

## CHAPTER II

### THE BEGINNINGS OF THE LAND RENT SYSTEM IN JAVA

#### *Minto's Instructions on Land Reform.*

Raffles was appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Java by Minto's commission of September 11, 1811.<sup>1</sup> In a proclamation of the same date announcing the appointment, his Lordship outlined the general principles which were to guide the new administration. On the question of the Dutch economic system, he stated:<sup>2</sup>

The vexatious system of monopoly which is understood to have hitherto prevailed in some instances to an oppressive and inconvenient extent, will be revised, and a more beneficial and politic principle of administration will be taken into consideration as soon, and to such extent, as full information on the subject can be obtained, as established usage and habit may admit, and as may be consistent with a due regard to the health and morals of the people.

During the remaining five weeks which he spent on the island, Minto diligently collected as much information on the state of Java as was possible, especially relating to the question of land tenures. "I applied myself with as much assiduity", he wrote later,<sup>3</sup> "in a very short interval admitted, to obtain a knowledge of the tenures & conditions under which landed property was held through all the gradations from the Landlord down to the husbandman & actual cultivator, of the soil of the coffee & other lands cultivated by public officers & servants on behalf of the Government itself, of the system of exactions of grain & other produce in kind at arbitrary & inadequate prices, commonly known by the name of contingents." Minto's

<sup>1</sup> Boulger, D. C., *The Life of Sir Stamford Raffles*, (1899), 136.

<sup>2</sup> Lady Raffles, *Memoir*, 103. The draft of the proclamation is in *Raffles Collection*, III, No. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Minute by Minto, August 3, 1813, *Bengal Civil Colonial Consultations*, August 16, 1813.

information was based upon first hand reports from the Residencies, but he probably gathered more helpful information from the Dutchmen Muntinghe and Cranssen, who had been appointed to the Java Council.<sup>4</sup>

On the day prior to his departure for Bengal, Minto presented Raffles with the following instructions for a reform in the revenue administration of Java.<sup>5</sup>

The late System was that of farming the revenues of every description. The Chinese were the farmers & from the circumstances of the country at large, had got exclusive possession of the farms.

The vicious nature of this System is obvious, and has been felt both by the Government & the subject.

A sudden and general transition from this plan, to collection by the officers of Government is not practicable; but the utmost efforts should be made to establish the latter system with the least practicable delay.

It has already been put in action in the port of Batavia, and may probably be extended to the Export and Import duties at the principal ports on the North Coast, and at Sourabaya, at an early period.

I should hope that the new mode of collection may become in a great degree general by the beginning of the ensuing half year. . . .

The revenue of coffee is obtained by a profit on the exclusive culture and sale of that commodity.

The whole system appears to me vicious.

First the actual culture of the land on account of Government.

Secondly, the monopoly of the sale and exportation.

To remedy the first inconvenience must probably be a slow process, and will require much enquiry and reflexion, as well as a cautious and gradual execution.

*Government should throw the coffee lands into the hands of private industry. This cannot yet be accomplished by sales in perpetuity subject to quit rents for the indemnification of Government. There is not private capital enough at present for*

<sup>4</sup> Minto stated that his "considerable body of information" was procured from both "written & oral" sources, loc. cit.

<sup>5</sup> The instructions are dated October 18, 1811, and form Enclosure 3 of Minute by Minto, Ibid. Part of the instructions were printed by Raffles in *Gillespie Charges*, Appendix RR, pp. 269—70. They also appear in Anon., *Official and Secret Papers Relating to the Sale of Lands and Other Subjects During the British Administration of Java*, (1883), pp. 1—2. Italics mine.

such an operation; but it may be invited from without, and I hope will accumulate within, at no distant period.

Leases for moderate periods appear to me the best way of commencing this process, but even this should in the present state of society and of industry be attempted only gradually. Let one or two lots of those lands be let for any number of years thought advisable, say ten, on the terms and conditions to be hereafter approved of. And as a step also towards a departure from the monopoly, let the coffee of those farms be saleable by, and for the benefit of, the farmer, and exported on a proper duty.

Contingents<sup>6</sup> of rice, and indeed of other produce, have been hitherto required of the cultivator by Government at an arbitrary price.

This also is a vicious system to be abandoned as soon as possible.

