

WOOLLEY

Career	1
Comments	0 ² / ₃
Interview	35
Answers	8 ² / ₃

3000 words

L WOOLF

* Career	1
Comments	1
Interview	31 ¹ / ₄

Missing

NIHILL

Career	1
Comments	0 ¹ / ₂
Interview	19 ¹ / ₂

200 "

Lucette p 32 No 2 in here. No 4 must be in M'sota.

Unrecorded information provided by Leonard Woolf

Dowbiggin : Woolf liked him but considered him 'stupid' ; said that Dowbiggin often did not think before he acted .

Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranayake : 'an awful man'; a terrible 'snob'; 'a time-server'.

LEONARD SIDNEY WOOLF

b. 25 November 1880.

B.A., Cantab.

C.C.S. 1904 - 1911

19 Nov. 1904	apptd. to C.C.S.
17 Dec. 1904	attached to the Col. Sec's Office.
4 Jan. 1905	attached to the Jaffna Kachcheri.
16 May 1905	Additional P.M., Jaffna.
18 Feb. 1906	Additional A.G.A., Northern Province and Additional P.M. and Com'er of Requests at Mannar and Puttalam in connection with the Pearl Fishery.
15 Aug. 1906	Acting A.G.A., Mannar.
16 Sept. 1906	attached to Jaffna Kachcheri.
13 May 1907	O.A. to G.A., Northern Province.
18 Aug. 1907	O.A. to G.A., Central Province.
29 Aug. 1908	A.G.A., Hambantota.

Leonard Woolf has already presented to the world many of his experiences and his views on colonial life in Ceylon. The interview covered some of the same ground but was able to set off from the base he had already provided.

In his 80's, and an eminent man who had outlived most contemporaries , he was not in the least worried about what others would say and presented his views in an absolutely candid manner with little regard to the recorder. He also had the courage of his convictions.

There can be no question about his intellectual calibre; his perception and his industry in the field while in Ceylon. The great danger was that he would be ultra-critical towards Government during the interview. But my impression is that he was quite fair. For example , while critical of Government's restrictions on chenaing in Hambantota District he was ready to see that they had a case for their policy in general. For example, while he said that the British were often arrogant and slighted Ceylonese, he pointed out that at times the Ceylonese also imagined slights, where there were none.

His appraisal of men, of course, was severe. His ability was such that he demanded a great deal from other officials and would not suffer fools gladly; (at least in historical verdicts). His books reveal many a sign of some conceit , but as I suspected then, his interview indicates that he is quite aware of this. Is the apparent conceit rather the result of dispassionate candidness than a desire to blow one's own trumpet?

Regarding racial questions, he was virtually unprejudiced and very objective; his views would be extremely valuable here.

It must be remembered that his experiences in Ceylon span a very short period in the first decade of the 20 th century. By the 1920's the climate of thought in the world at large had changed in many ways while the post-war Civil Servants were not of the same ilk as those recruited a generation or two earlier. Hence some care is needed when generalising from Mr. Woolf's evidence.

M.W.Roberts

22.12.65

INTERVIEW WITH MR. LEONARD WOOLF

22 DECEMBER 1965.

- I. Did you ever think of going - joining the I.C.S., the Indian Civil Service?
- W. No, because I was over age.
- I. Oh, I see.
- W. I thought I would get into the Home Civil. So I left it until my last year. And that was ^ayear too late for the Indian Civil but you could take, what was called, the Cadets. And then I was - did worse than I thought I should, and would have only got something like the Inland Revenue or the Post Office, I decided to go ...
- I. Out to Ceylon?
- W. To the east.
- I. Did you find when you were out in Ceylon and having to cope with administration that your public [school life] helped you at all in this work?
- W. I don't think its possible to answer that with a 'yes' or 'no' really. I mean one's public school life made one more or less what one was, up to a point. And - I think the public school system in those days was very bad in some ways, but quite good in others. Helped one in some ways.
- I. Yes, I was especially thinking of the - well, they say that it gives you more assurance and more a sense of responsibility and training in all these sort of things. Does it really?
- W. To a certain extent, I think, it does. As you go up the school you get more and more responsibility. And you take a certain amount of administrative business at school which teaches you something. And the theory is that you ought to be able to do anything. So that you are not frightened of taking responsibility.
- I. What about university life?
- W. Well, this is the same I should have said. I mean, I think English education does tend to make one feel that one ought to be able to do anything. And that one ought not to be frightened of anything.
- I. What about the practical aspects of work? Well, of course,
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some people are practical minded by nature. I mean practical with their hands and others aren't. And I should have thought it would have been helpful for an A.G.A. if he was rather practical?

W. Yes, I think he is - I think it is. I'm fairly practical. In fact I think I'm quite practical. But to give you an example of the sort of thing that happened. I went up to Jaffna as a Cadet. I hadn't the vaguest notion about Ceylon or anything to do with it. But about three weeks after I got there the G.A. went on circuit and the Office Assistant had to go away to Colombo. And I was left in charge of a province - practically. I had to make up my mind what to do, three weeks after I got to Ceylon, for a whole province. I couldn't get into touch with the Government Agent.

I. Yes.

W. But I wasn't frightened of it. And the province was in existence after - when he came back.

I. Ha-ha. What were your initial impressions of the Civil Service?

W. Well, now, you see, when you go out to a place like that its all so new that you don't really have an impression of the Civil Service ...

I. As a whole?

W. ... as a whole at all. I was rather surprised by Ashmore, who was the ...

I. Yes, I ...

W. ... Colonial Secretary, ...

I. Surprised in what way?

W. ... in Colombo. He was so cynical. He was a very clever man but very, very cynical and, as I think I'm slightly cynical, I rather liked it. But I was rather surprised at the way he talked to Millington and me about the Civil Service and our jobs.

I. He did say something about the Civil Service to you?

W. Yes, he gave a sort of sketch of what one would have to do as a Civil Servant. Very cynically.

I. Cynically ... Well, I think, in that sort of situation its better than idealism.

W. Oh, much, much. I'm all in favour of it.

I. And - of course your experience seems to be different from some other Cadets. Who'd just gone out and then - met the Colonial Secretary - he spoke about missing his - losing his croquet match or something like that and never gave them an

inkling of what they were supposed to do. And just sent them off.

