greatest risk of being sent to the Macadam as a liar and a vagabond, and that every impediment is put in the way of his reaching the Consulate.

The Governor does not possess extraordinary powers as to setting aside sentences passed in the Law or Police Courts of the Colony; but he can urge the importance of the Indian's case upon the notice of the various functionaries, and warn them of the necessity of faithfully carrying out the provisions of the law. In point of fact the Governor is all-powerful, as he can suspend any functionary who neglects his duties.

The law to insure the physical well-being of Indian immigrants is a dead letter in this Colony. The regulations in connexion with sanitary inspections, medical visits, hospitals, &c., are strict, but no attention whatsoever is paid to them. The law says that every plan-

Law a dead letter.
Sanitary and medical inspections.
Hospital.
Medicine.

tation of twenty men, or over that number, is bound to have a hospital, built of wood or stone, and floored with boards. A stock of medicines in proportion to the number of laborers should be kept in the hospital, which must be regularly visited by a medical man.

In the record book, or register of the hospital, the doctor should inscribe the date of each of his visits. Once a month he shall certify as to the condition of the stock of medicines on hand, and indicate the names of the sick and the

Record books.
Doctor's visits.

nature of their complaints. This register must be always open to inspection by the functionaries whose business it is to visit estates.

Regulations obligatory.

The above regulations are obligatory, and when not conformed to, punishable by Article 466 of the Code Penal Colonial.

The law provides that every immigrant shall be furnished with a suitable house; each house shall contain a sufficient number of bedsteads, raised at least 50 centimetres above the ground. The Commissaire d'Immigration, the Syndic,

Dwellings.
Bedsteads.
Situation.

&c., the Maire shall decide whether these lodgings and arrangement are what they should be according to law.

As regards drainage and water-supply, it is quite a matter of chance. If there is water near the camp, the Indians benefit by it; if not, they get on the best way they can. Deaths should be reported to the Syndic and Maire.

Drainage.
Water-supply.

Coolies who can show that they possess a good round sum of money, may procure from the Direction of the Interior, on the payment of a

Facilities for settling in the Colony.

tax of 50 fr. for the first year, and 25 fr. for every subsequent year, what is termed here a *permis de séjour*. In addition to the tax of 50 fr., the immigrant is required to pay 4 fr. police fees, 4 fr. for a photograph to be attached to his *permis*, and 7 fr. 50 c. poll-tax.

The following years the poll-tax only is demanded in addition to the 25 fr. tax.

When once they are in possession of this document, the immigrants may purchase land, &c., engage in any kind of commerce they choose. Unfortunately, those few privileged individuals only hold their *permis de séjour* on sufferance, and it can be withdrawn, or cancelled on the most frivolous plea or on the lightest charge, be it true or false, brought by any petty creole authority. I have had, more than once, to remonstrate against such peremptory proceedings, and to beg the Director of the Interior to revoke his decisions.

There are also said to be 216 Indians, who have received permission to reside here indefinitely.

Indian immigrants on estates keep a good deal to themselves, which probably arise from the fact that they are regarded by the colored creoles as inferior beings living in a state of bondage.

Habits of Indians.

Intercourse with creoles disadvantageous to Indians.

Their intercourse with the creoles, however limited it may be, is of a nature disadvantageous to the Indian.

One fact is certain, that after a few years' residence in the Colony, they are more completely demoralized and depraved than when they arrived.

Bourbon coolies not sought for at Mauritius.

At Mauritius, coolies at Bourbon are at a discount.

Disproportion in the number of men to women
Depravity resulting therefrom.

Naturally, the immense disproportion existing between the number of men and that of the women leads to depravity of the worst kind.

No regular record of the number of births among Indians appear to exist, as will be seen from the following numbers supplied me on three different occasions this year as accurate statistics of births for 1875.

No regular record of births kept.

The first time I was told there had been 153 births; the second, 417; and the third, 185 for six months.

Incorrectness of statistics.

All statistics and returns furnished me by this Government are of an unreliable nature, and merit no consideration.

No arrangements for transmission to India of immigrants' wages.

There are no facilities offered by the Administration for the transmission of the savings of Indians to India.

No provisions made for immigrants incapacitated for labor.

Immigrants incapacitated by sickness or accident, are merely sent to the commune, or hospital, and in some instances I have known them to exist by public charity.

When sent off to India as time-expired immigrants, they are given a change of raiment, and a rupee at Pondicherry, to find their way across the frontier.