An abolition of the contingent, a perfect freedom in the cultivation and sale of rice, will soon render it unnecessary for Government to provide immense stores of grain for the food of the people whom a free market will supply without the intervention or providence of authority. This system of contingents did not originate in a mere solicitude for the supply of the people, but was a measure at once of finance and control to enable Government to derive revenue from a high price imposed on the consumer, and to keep the whole body of the people dependent on its pleasure for subsistence.

I recommend a radical reform in this branch to the serious and early attention of Government.

The principle of encouraging industry in the cultivation and improvement of land by creating an interest in the effects and fruits of that industry, can be effected in Java only by a fundamental change in the whole system of landed property and tenure.<sup>7</sup>

A wide field, but a somewhat distant one, is open to this great and interesting improvement. The discussion of the subject, however, may be safely, and must be necessarily, delayed till the investigation it requires is more complete. I shall transmit such thoughts as I have entertained and such hopes as I have indulged on this grand object of amelioration, but I am to request the aid of all the information and all the lights the Island can afford.

On this branch nothing must be done that is not mature;

<sup>6</sup> Most of the last part of the instructions is printed in *H. of J.*, I, 153; Lady Raffles, *Memoir*, 212; and *Sub.*, pp. 4—5.

<sup>7</sup> Compare Minto to the Secret Committee, October 5, 1811: "[T]he whole system of property is vicious, and adverse alike to the Interest of Government and People". *Bengal Secret Letters*, Vol. 13.

because the change is too extensive to be suddenly or ignorantly attempted. But fixed and immutable principles of the human character, and of human association, assure me of ultimate, and I hope not remote success in views that are consonant with every motive of action that operate on Men, and are justified by the practice and experience of every flourishing country in the world.

I shall abstain under the present circumstances from all instruction, and from further discussion on a subject reserved for future enquiry and deliberation.

In separate orders, Minto forbade the Residents at Solo and Yogyakarta from deriving any advantage from the farms of birds'-nests, and they were instructed to come to some arrangement with the Courts for vesting the farms in the Company.<sup>8</sup> They were to superintend the collections of the farms, and were to be granted a small commission on the net proceeds.<sup>9</sup>

Minto's instructions on the revenue system were not precise, nor indeed were they meant to be. They were, he said later,<sup>10</sup> "intended only as a sketch which his [Raffles'] knowledge of my general views and his own research, discernment & prudence afforded the assurance of his filling up as perfectly and as quickly as zeal, guided by sound discretion, could enable him to perform so great and delicate a task."

#### *The Appointment of the Mackenzie Land Tenure Commission.*

Immediately after Minto's departure, Raffles commenced the reorganization of the administration. On October 22, he appointed a Committee under the presidency of the two Dutch members of Council to register all the documents and records in the archives in Java, and to this Committee added Lieutenant-Colonel Colin Mackenzie.<sup>11</sup> The latter was soon to become an important instrument in Raffles' land reforms.

Mackenzie had acted as Chief Engineer of the British expedition to Java, and his detailed reports on the disposition of the Dutch-French military forces before the invasion had contributed substan-

<sup>8</sup> Order dated October 18, 1811. Enclosure 1 of Minute by Minto, August 3, 1813, *op. cit.*

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Minute by Minto, August 3, 1813, *op. cit.*

<sup>11</sup> "Report and Journal... of Lieutt. Colonel Mackenzie...", *Mack. Coll.*, (*Pr.*), Vol. 14, No. 15b. See also De Haan, F., "Personalialia", 600.

tially to its success.<sup>12</sup> After the fall of Meester Cornelis, he had sought Minto's permission to remain on the island in order to collect various Dutch records, and investigate the state of the country. When the Governor-General agreed, Raffles eagerly availed himself of Mackenzie's services. Before he had joined the Java expedition, Mackenzie had had many years of survey experience in British India. He had conducted the exacting survey of Mysore, and at the time of the Java invasion was Surveyor-General on the Madras Establishment. He knew both Read and Munro, the supporters of the *Ryotwari* system, and it has been assumed that it was Mackenzie who gave Raffles the ideas for this particular type of revenue settlement.<sup>13</sup> We will return to this question later. For the moment let us consider Mackenzie's activities during the early months of the British administration of Java.