- W. Oh, no, Ashmore ... We were first taken to see a man called Pagden, who was quite a good Assistant Colonial Secretary, also rather cynical. And they did tell us something about the Civil Service. And they were quite serious, but cynically so. Yes?
- I. And what was the attitude to the people? Did they speak about the people and, I mean, about the - well, there were the educated middle-class coming up at this time?
- I. Yes. You see, one of the things about the Civil Service in my time was that you didn't say very much about things. But the whole attitude of the Civil Service was paternal, purely paternal. I mean everyone that I knew, almost. I mean there were some just lazy people as there are in everything, who didn't want ever to take responsibility or really cared very much. But most of the Civil Servants - almost all of them - treated the people of Ceylon as if they were their children. And their attitude was that you had to do as much as you possibly could for them in every conceivable way. But [that] they [the people] weren't capable of doing it for themselves. But, for instance, in - when - in - I went for a year to Kandy; in the Kandy Kachcheri, I was Office Assistant under a very lazy Government Agent, who left practically everything to me. Well, you see, ...
- I. Was it Bailey, Allanson Bailey?
- W. No, that was J.P. Lewis.
- I. Ah, J.P. Lewis.
- W. Very old. He retired not so very long after that. But you see, I, and I think nine out of ten Civil Servants, always took the part of the Sinhalese against the planters. Always. I mean they - and the planters always used to complain that the Civil Service was against them and for the Sinhalese. And that was the - it was paternalism of that sort.
- I. Yes, I can quite see where - I mean I'm not against this sort of thing. But I was wondering whether, when you got this educated Ceylonese group gradually emerging whether they - some of the Civil Servants - tended to be cynical towards their constitutional demands. For instance, I know of an example in 1908. This is Bowes. When they were - 1909 - when they were asking for improvements in the Legislative Council.
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Bowes says, 'Oh, give a Fernando or a Pieris a seat and they'll be satisfied. They just want a finger in the pie', which is - well, which has some basis but which is a cynical attitude I think.

- W. Oh, the Civil Service was against giving any more power than they possibly could to the Sinhalese and the Tamils. And the consequence was that the Civil Service was much more in favour of the villager than they were in favour of the educated Sinhalese.
- I. Yes. This is a natural tendency which one found in India too. You see, as they - as the middleclass arose and this friction developed there was a tendency to glorify the villager as a ...
- W. Oh, yes, all through. And of course the educated Sinhalese and Tamil were very hostile very often to the Civil - to the Government.
- I. To the Government.
- W. And just as we were unfair to them, they were unfair to us.
- I. Did you feel that some of them had an inferiority complex, which led ...?
- W. Very strong, yes. Very much so.
- I. Which brought about some sort of aggressiveness?
- W. Yes, and caused great unpleasantness. I mean there were - I had a very unpleasant thing with Harris(?) Sandrasekera(?), who was a proctor in Jaffna, who reported me to the Governor for having hit him in the face with a riding whip.
- I. I think you did mention that. When you were passing ...
- W. Well, you see, it was entirely untrue. But he had an inferiority complex. And, as I said in my book, I think the probability is that I was pointing with my whip like that to show something to the Government Agent. And this chap went by and my horse turned like that. I know - I mean I could swear more than ever - with greater belief than in many other things, that my riding whip never touched him at all. And that I didn't know that it had happened at all.
- I. Yes, I see.
- W. Until he reported me. But that sort of thing was by no means uncommon. All through one's career one had to be very careful.
- I. So it would be correct to say that because - that there was an extreme sensitivity which sometimes led them to imagine slights?
- W. Yes, very much so. But also they did - don't spare - not exaggerated ... They were slighted too.
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- I. Agreed. I was just coming to that.
- W. I see.
- I. I was just coming to that. There's a typescript autobiography, written by Stace, who came out after you. He became a professor in Pennsylvania University.
- W. Yes, I corresponded with him.
- I. And he says that one of the faults in British rule, in his opinion, was arrogance. You know, racial prejudice. He's referring not only to the officials but also to the unofficials.
- W. Oh, yes, there's no doubt whatsoever. And that is one of the reasons why I didn't go on. I mean when I came out there I didn't - I had no views either way. Naturally I rather fell into the sort of habits of my people. And - but the more I was there the more convinced I became that it was wrong. And that we were behaving in a wrong way.
- I. How often...? What do you mean by the general - was there a superiority complex?
- W. Yes, very strong. Much too strong. And also there was no self-government really.
- I. Was self-government possible at that time?
- W. Yes, certainly. Much more than they had.
- I. Oh, you do not mean complete self-government but later ...?
- W. Well, of course, really they could have - self-government could probably have been introduced but I mean - you talked about gansabhawas.
- I. Yes.
- W. Well, gansabhawas were a local government, roads and that sort of thing. And schools which hardly existed. But even those, you see, were run by the officers, by the Civil Service.
- I. Oh, you wanted more devolution of responsibility?
- W. Much more. They wanted - there ought to have been - I mean local government ought to have been in the hands of Sinhalese and Tamils. But it wasn't in the slightest.
- I. But I think when they did start this - I certainly know in the nineteenth century when they did start local government their intention was that this would be a training towards self-government.
- W. Yes, but it wasn't.
- I. Perhaps the people didn't take on the responsibility?
- W. It was partly that. But it was also partly that - I mean when you have the local go - council meet, it consisted of the
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Government Agent or the Assistant Government Agent in the Chair, and three or four or five appointed or elected members. They didn't know really anything about it. And they weren't encouraged, in any of the districts, where I was - they weren't encouraged to do - to take any responsible part(?) really in it. And they didn't.

- I. Could this, in part, be explained by the desire of the A.G.A's to make - you know to run things efficiently; and obviously ...
- W. Oh, yes. Yes.
- I. ... if one man decided ...
- W. Oh, yes, that was the truth of it. They wanted to run things themselves. They knew everything about it and they could run it. I mean, its obvious that in Hambantota I could run the local government much more efficiently than the people, who'd had no experience of it at all.
- I. But you think that was bad policy?
- W. Very bad, yes. Very.
- I. Did you feel that even among - apart from the superiority complex which perhaps, I mean, you could say is perhaps natural ... perhaps ... but apart from that did it sometimes degenerate into downright arrogance?
- W. Oh, yes, very much so. Certainly. Very much so.
- I. Was Clifford very much like that?
- W. Clifford was an odd man. He - its difficult to say because he was very friendly. As long as people kept in their place.
- I. Was he inclined to stand on his dignity?
- W. No, not when I saw him. If you presumed, he would; but normally he wouldn't. I mean, for instance, he came and stayed with me in Hambantota and - for two or three days. And he went and bathed in the bay with all the people looking on and didn't mind a bit like that. And we went and were given an enormous lunch by a Malay village. And they all knew him as a Malay Civil Servant. And he was very affable to them and not at all on his dignity. But of course he was a great man. He was Acting Governor and he was treated everywhere like that. He would have been very, very down on a white Civil Servant who presumed on him. More so than on a Sinhalese or a Tamil.
- I. Yes, I see. Of course when you look at it - I mean the people's attitude and especially the middle-class attitude to the British was, 'Well, they're our rulers'. And even if you could build a case for superiority complex, it was not wise from the ruler's point of view to be arrogant. In the long
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run it was not wise.