General status of Indians unsatisfactory.

In short nothing can be more unsatisfactory than the general status of our Indians in this island.

Notwithstanding the repeated assurances of this Administration to the French Government, that the Indian immigrants are in the actual possession of their livrets, I regret to state that

Livrets.

this was far from being the case. I should say that at least nine-tenths of the Indians are not in possession of their livrets, and that half of them are not even aware they should possess them.

Duplicate copies in certain cases are issued to the creoles, but these livrets are useless as records, or books of reference, no entries of payment of wages, &c., being inserted therein, or certified to by the Syndics. Moreover, the paper of which they are made is so thin and poor in quality, as to render it impossible for the Indians to preserve the books for any length of time.

From the non-observance of the livret law the Indians are, as a rule, complete prisoners, and I should say from what I saw of slavery in Brazil, less free than the slaves in that country.

Here, an immigrant absent for an hour, may be classed as marron by a bad or severe master, and sent to the macadam on simple assertion of said master, conveyed on a slip of paper, or by note addressed to Commissaire of Police, "Juge de Paix" of the district.

Only a few days ago, a M. Fauchin appealed to me for redress against the treatment experienced by an Indian in his employ, named Palaniappi, at the hands of an overseer at the Atelier de Discipline.

I inquired into the circumstances, and found that:

M. Fauchin believing his servant marron (the man having been absent a few hours) wrote to the Commissaire of Police requesting his immediate arrest, and incarceration at the Atelier de Discipline for fifteen days.

It would appear that Palaniappi had already been arrested for being without a pass, which his master through forgetfulness had omitted to provide him with, and that on the receipt of M.

Fauchin's letter, the Commissaire of Police immediately caused the man to be attached to the bands at work at the macadam.

In the meanwhile, M. Fauchin went into the country for a month, and on his return remarked that Palaniapin had lost the use of an eye, and learned that this mishap had been caused through an overseer at the Atelier de Discipline, going into the rooms of the prisoners at night without a light and laying about him right and left with a stick. One of these blows struck Palaniapin in the eye. I brought the case under the notice of the authorities.

Had this man been in possession of his livret, the misfortune alluded to might have not occurred, as he had no intention of deserting, and should never have been sent to the Atelier de Discipline without an inquiry of any kind.

Hours of labor.

Article X of the Convention of 1861 distinctly specifies that Indian immigrants are not bound to work for more than nine and a half hours per diem, or more than six days in seven.

These rules are neither observed nor enforced, nor do I believe that there is a single planter who conforms to them. An aggravated case lately came under my immediate observation where it was proved that the Indian immigrants (the weak as well as the able-bodied) were forced to work fifteen hours per diem—this breach of the law being perfectly well known to the authorities. (Vide Despatch No. 40 of the 11th September 1876, to the Earl of Derby.)

According to Article 23 of the Convention of 1861, and the second paragraph thereof, Her Majesty's Indian subjects shall not have conditions imposed upon them more stringent

Double Act.

than those prescribed by the Martinique Regulations.

Article 6 of the Decree of the 13th February 1852 appears to me a contravention of Article 32 of the Regulations referred to above, which I understand as determining that an engagé is to make up the days that he is absent from his engagiste, whatever may have been the cause, no mention being made of deducting for marronage (desertion) two days for one, as is the invariable practice here.

The natural consequence of such a system would seem to encourage bad masters to ill-treat their employés, in order that they shall desert, since the longer the engagé is marron, the greater the gain to the engagiste.

Take, for example, the case of an Indian who absents himself for a year.

By the Decree of the 13th of February 1852, he is bound to work two years without wages, and at the completion of his engagement to make up the year he has been absent, so that the immigrant gives three years' work for one of absence, receiving pay only during one of the three years.

It is superfluous to add that such a monstrous abuse of power is sufficient in itself to demoralise the whole Indian population, and make them worthless.

The authorities assert that no impediments are placed in the way of Indians desirous of communicating with the Consul. On the other hand, the immigrants declare that if they breathe

Access to Consul.

the name of the Consul, they run the risk of being sent to the macadam, nor do I think this statement exaggerated.

Every immigrant wishing to lodge a complaint at the Consulate must apply for a pass to the Commissaire of Police of his district, who is forbidden to refuse them; but, like everything else in this Colony, this injunction is undoubtedly disobeyed; since, according to the assertions of the Indians, these passes are not only withheld, but the applicants for them are sent back to the estate to meet with summary punishment for their rashness and presumption.