W. Its not wise, but you - everywhere you went you came across it. And of course if you - anyone who - well, I mean, I was under a G.A. called Price who was an arrogant man.

I. Wasn't he also lazy?

W. Very lazy, yes. But he wouldn't have stood any nonsense from any Tamil or Sinhalese, as you would say. He would say, 'You've got to stand on your dignity and ...' 'No nonsense', he would have said, in just about that ...

I. Question of Government prestige too?

W. Yes. And the natives must be kept in their place. Which he would have said ... He wouldn't have said it to you or to a Tamil, but he would have said it to me.

I. Isn't there also an historical explanation for this? The Sinhalese and Tamils had been used to monarchs and an aristocratic system. They paid a lot of subservience to the headmen and the like. And they continued to pay the ^{same} subservience to the new rulers?

W. Yes. You see, the village - I mean it depends what you're - if you were in Kandy all of the proctors, and middle-class like the proctors, had - were annoyed with the British really. Because of their arrogance. And you had to be very careful in dealing with them up to a point. But a lot of people behaved very badly to them. And I was never in Colombo but I imagine Colombo was much more like that. And so was Jaffna. But in the Hambantota District they were all villagers really, you see. There were no proctors in Hambantota. None at all. There were one or two - no, I don't think there were any in Tangalle. They used to come from Matara. There were no middle-class except one's chief headman. And therefore the whole population automatically regarded the system of Government Agent ...

I. As their god?

W. As their ruler. And they liked seeing him, and liked coming and making their complaints to him, but they did it like that; always. And if they didn't you heard the headman say to them, 'What the devil do you mean by not - by behaving like that? This is the A.G.A. This is the hamaduru.'

I. Yes, that's the point I'm making. This subservience, which they paid as a natural mark of respect, could unconsciously breed some sort of arrogance. At least in some.

W. Well, I mean it was - you couldn't help it to a certain - I mean they looked to you for everything, from the administrative

point of view. They treated you as the superior and naturally you felt superior. But not in the arrogant way that people did towards the educated people. It was like a father to his child.

- I. Would you say that, in your time, this British habit of rule of thumb - of sending officers out into the bush to learn for themselves - still applied? You had to pick up your job yourself.
- W. Yes, to a great extent.
- I. Were you supposed to pick your G.A's brains, if he had any?
- W. Yes, I suppose so. The curious thing was that you were hardly instructed at all. I think what it was that, in those days, you really learnt more from the Office Assistant than you did from the Government Agent. I mean, I had an Office Assistant above me, Southorn, who subsequently became a Governor. We lived together in the same house. He really taught me how to work, when I would have been a very arrogant person from that point of view. Very soon thought that I knew much more about things than he did. And instead of accepting - being told, 'You've got to do this', I insisted upon being given more important work. But I think I was more arrogant in that way than most Civil Servants. And most of them simply learnt from the Office Assistant.
- I. Did you feel that the older hands - the G.A's and the like - tended to treat Cadets like dirt, you know, as a ...?
- W. Oh, no, no, not at all. No, they were extremely - well, they all treated me with the greatest respect really. And I mean they - I played a good hand at bridge, much better bridge than they did.
- I. Yes.
- W. And they used to ask me to dinner and that sort of thing. And old Lewis was very, very glad to have someone who would work hard. And then Price who was the other one, the only other Government Agent that I had, was an extremely able man. But bone lazy and he taught me a great deal. How to run an office, he taught me. He knew exactly - he knew that. But he let one do practically everything. Both of them. And then I got my A.G.A'ship and had nothing to do with them at all. So I only had two Government Agents.
- I. Without wishing to be a theorist, I was wondering whether you could have done with some more instruction and discussion, or some theoretical courses? At the same ...
- W. Yes, I think it would have been a very good thing if one did.
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And I imagine, to some extent, that was later on done, wasn't it?

I. It was. In the 1930's.

W. Because certainly in the Indian Civil you went for a year to Oxford or Cambridge after you'd passed your exams.

I. That's right.

W. Which I should have thought was rather good.

I. Some Civil Servants, well, tended to be cynical about this sort of thing. They - you know, they felt that you should learn on the field. But I agree that you learn a lot on the field and, perhaps, theory in England ...

INTERRUPTION

I. When I referred to theory I was especially thinking of theories and, well, some sort of detail on land tenure and land problems and land policies, in any country. You know, alternative politics and comparisons would have given a person a sense of what he was doing out in Ceylon.

W. Yes, of course, you went out and you didn't know anything at all. You learnt everything from the ground.

I. It need not necessarily have been theory here [in England]. If you went there just one or two months in the Secretariat learning something about the chena problem and its history may have just given you a ...

W. Yes. I think at one time they did, didn't they?

I. Not that I know of.

W. I thought they sometimes - the Cadet was put into the Secretariat to learn for a bit. Not in my time but I thought later on they ...

I. Later on they were put into the Secretariat as Cadets where they learnt the Secretariat routine.

W. Oh.

I. As far as I know. What about this question of routine? Did you - you see Stace's other point - his other main criticism was that there was too much routine. That it was often a question of following precedence and mere routine. He's not against routine; he believes it has its uses. But he felt it was followed too blindly.

W. My recollection is that everywhere there was far too much work. I mean instead of us being underworked you were overworked.

I. I agree.

W. I mean, I worked about sixteen hours a day nearly everywhere. Not so much in Jaffna but in Kandy one could only just keep up

with it. I used to begin at seven in the morning when the tappal was brought to me. And I often was working until eleven o'clock at night, in my bungalow. That wasn't altogether - of course some of it was routine. But it was a continual deciding small questions, of every possible kind. Land tenure to questions about licenses and that sort of thing.