I have myself heard groans laugh at the very idea of an Indian asking permission of his master or of a Commissaire of Police, in order that he may come and complain to the Consul, and I have known instances of immigrants being arrested and treated as vagabonds after they had succeeded in reaching the Consulate, and I had sent in their complaints to the so-called Protectorate of Immigrants.

Those that attempt to reach the Consulate without a pass run great risk of being arrested *en route* and sent to the Atelier de Discipline.

It is, therefore, not surprising that many of Her Majesty's Indian subjects prefer suffering in silence to attempting to appeal to their natural protector.

Should the immigrants arrested refuse to give their names and that of their engagiste, they are generally sent to the macadam, and from thence to the dépôt of the commune, where they remain in a state of filth and misery for a period of two years, after which the law says that they may re-engage or be sent back to India.

I had occasion to doubt whether even this hard law was not violated; and a few days ago I called for a return of the Indians at the St. Denis' dépôt, and subsequently requested that the coolies detained there might be brought before me.

Sixty-three out of ninety-four coolies were escorted to the Consulate in different batches by the police officers and dépôt guardians.

The first batch of twenty emigrants presented so repulsive an appearance, that it was with difficulty I could go through with the necessary examination.

I was, however, enabled to remark that four of them were blind, one insane, and the rest covered with sores, vermin, and eaten up with complications of diseases.

Many of them had been for five years at the dépôt.

The second batch of twenty-one persons was composed of Indians of a less repulsive aspect, although one was insane, and the majority presented a wretched and filthy appearance. Many of them had been in the dépôt for five years, and two (a man and his wife) for ten years each.

The third batch of twenty-two men was more or less of the same description as the second. One man had been ten years at the dépôt, and many of the rest for periods varying from one to five years.

The Commissaire d'Immigration alleged that all these Indians were detained at the dépôt because they refused to give up the names of their last engagiste. On inquiry, I found that this statement was not borne out by facts, and on looking over the list furnished me by the chief of the Immigration Department, and certified by him as correct, I found that about two-thirds of the dates of entrance of the immigrants into the dépôt were mis-stated. Most had been there five years or more, according to the statements of not only the Indians but of the dépôt guardians, were put down on the list as having entered a month ago, or within the year 1876, and only those entries of the coolies who had in reality been there a short period were at all correct.

Réunion Immigration Department.

Nothing can be more lamentable than the present disorganized state of this service, which may be said to be without a chief.

The Director of the Interior, whose business it is to supervise immigration affairs, is too much absorbed by other duties of his Administration to give any attention whatsoever to the shortcomings of his inferiors; therefore, the whole management of the Department devolves upon the Commissaire of Immigration and the Sous-Commissaire d'Immigration, who are certainly not equal to the situation,—the former through his want of administrative ability, and incompetency as a Chief—and the latter through the little respect he is able to inspire on account of his doubtful reputation.—(Vide Despatch to Lord Derby, No. 78, of the 6th December 1876.)

The Immigration Office might more properly be designated a Protectorate of planters and creoles, as the interests of the creoles, whatever may be their condition, invariably take precedence over those of the Indian immigrants.

The Syndics and clerks in the Cantons are still more unsuited for the positions they occupy, and as a body, may be looked upon as creatures of the planters.

The whole service requires remodelling.—(Vide Despatch No. 78, December 6, 1876.)

Such Articles of the Convention as refer directly to the Indian immigrant, as well as the wording of the contracts made in India, and the various arrêtés and quotations specified therein, should unquestionably be translated into Malabar, and printed copies circulated freely in the

Madras Presidency among Indians about to emigrate to Réunion, in order that they may not, as now, arrive here without the slightest knowledge of the country they are coming to, or the work required of them.

Stability of the Colony.

It is difficult to give an opinion of the stability of planters and commercial houses, as the whole island may fairly be said to be in a state bordering on bankruptcy.

The Credit Foncier Colonial is already in possession of seventeen large plantations, as well as many small—more falling every year into the hands of the Company. The remaining estates are said to be mortgaged, with but few exceptions.

Plantations are usually owned and worked by the proprietors themselves, or by agents appointed by them.

As regards the stability of the mercantile class, I fear that their position is no more secure than that of the planters, for their interests are closely interwoven with those of the latter.