- I. From your experience in Kandy and Jaffna did you feel that the G.A's often tended to follow precedence for the sake of following it? You know ...
- W. No, I wouldn't have said that was the case.
- I. That's very interesting. And, for instance, when you were A.G.A. Hambantota did you feel that your G.A. in Southern Province or Colombo¹ tended to be obstructionist when you suggested new things?
- W. You see, the great point in my time was, from my point of view, that it took an awful long time to get the G.A. in Colombo - there were no telephones.
- I. Yes, I see.
- W. The only way you could get them was by wiring. I was always in favour of not consulting them. I had a Government Agent who I considered obstructed me.
- I. Who was this?
- W. Lushington. And I defeated him. I also got very badly rapped over the knuckles for being arrogant to him. But I got my way.
- I. I think he's the chap which - whom Stace refers to. Because as G.A. - you see Stace went down to Galle around 19 ...
- W. Yes, he was there.
- I. And Lushington got another Cadet transferred because this Cadet was - according to local gossip - was taking an interest in a Burgher girl. And he was - Stace makes this out and says he was transferred to Kandy.
- W. Yes. Quite. I didn't like Lushington at all. And he - I recommended a headman - a chief headman - very soon after I got there. And he didn't even put on, say, a - it was a recommendation which had to go to Colombo. And he - I found out somehow or other that he didn't even send on my claim. And I wired Colombo direct, which was unheard of, and asked them to hold over their decision until they heard from me. And it was rather an unpleasant thing the way he did it. And I won. And he never really forgave me for it.
- I. Yes, I see. Well, I suppose in any field you get a certain amount of pettiness.

1. Meaning either the provincial headquarters [G.A., Southern Province] or the Secretariat in Colombo.

- W. Yes. I think that as a generalisation you - my experience was that the worst of the system was that the Government Agents were old. And the climate is trying to old people and, therefore, most of the Government Agents were quite willing to leave responsibility to subordinates. Too much if anything.
- I. Yes. Did you feel that there was a tendency - I mean there was some sort of lethargy when it came to trying improvements where ...
- W. Yes, very much so.
- I. Let sleeping dogs lie?
- W. Yes. And they didn't altogether like a very active Assistant Government Agent who was always bringing out new things and worrying them. They liked to be ...
- I. Peace and quiet?
- W. ... peaceful.
- I. Would it be possible to extend this to the centre too in bigger questions?
- W. Not so much I don't think. I think it probably depended a good deal on the Assistant Colonial Secretary. I wouldn't really ...
- I. P.A.C.S.?
- W. Yes.
- I. I see. You see, this is Mr. Newnham's great point. He says that usually the Governor had reached the climax of his career and wanted things quiet. He wanted a sort of peaceful reign. And the Colonial Secretary was looking for promotion and, therefore, knowing the Governor wanted things quiet, he also wanted things quiet. This is a generalisation of course. And the Secretariat people also knew that. Would you say that there was this tendency?
- W. Its very difficult to tell if you were never higher than an Assistant Government Agent, you see. Clifford, to give him his due, liked you to do things. And he jumped me up [i.e., raised Woolf over the heads of some officials senior to him] because I did. And encouraged me to do that sort of thing. But then that was only in a minor way. I was very subordinate ... I think probably he would have been go-ahead and liked that sort of thing. Active. I think Freddy Bowes, who was Principal Assistant, liked to be at peace and didn't like to be bothered. The Government Agents were not(?) much(?) better(?)
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than Assistant Government Agents.

- I. Did you feel that many of the Civil Servants tended to move in fixed grooves?
- W. Yes, I think they did.
- I. This was-my point about precedences allied to this really. Well, sometimes you can only understand what you're doing when you think of alternatives really. You might decide to follow the same course but if you have some other alternative in mind, you're all the better for it.
- W. Yes. Of course my experience was really very little. Because my experience was only in Jaffna Kachcheri for nearly three years, where I was left entirely to do what I wanted really. Then the Kandy Kachcheri for a year and then on my own in Hambantota. I didn't come across - I mean the only Civil Servants I ever came across were the two Government Agents and Lushington, and one Office Assistant.
- I. What about the Governors; what did you think of Blake and MacCallum?
- W. Oh, they were hopeless.
- I. Hopeless in what way?
- W. I mean they - they were soldiers and they didn't ... They were all pomp and that sort of thing. I don't think they knew what they were doing either really. But they didn't - I don't think they interfered very much. I mean they came down and stayed with one and made an awful nuisance of themselves. But you really didn't have - I don't think they made much difference. I think Clifford was a very different sort.
- I. Yes, he was very. He rose because of that.
- W. He knew what he was doing. And he had views of his own. And he was a Civil Servant to start with.
- I. What about Pagden? Was he too bureaucratic-minded?
- W. He was rather I think, yes.
- I. Because Bowes has also written a book called - well, not a book, his memoirs called, 'Bowes and Arrows'. And he has a vast diatribe against Pagden.
- W. Which Bowes is that?
- I. Freddy Bowes.
- W. Did he! Really!
- I. Its bound but in typescript. They have it in Oxford now.
- W. Not published?
- I. Not published. He gave it to Strong and then Strong gave it to - to the library.
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W. Really.

I. And he has a vast diatribe against Stubbs, who came, perhaps, just after your time?

W. Yes, after my time.

I. And Pagden. For their very sort of officious red-tape methods, you see.

W. Stubbs was the Colonial Office man, wasn't he? Pagden was a Civil Servant from the start, a Ceylon Civil Servant.

I. Did you feel that the Secretariat, for instance, tended to breed a type of man who was an essay writer rather than a practical sort?

W. We always thought that. The outstation people always said that. Whether it was true I don't know. Of course the Secretariat made a great deal of difference to one's - they had the final say about one's recommendations. And therefore one rather hated them.

I. Ha-ha. Yes. You never really came across Cumberland and Fraser?

W. I came across Fraser. He was in the Land Settlement, wasn't he?

I. Yes, he was.

W. He was at the head of the Land Settlement in my time. I just came across him. Cumberland I didn't know at all.

I. Turning to another sphere, there was a feeling among the Ceylonese Civil Servants - of course, very few of them at that time - that they were kept away from the substantive posts and shunted into the judicial line.

W. They always were. I think they always were.

I. This was a tendency - a policy was it?

W. Oh, yes. I'm sure they were. I mean I was never in the Secretariat. But one only has to look at the lists to see that it was jealously kept in that way. Very markedly I should have thought.

I. Well, my father himself has a feeling about himself and Rock, you see. They felt that they were kept away from the G.A.'ships.

W. Oh, I'm sure they were.

I. And the question is - I mean undoubtedly there was some racial prejudice here. I presume they didn't want to have the - well, the G.A. having lots of status, I presume they didn't want to have a coloured person there?

W. There was that. But you know - you don't mind my saying so? I've heard - I mean, I didn't know your father but I've heard

the Sinhalese - I remember now - talking much more against your father because he was coloured than anyone in the Civil Service would have done themselves. And there was that prejudice. There was the prejudice which probably came from - it certainly came from the white Civil Servants. But, of course, they also had it against the Sinhalese and the Tamils.

I. Yes. Yes, I see your point. I was coming to that in fact because Bowes argues that way too. But I was speaking to Mr. Strong on this and he was quite fair on this point. And he said that the Civil Servants who were above him - he came out in 1913 - the Ceylonese Civil Servants, were not the type who would have been made G.A's. You see, even among the Europeans, he said, there were some who'd never have been made G.A's. Is that correct? That some ...

W. Now, who were they? Can you give me ...?

I. Well, I'm afraid I haven't gone into the Civil List.

INTERRUPTION [Mr. Woolf brought out a Civil List.]

W. off at the bottom. In the way that we were started off from the bottom. And made them Government - Office Assistants and A.G.A's you'd find that they were just as good as anyone else.

I. No. He was not - not putting this forward as a generalisation.

W. Wickremesinghe - Cyril Leonard Wickremesinghe. He was appointed in 1912.

I. Oh. Well, he was the one - he was the first - I think he was one of the first Ceylonese G.A's. And he was undoubtedly a man of ability. And he was, as I said, raised pretty quickly. Well, not all that quickly but ...

W. No, you see, he wasn't. He went to Matara, an Office Assistant. He then became a Police Magistrate, District Judge, Galle, Police Magistrate Colombo, Police Magistrate at Kalutara, Police Magistrate at Jaffna. He'd been eight years in the Civil Service then. Additional Police Magistrate Colombo, nine years. Now, he got an Additional Assistant Government Agent Colombo after he'd been out nine years. But he was sent back to the Police Magistracy the next year. And he'd been eleven years when he was again made an Additional Assistant Government Agent Colombo.

I. In 1923 he was made A.G.A. Chilaw. I know that. But I intend to go into this point in detail. One has to, you know, take personnel ...

- W. You'll have to take the whole thing and look through it.
- I. Yes. But Strong's point was that the first few Ceylonese who came in, on the whole, were not the sort who would have been made G.A's. But I have some doubts about this point.
- W. Yes. Very much doubt it. I mean what sort could they be. I mean ...
- I. Well, there are some who may have been the type who tended to shelve responsibility and may have been weak men.
- W. Well, there were a lot of people who were made G.A's who were the same, who were weak.
- I. Yes, certainly Vaughan in Kandy, in 1915, he was known to be a ...
- W. Oh, a rascal(?)
- I. ... weak man.
- W. No. There(?) wasn't(?) persons(?) not(?) taking responsibility. Also, of course, I always thought that an extremely bad thing was to make a man you thought wasn't responsible a judge. I mean you just want just as much responsibility if you're ...
- I. Yes. Actually that was one of the points I had got down here. But perhaps the answer to that would be that in a judicial case they're bound by - its within the limits of the law?
- W. Yes, there is that. But you've got to be very - you've got to be able to take your life in your hands.
- I. Well, one of Bowes' arguments - he's very much a diehard on this - was that the stability of Government would be undermined. And that Ceylonese would not be disinterested in local politics, and could be worked upon.
- W. Yes, that's what they always said. And, of course, there's a little in that but not very much.
- I. But his main - well, another point was that Ceylonese lacked independence of character. These are his words. And in a crisis they were not cool-headed. And I heard Mr. Ferguson, a policeman, say something very similar.
- W. Well, they all said it. It was one of the reasons for not giving them responsibility. But again I just think its nonsense myself.
- I. Do you think its rationalisation for their prejudice?
- W. Partly that. And partly that if you don't give people responsibility they're not responsible.
- I. Its like pushing - well, the argument was - if you maintained this argument, they would never have been able to get self-government.
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- W. No.
- I. But Bowes' principle argument, and again I think it has a grain of truth, at least in theory, was that - allied to your point you see - he said that the Oriental mind never trusts another - is such that they never trust another Oriental.
- W. I think that's absurd. I mean, I think that if you have a system such as existed in Ceylon, and over a great deal of the East, in which nobody is so disposed to be responsible except someone like up at the top who has to give orders, naturally people aren't responsible and then they don't trust one another.
- I. No, but the incident you referred to earlier, about Sinhalese referring to my father, that does show some prejudice on the part of the ruled towards coloured personnel being on top of them?
- W. But, you see, it doesn't mean anything. If you go around the corner you'll find people who've got a prejudice against Jews. On the other hand if you turn another corner you'll find people who've - Jews who've got a prejudice against Christians. Saying exactly the same thing about Christians as the Jews say ... Well, the Sinhalese whom I talked to had never seen what he called a (?)¹ - isn't that what they call them?
- I. Yes.
- W. The Sinhalese thought the (?)¹ as negro, wasn't it?
- I. Yes.
- W. He'd never met - he didn't know anything about them. But he had a prejudice against them of the same sort which that person has against the Jew, or the Christian has against - the Jew has against the Christian. Perfectly irrational. And he didn't want his district governed by him. And the next man didn't want it governed by a Tamil.
- I. Turning to sort of political matters, did you ever come across any Theosophists in Ceylon? Theosophists?
- W. No, I don't think I ever did.
- I. And what about the Temperance Movement? This Buddhist revival and the part of it, the Temperance Movement?
- W. That hardly existed in my time.
- I. Yes. Because, of course, this Temperance Movement had some connection with the 1915 riots, or so the Government believed. And they arrested some of the leaders.
- W. I think it was beginning, the campaign against alcohol was

1. He used a Sinhalese word which is incomprehensible on the tape, though I answered in the affirmative; it sounds like 'pukshay' in the recording.

beginning towards the end of my time. But I never came across it.