This portion of the report need not be repeated, since the late Acting Consul, Mr. Blunt, has already given it in full in his compilation of 1873.

History of the Immigration in Réunion, and of the laws connected therewith.

I would, however, submit that the various changes alluded to by Mr. Blunt as resulting from his representations to the authorities here, never took place.

This misconception on his part probably arose from a belief in the promises of the Administration, and from the fact that, during the whole of his residence here, he resided in the interior of the island, and consequently had no opportunity of judging whether these promised reforms were carried into effect.

M. le Commissaire d'Immigration,

St. Denis, le 11 Décembre 1874.

Aux termes de l'Article XX de la Convention du 10 Août, 1861, "les immigrants, sujets de Sa Majesté Britannique, jouiront, dans les colonies Françaises, de la faculté d'invoquer

"Même Circulaire, aux Commissaires de Police. l'assistance des Agents Consulaires Britanniques au même titre que tous les autres sujets relevant de la Couronne Britannique, et conformément aux règles ordinaires du droit international, et il ne sera apporté aucun obstacle à ce que l'engagé puisse se rendre chez l'Agent Consulaire et entrer en rapport avec lui; le tout sans préjudice, bien entendu, des obligations résultant de l'engagement."

Je crois utile d'appeler, de nouveau, votre attention sur ces dispositions qui ont déjà, à plusieurs reprises (Janvier 22, 1870, No. 14; 15 Juillet, 1870, &c.), fait l'objet de nombreuses recommandations, et de bien préciser vos obligations à cet égard.

Tout immigrant qui se présente à votre bureau et déclare vouloir venir à St. Denis pour porter ses réclamations devant le Consul doit être pourvu, immédiatement, du permis nécessaire. Sous aucun prétexte cette passe ne doit lui être refusée, et vous n'avez pas à vous enquerir de la nature des réclamations qu'il a à faire entendre. C'est pour l'immigrant un droit absolu, et vous n'avez à y apporter aucune entrave. Il demeure bien entendu que la remise de cette passe ne peut, en aucun cas, tenir lieu du duplicata de livrets que vous devez toujours continuer à délivrer aux immigrants de votre circonscription qui n'en seraient pas encore pourvus.

Je vous recommande, particulièrement, de prendre les dispositions nécessaires pour que, même en votre absence, les passes puissent être délivrées aux Indiens qui se présenteront à votre bureau pour les réclamer.

Il est indispensable que les passes soient toujours datées.

M. le Commissaire d'Immigration,
St. Denis.

Recevez, &c.
Le Directeur de l'Intérieur,
(Signé) L. LANZIER.

ILE DE LA REUNION.

*Consulat de Sa Majesté Britannique.**Avis aux Indiens, sujets Britanniques dans l'Ile de la Réunion.*

Son Excellence le Gouverneur de cette Colonie a donné des ordres formels aux Commissaires de Police de vous délivrer des permis de circulation, quand vous aurez besoin de vous présenter devant moi, soit pour affaires, soit pour déposer des plaintes, sous la condition que vous ne quitterez pas vos établissements en masse, et que vous ne vous présenterez qu'au nombre de huit ou dix à la fois; aussi, je viens aujourd'hui vous enjoindre de ne négliger, sous aucun prétexte, de vous munir de ce permis de circulation, car, si vous n'obéissiez pas à cet ordre, vous courriez le risque d'être arrêtés par les autorités locales, et vous n'auriez pas alors à compter sur mon assistance.

J'ai, de plus, à vous prévenir que les sujets de Sa Majesté Britannique, en se figurant généralement que je suis toujours disposé à recevoir leurs plaintes et leurs accusations contre leurs engagistes, sont dans l'erreur. Je serai toujours disposé à intercéder en votre faveur près des autorités, quand la nature de vos plaintes sera sérieuse et valable, mais ceux des Indiens qui porteront de fausses accusations contre leurs engagistes, encourront mon mécontentement et s'exposeront à un châtement bien mérité, de la part des autorités.

Fait à St. Denis, ce jour, le 1 Mars, 1875.

(Signé) GERALD RAOUL PERRY,
Consul de Sa Majesté Britannique.

The only arrêté of importance issued by this Local Government since the publication of Mr. Blunt's compilation is the foregoing, which was drawn up by Governor de Lormel at my suggestion, and with the understanding that I, on my side, should issue a notice to the Indians warning them to supply themselves with a pass when they had occasion to come to the Consulate with complaints. (*Vide* Despatch to Lord Derby, No. 8, of the 1st of March 1875, and enclosures.)