- I. Did you feel that the politicians had a - the Ceylonese politicians - had a rather exaggerated sense of self-importance?
- W. No, I don't think I did. I came across very few, or practically no politicians in my time.
- I. And on the other side of the coin did you feel that - well, I have a feeling that Government - that is the centre - was extremely sensitive when it came to criticism of British rule and of the British in general. Did you feel that that was so?
- W. I think it probably was. But I didn't experience it in my time. It was pretty calm, you know, (?) (?). It began two or three years later much more to come like that.
- I. Yes, of course, in India things were hotted up at this time.
- W. And then, I think, that had an effect on Ceylon. But we didn't really think in those terms in my time.
- I. Would you say that Government and Civil Servants hearing about events in India wondered about possible repercussions or implications in Ceylon?
- W. It was hardly ever discussed in my ...
- I. That is significant. Its very useful.
- W. But then of course again I lived a very solitary life in Hambantota. I didn't really see many people.
- I. The impression I got from talking to other Civil Servants, even those who were there for thirty years, is that they felt that Ceylon and India were - well, they were simply - were hardly - simply were no comparisons in the political movement. And they were not worried by it.
- W. No, I think that's correct. The relations between the white Civil Servants and the Sinhalese were extremely good compared to what must have been in India.
- I. Yes. For some reason or other Clifford never seems to have gone down well with the politicians. Was he a vain man?
- W. Very vain, tremendously vain. Tremendously.
- I. And, of course, I think, its fairly well-known that it was Clifford rather than MacCallum who wrote this despatch on constitutional reform - in 1909, I think - 1910. And, well, in effect he denied that Ceylon was really ready for the self-governing process to begin.
- W. Yes, I'm sure they would have as a matter of fact.
- I. This is rather strange because part of the policy in the nineteenth century was to develop education and create an
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- elite. And now when the educated elite arose by the twentieth century, they argued that they did not represent the people.
- W. Well, that was universal wasn't it really? In theory that was the whole - that was the policy of colonialism. In - of British colonialism. You educated the people to govern themselves. But the moment they began to show any sign of it you thought it was appalling and tried to stop them. It was a characteristic of the British Empire.
- I. Yes, forgetting of course that the things like the Magna Carta were the work of a minority?
- W. Yes, and I(?) think(?) it was ludicrous. I mean, after all, in the Hambantota District, there practically wasn't a school. Until I began starting them all over the place.
- I. One of Clifford's arguments was that the masses were quite content with British rule; and that the G.A's and headmen represented the peasantry much better than the educated middle-class?
- W. Yes, that was the universal argument.
- I. Would you comment on that?
- W. Well, of course, they'd made it - they made it - took jolly good care that it was true. By not allowing anyone to take any part in the Government except themselves. And, I mean, if you do that its true. I mean, I knew much more about the Hambantota District than any Sinhalese in the district. But it was because no Sinhalese had ever learned to take any part in the administration of Hambantota. If you'd allowed them to they'd have known more - just what I did.
- I. Touché. Oh, yes, I was - about this self-government. What did you think of the gansabha in the Hambantota District?
- W. It was a pretty feeble business. It didn't count really at all. I mean it did a certain amount of very, very small things. But it wasn't - it never really did much.
- I. Why was this?
- W. Well, I don't really know why. It was never encouraged. The headmen didn't really like it. I mean they liked ...
- I. A monolithic thing?
- W. Yes. I mean, they were primitive villagers nearly all of them, and they liked to manage it themselves. And if there was any difficulty to refer it to the chief headman. And if he couldn't settle it, then it used to come to the Government Agent.
- I. That's, of course, very funny because Hambantota was such a primitive district and, well, not influenced by modern
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developments like other districts. And one would have thought that this would have been just the sort of area where the communal - and more communal aspects like the gansabha would have been popular?

- W. Well, what would-you see, when you come to think of it, what would it - they used to do a certain amount by work(?), the village tanks, didn't they? And I expect they did fix that to a certain extent. But it was almost certainly under the headman that it was done, and he took jolly good care that it was done in the way that he wanted it. They [the gansabhawa] had a certain amount of jurisdiction and could fine, couldn't they?
- I. Yes, that's right. That was the ...
- W. For a small, very small things. And they did that sort of thing. But it was all so small and the communal life of those villages was so little. They were so poor most of them.
- I. In other words you feel that their scope [the gansabhawa] was too limited?
- W. Yes.
- I. I think someone else mentioned that. So they could have done with wider powers and more duties?
- W. You see, I think the whole - the answer to all your questions is - always comes back to this - that we never took the trouble to begin the education of the people in self-government. And, therefore, the gansabha, which ought to have been the lowest rung in the ladder, was never taken seriously from that point of view.
- I. Doesn't it also boil down to a question of finance? You needed money for doing all this sort of thing.
- W. Not very much. Not enough to make it an effective factor(?). No.
- I. For instance, even - well, irrigation being a thing on - they were keen on, did you have enough money to undertake these village tank repairs on your own?
- W. The village - you see, the village roads, of which there were gansabhawa roads, they were maintained really by that road tax.
- I. Yes.
- W. The people were supposed to work on the roads and keep the village roads clear. And the gansabhawa did do that. I mean, I don't think the gansabhawa ever meant really to do that. I imagine what happened was that they called them out. The
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headmen called them out. And they did the roads, they cleared the roads. The same thing was done with the tank. But the - in Hambantota District the tanks fell into such disrepair. Partly because you only about got water in them once in about four years. And therefore it really - the villagers lost heart. And it was only if you were an active G.A. and went round the district and said, 'Why isn't this tank in repair?' and called the headman and told him, 'Next time I come here, it must be in repair'. Well, then he called out the people who owned the paddy under - the fields under the tank. And I suppose he may have - I don't know its so long ago. I never saw the gansabhawas act myself.

- I. Apart from village labour, sometimes weren't sluices called for? And for that you needed money. You know, sluices for the tanks.
- W. For the village tanks?
- I. Yes. It would have been useful in some cases.
- W. It may have been. I can't remember that. I remember there was - in the East Giruwa Pattu - it comes back to me that there was a large - for village irrigation work which - there wasn't a big irrigation work, but there was a channel which fed various tanks. And I can remember that that was done with money. And what that came from I don't remember. But I know that the Irrigation Department, who didn't as a rule deal with village tanks ... I'm almost certain that they were pressed into doing it. And that we had sluices and things then.
- I. What was liaison like with this department? Did you find it difficult to get on with this Irrigation ...?
- W. It depended a good deal on one's personal relations. I always got on very well with irrigation people in my district. I never had any difficulty at all. I knew them very well and we always got on very well.
- I. Did they have the institution called vel vidanes in Hambantota?
- W. Yes. They were the people on big irrigation works who had to take the orders to open - and there was friction between them sometimes and the Irrigation Department. Because they only took the water off after the Irrigation Department had opened the sluice, the bigger sluice. And they were in charge - my recollection of it - of it going into the individual channels to the individual people.
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- I. What about the size of these gansabha? Did you feel that they were too big to know the area intimately? Or were they too small?
- W. Its so long ago that that question I'm not sure. I imagine that they were quite small.
- I. Yes, I see.
- W. My recollection of Hambantota is that they were very small.
- I. When one looks at all these administrative problems in the field what really strikes everyone is that so much depended, well, apart from depending on the A.G.A., so much depended on the headmen.
- W. Enormously, yes.
- I. What did you think of this institution - system?
- W. Well, the truth was, then, one didn't think very much about it because it was so universal that one accepted it, you see.
- I. Yes, I see, yes.
- W. Universal and also the age-old method which Government in those districts ... You see, the government of Hambantota was a very different thing from the government of a populous and very well-to-do Kandyan village. And I don't remember very much about that. That seemed to me to depend almost entirely upon headmen who were, of course, much more sophisticated than the low-country Hambantota headman, who was simply a very ignorant villager very often. And the gansabha in the Kandyan District, I think, probably did quite a lot of work. But I can't remember that sufficiently well.
- I. What about corruption which is a charge which is so often levelled at the headmen?
- W. Well, I have very strong views about that. And I had when I was in Ceylon. Nearly every Civil Servant disagreed with me.
- I. What are your views?
- W. My view is that there are two forms of corruption. The English form and the Eastern form, which is entirely different. I mean, our theory was that if you were a Government person you were corrupt if you took anything of any sort or kind from anyone whom you were administrating. That was totally unknown to ninety-nine out of a hundred Sinhalese. I mean, the theory of the Sinhalese - well, begin with the villager - was: I want a license for my cart. I go to the village headman. The license costs so much, so many cents are given to the village headman. That is not corruption. If the village headman said
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to you, 'I won't give you a licence unless you give me twenty cents', when the current thing was five cents then that's corruption. And the Civil Servants who said everyone is corrupt, because every headman did take cents for everything, was nonsense. They didn't consider it corrupt and it wasn't.

- I. If I may say so, of the later Civil Servants I met many seemed to adopt your view. And I know certainly my father accepted it.
- W. Well, it was very much - I've had violent arguments with Civil Servants in my time, who said that was nonsense. And that - what they always said is its the thin edge of a wedge. That if you do that then you are corrupt. It isn't true or wasn't true. I mean, a lot of headmen weren't corrupt at all, but they all took money for doing things.
- I. Well, they were not paid much, were they?
- W. They were paid disgracefully.
- I. How useful were the headmen when it came to land matters? I mean did you trust them?
- W. One had - up to a point I trusted them. One always had to be very careful of course. I mean one of the reasons for - I mean whether you knew your district or not, and you knew your headmen. I mean, some headmen you could trust and some you really had to be very careful of.
- I. What about questions of land policy as such? Was there ever any sort of policy coming from the centre? On land matters? I was especially thinking - I'm not thinking of the chena problem in Hambantota. I will come to that. But I was thinking of this policy in an area like Kandy, where this policy of selling land to capitalists for development... And there you find also these peasant smallholdings and there was a conflict sometimes. And did they really think about this conflict?
- W. My recollection of that is that in Kandy there were - it had been gone into with some care and there was certain areas in which it was decided that a certain amount of Crown land could be sold. That applications were made for it and that when you had a certain number of applications you fixed a land-sale and they were sold by public auction. But the other thing was, of course, that in many districts, and to some extent in Tangalle District, Hambantota, where the land settlement was going on, you waited for the land settlement to settle the village and you would then say, 'Well, now, we've got settlement;
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there is this bit of land; it is quite a good thing to sell it if anyone wants to buy it'.

- I. Yes, I see. Would you say that, again especially in the more populated areas, would you say that there was a tendency to try and protect these native smallholdings from - protect the native peasantry from capitalists and speculators?
- W. I don't remember that that occurred in - of course, Jaffna was so populated that there was very little land of that sort at all; (?) (?).
- I. Yes, that's why I'm concentrating on Kandy. I was ...
- W. In Kandy there were very thickly populated villages. I don't remember that, at that time, ever happening. Any danger taking place of capitalist exploitation. I think that that must have taken place earlier when the tea estates were first - but, you see, there was very little opening-up of tea estates that I can remember, in my time.
- I. No, I was wondering about the administrators' bias. Whether many would have tended to be appalled at the thought of a Sinhalese - say of a Kandyan - losing his plot of land or losing a section of his land and therefore having to do part-time work on an estate?
- W. Well, you see, in my time the Kandyans wouldn't work on estates.
- I. Not even as part-time, occasional labour?
- W. Hardly at all. They were very much against it. And I don't remember instances of land being alienated, people losing it in that sort of way.
- I. Well, yes, ...
- W. It may have been but I can't remember it happening. It wasn't a burning question at all.
- I. What about the question of peasants selling their own land? Sometimes they were very improvident and did that.
- W. I don't/^{even}remember that happening often. At any rate causing any difficulties.
- I. Can you remember this term 'C.Q.P.', Certificates of Quiet Possession?
- W. Yes.
- I. Were many called for in your time?
- W. I think a good many in Kandy.
- I. To Europeans or Kandyans?
- W. Kandyans.
- I. Oh, well, that's - I think that was a very useful thing because
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it gave them ...

- W. I think it was. It seemed - its a long time ago. I think it was. I don't remember it in the Hambantota District.
- I. Did you ever feel that, in Kandy, for instance, there was a class of Ceylonese who could be termed land-brokers? They specialised in buying up dubious claims from Kandyans - you know, dubious titles; or buying - getting one Kandyan to sell his - to sell a plot of land to which he had only a share. And then they sold these again to planters.
- W. I don't remember that happening.
- I. Oh, what about this Land Settlement work? Did you feel that it was useful?
- W. Very useful I thought, yes.
- I. A later criticism of this department is that they took a considerable amount of time to settle a village, for very natural reasons. But this rather hindered the A.G.A's in other ways. Because this village was in the hands of the L.S.D., the A.G.A's couldn't - either couldn't sell land or couldn't do much with regard to the village.
- W. Well, I suppose that did happen sometimes. It didn't happen in my district. No, one welcomed it. They were doing - I can remember them doing the Kirama District in my - in Hambantota.
- I. Yes, near the tank.
- W. And the - I think there was a man called Brayne who came down and they settled in these villages for weeks. And I welcomed it because it made (?) - the thing was really settled once and for all. And got rid of a good many disputes.
- I. Did it also reduce the question - the problems of cattle trespass and the like?
- W. I suppose so. I don't remember that.
- I. But it definitely reduced land disputes?
- W. Yes, I mean one of the bad things that one dreaded was a really bitter land dispute, which was a very material cause of crime.
- I. Yes, I think so. Would you describe the Land Settlement work in - as also a sort of - a large scale partition case, in the sense that they partitioned shares - claims to a - partitioned undivided shares.
- W. I don't think they did that to any great extent. I never came across that. But then I wouldn't know very much about what was done. One used to get the village sheets after they had
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settled them. And they certainly couldn't settle the shares of many of the sorts of land in the Southern Province. Because, I mean, you had about fifty owners to a quarter of an acre of land, hadn't you? You did in my time. I mean you owned 1/25th of a coconut tree.