This arrangement lasted until the departure of Governor de Lormel in September 1875, when it fell to the ground at once. (*Vide* Despatch to Lord Derby, No. 76, December 1, 1875, and enclosures.)

Consul's position.

The undefined position of Her Majesty's Consul in Réunion is a source of constant annoyance, and gives rise to endless questioning.

The position is analogous to no other in the Consular Service, the Consul having been appointed under a Special Convention to act as protector to many thousands of Her Majesty's Indian subjects who are in Réunion for the benefit of the Colony.

In fact, the immigration and the Consul are inseparable. Were there no immigrants, there would be no Consul, and *vice versa*. Under these circumstances one would suppose that this Local Government would do all in their power to co-operate with the Consul in guarding the interests of the Indian immigrants, instead of which he meets with hostility and resistance.

Suggestions on his part, however mildly put, are met in an evasive and contradictory spirit. It seems enough for the Consul to recommend the advisability of a measure being taken, for the Administration to raise obstacles, and remonstrances on his part, or on the part of Her Majesty's Government, are looked upon by both Administrators and planters as an unwarrantable interference.

What makes the Consul's position infinitely worse than it would otherwise be, is the absence of a Consular Convention between France and Great Britain, and no clause having been inserted in the Convention of 1861 securing unto him the authority which his exceptional duties as Protector of Immigrants demand.

In a country like this, so cut off from the rest of the world, it is most essential that the British Consul should at least have conferred upon him the privilege granted by France to the

Consuls of other nations with whom Consular Conventions have been exchanged, and that this Local Government should be made to understand that the Consul here is not merely a Commercial Agent, and that his functions and positions can in no wise be likened to those of French Consuls in British territory.

Without some such understanding, it is difficult for him to act with success, even should the Immigration Service in this island be forced out of its present apathetic and disorganized state.

(Signed) GERALD RAOUL PERRY,

British Consulate, Réunion, October 7, 1874.

Her Britannic Majesty's Consul.

No. 70.

No. 442.

Ordered that the following telegram be despatched to the British Consular Agents at Pondicherry and Karikal :—

“Your telegram of July 1876. Is emigration to Réunion likely to recommence this year. If so, when.”

FORT ST. GEORGE,
5th April 1877.

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Offg. Chief Secretary.

No. 71. *Telegram from the British Consular Agent, Pondicherry, to the Officiating Chief Secretary to Government, dated Pondicherry, 5th April 1877.*

Emigration for Réunion commenced March fifteenth. Ship *Lacydon* left with first convoy.

No. 72. *Telegram from the British Consular Agent, Karikal, to the Officiating Chief Secretary to Government, dated Karikal, 6th April 1877.*

Emigration to Bourbon began in February. First batch of emigrants left last month; next probably leaves Pondicherry to-morrow.

No. 73. ORDER THEREON, 12th April 1877, No. 490.

Ordered that the Despatch, recorded in the foregoing Proceedings, with its enclosures, be communicated to the British Consular Agents at Pondicherry and Karikal, and to the Protector of Emigrants, and that the following letter be addressed to the Government of India.

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Offg. Chief Secretary.

No. 74. *To the Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Revenue, Agriculture, and Commerce, dated Fort St. George, 12th April 1877, No. 491.*

With reference to telegram from the Government of India, dated 30th June 1876, and reply thereto from this Government, dated 4th July, intimating that there was “No emigration at present to Réunion. Expected to recommence at Pondicherry and Karikal early next year. At Madras, uncertain.” I am directed to request,

* 1876.

with reference to the Report* on the Colony, drawn up by Her Majesty's Consul there, at the instance of the Government of India, copy of which has been

forwarded to this Government by the Secretary of State, whether, with reference to the circumstances set forth in the report regarding the treatment of Indian coolies, the Government of India intend taking any action to preclude emigration to Réunion.

2. From the enclosed copies of telegrams from the British Consular Agents at Pondicherry and Karikal, it will be observed that emigration to Réunion and Bourbon has recommenced.

(Signed) D. F. CARMICHAEL,
Offg. Chief Secretary.

Bohl. of 1877 30th Nov

-PUBLIC-

THE BRITISH CONSULAR
AGENT AT LONDICHERY

At the ...

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APRIL
Nos. 60-74.



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Handwritten signature and text:
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