- I. Yes. Well, I don't know what they did in such cases. What was the response of the villagers?
- W. I'm not certain of the answer to that. I think you would have found, my impression is, that a lot of them would welcome it and of course people who would - there would be people who very much were against it. Self-interest.
- I. Did you get to know Brayne? I mean what sort of man was he?
- W. He was a - he married a missionary, I remember, and he was very good in that sort of way, but rather a dull man.
- I. Because later on he did start a new system of tenure and he seems to have been fairly, well, progressive-minded?
- W. He was - I think he was a very intelligent man. He was - I can't - I think he was - had been rather a good scholar at Cambridge of some college.
- I. Campbell? Did you know W.K.H. Campbell?
- W. No. He was - I think he was after my time really.
- I. Probably. And this - of course this chena question, you've given - well, much of what you thought is found in the diaries there. And would you say that basically you were against this strict refusal to grant licences? I mean ...
- W. I think my position was quite simple. Where chenas could do a great deal of harm still, I was absolutely against them. Because they do - of course they ruin the country.
- I. Agreed.
- W. But in the Hambantota District, say in Magam pattu, ...
- I. It was a sea of old chena?
- W. ... where you had miles and miles of scrub jungle and tiny little villages separated by miles of jungle. And where the water supply, the rainfall, was only sufficient in the three years out of four, to make it possible for the village tank to grow rice, then it was simply imbecile to refuse chenas. There was only one alternative. You either ought to have taken the village away and moved it bodily to some other part of the country where they could make a living. Or you had to allow them chenas. If you didn't, they took chenas (?) (?) or gradually died out from some disease.
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- I. And that was what Government was trying to do, was it? The orders, at least?¹
- W. Government made this perfectly strict rule that in theory you weren't allowed chenas. But they knew that really in these sort of places land was illegally chenaed if you didn't grant it. And then they were faced - well, they never faced it honestly.
- I. For what reasons then did they have this strict rule? I mean ...
- W. Well, they had the strict rule for the simple reason that acres on miles, square miles, of Ceylon have been ruined, particularly in the hills, by chenaing.
- I. Yes, but it should have been obvious to them that it was a sort of different story in this dry zone where it was not commercially valuable?
- W. Yes. But, of course, part of the reason why the Dry Zone was the Dry Zone was also that it had been chenaed. And therefore it was a vicious circle.
- I. Yes.
- W. And it had gone on for hundreds of years and you - the Government really never faced the problem as a whole all through the Island. I don't know whether they ever have.

INTERRUPTION

- I. How did you get on with the planters when you were there?
- W. Quite well. I didn't very much like them on the whole. Some of them were nice. One had to be careful with them. They were prejudiced against the Civil Servants.
- I. Would you say that Civil Servants were prejudiced against them?
- W. Slightly, yes. Also.
- I. Well, I know that - I've known some planters myself and seen their life. And I know that they're very hospitable and that - well, that need not be discounted. But I was wondering whether just because they were so important for the economy they felt that they were - I mean, they were lords of the earth?
- W. They didn't, because they knew that we didn't think they were at all.
- I. Oh, I see.
- W. But I expect in some ways they did. I stayed with them when - in the Badulla District, when I went there to recruit [sic] after having typhoid. And I got to know some of them and stayed on the estate. And I knew some very sort of - Chairman of the Planters' Association in Kandy - very, very gentlemanly

1. i.e. in theory.

English gentleman. That sort of place [sic] which they were in those days. Very proper and ...

- I. From what sort of class did the majority of planters come? I mean, were they ...?
- W. Well, they were a rowdy drinking set whom we disliked. They were - we kept them out of Kandy Club as a matter of fact. But then there were also quite a lot of very, very respectable rather upper-class country gentlemen still going on there, whom you met.
- I. Were they ultra-respectable?
- W. Very much so, yes. Very, very respectable and regular country gentlemen, who made their bungalows into sort of country-houses. And their wives and daughters were typical of English country-house society.
- I. Did you feel that these planters knew much about the life of the people - the Kandyans?
- W. They knew nothing except about their coolies. Whom they took a great interest in as a rule, but treated in the most paternal way. I don't think they knew anything about anything else. Some of them, of course, were great sportsmen who used to come down and shoot in the low-country. And some of them hunted.
- I. Did you feel that the Kandyans were greatly indebted? The peasantry? I mean, the credit system was terrible, wasn't it?
- W. Yes, it was very bad. But it wasn't anything like as bad as it was in the low-country.
- I. It was worse in the low-country was it?
- W. I think so. I think in Hambantota District, in the impoverished parts, it was much worse. Because there you had people who in order to get grain to sow mortgaged their whole crop. Whereas I think that most of the Sinhalese in the Kandyan District villages were comparatively well-off.
- I. Was this due to better roads and marketing facilities and also the presence of the estates?
- W. I think it was partly that if you had a small farm with a few coconut trees and a small piece of paddy land you had enough grain to give you, at any rate the beginning of, a living throughout the year. And if you would kill you were never on the verge of starvation. But if you live in a place where you don't get any rain and have to depend on rain, you're always on the verge of not of being badly off but really on the verge of starvation.
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- I. I always wondered why the Government, and why really the centre, didn't think of some sort of scheme of rural credit. Well, they did in the 1920's.
- W. They did. And of course, they ought to have done much more in that way than they did. It ought to have been started a long way before. But, you see, even in India - I don't know if you know the books of Darling?
- I. No.
- W. Sir Malcolm Darling. He was - did the rural cooperative business in the Punjab and really revolutionised the Punjab. But even he, you see, his doesn't begin until a good deal later than my time in Ceylon.
- I. Yes, I see. Yes, well, I suppose its the nineteenth^{century}/laissez-faire attitude?
- W. Yes.
- I. And did you feel that British rule brought law rather than justice?
- W. I think there was a good deal of justice.
- I. Yes, well, yes. I think this question ...
- W. Really. I mean I think it - British law is based on a certain amount of fairness. And that on the whole where there's - the people interests are not concerned - its administered fairly. Every now and again something disgraceful is done in an unfair way.
- I. But wasn't it rather too formalised? For the people, for the peasantry?
- W. I don't think it was. I can only speak for the Hambantota District, where it was so informal ...

END OF INTERVIEW

Unrecorded Information provided by Leonard Woolf

Dowbiggin: Woolf liked him but considered him 'stupid'; said that Dowbiggin often did not think before he acted.

Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranayake: 'an awful man'; a terrible 'snob'; 'a time-server'.