In order to obtain information about agricultural and economic conditions in Java, Raffles, on November 18, began circulating to present and past officials certain queries to which he demanded prompt answers.<sup>14</sup> Permission was given to use the archives in the preparation of the answers, and the officials were to collect the opinions of their subordinates on the various questions.<sup>15</sup> At the end of the month, Mackenzie left Batavia for a personal investigation of the districts along the North East Coast, and the Residents were instructed to furnish him with all the information he required.<sup>16</sup> In order to speed the investigation another questionnaire relating to problems of land tenure, was circulated in the middle of December to the various civil authorities on the island.<sup>17</sup> Before there was time

<sup>12</sup> Many of the reports are in *Mack. Coll., (Pr.)*, Vol. 14. See also Mackenzie, W. C., *Colonel Colin Mackenzie, First Surveyor-General of India*, (1952), pp. 101—122. I have taken some of my facts about Mackenzie from *D.N.B.*, (1893), Vol. XXXV, pp. 138—9; Blagden, C. O., *Catalogue of Manuscripts in European Languages belonging to the Library of the India Office. The Mackenzie Collections*, (1916), Vol. I, Part I, Preface and Introduction, pp. vii—xxxii.

<sup>13</sup> Dodwell, H. H., "The Straits Settlements, 1815—1863", *Cambridge History of the British Empire*, (1940), Vol. II, Chapter XVI, 596.

<sup>14</sup> De Haan, F., *Priangan*, (1910—12), II, Appendix L, 680.

<sup>15</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Loc. cit.; and De Haan, F., "Personalalia", 600.

<sup>17</sup> "Heads of a Memoir of the Regentship or District of — in Java intended for obtaining a complete Geographical & Statistical View of the Island — communicated for circulation by Lieutt. Colonel Mackenzie", *Mack. Coll., (Pr.)*, Vol. 14, No. 16 (iv). De Haan, F., *Priangan*, II, 680, wrongly stated that the questionnaire was circulated in November.

for any replies to come in, however, Raffles decided to appoint an official Commission to investigate the whole subject. In January instructions in Dutch were addressed to F. J. Rothenbühler, J. Knops and P. H. van Lawick van Pabst<sup>18</sup> to act under Mackenzie's presidency, and to consider how the existing revenue system could be replaced by one of free trade and cultivation. Joint instructions in English were issued to the Commission on January 21, and in these Raffles showed clearly in which direction he expected the enquiry to proceed.<sup>19</sup>

It now becomes necessary that Government should consider the inhabitants, without reference to bare mercantile profits, and to connect the sources of the revenues with the general prosperity of the Colony.

The system of monopoly and obligation to deliver products at stipulated prices, and of contingents, cannot be viewed otherwise than a check to industry and in opposition to the general prosperity of the community, and it must be equally prejudicial and dangerous to subject the chiefs and Regents of the Javanese to an imposition in money by which the population are exposed to any consequent levy of taxes which the Regents may lay upon them.

It is, therefore, the wish of Government that this system should in process of time be abolished, and that a free trade and free cultivation, accompanied by such regular and fixed taxes as may be sufficient to defray the necessary expenses of the Colony, should be substituted in lieu thereof.

But at the same time that Government indulge the hope that such a change may eventually be made, they are satisfied that the same cannot be attempted but by degrees and a progressive system of improvement.

With a view of effecting this general change at as early a period as practicable, and which I hope may in a few years be considerably proceeded on, I have deemed it expedient to appoint you a Committee under the following instructions . . .

It is known in general with respect to the object of your inquiry that the native Regents dispose in a very arbitrary manner of the lands and principally of the rice fields in their districts.

<sup>18</sup> For details of these three, De Haan, F., "Personalia", pp. 634; 591 & 593—4. On Rothenbühler, Ketjen, E., "Levensbericht van F. J. Rothenbühler", *Verh. Bat. Gen. van Kunsten en Wetenschappen*, (1881), Vol. XLI, pp. 71—3.

<sup>19</sup> *Java Public Consultations*, January 21, 1812. There is another copy in *Mack. Coll., (Pr.)*, Vol. 35, No. 2. The instructions have been published by Wright, H. R. C., "Muntinghe's Advice to Raffles . . .", *op. cit.*, pp. 222—5.

That they distribute important shares of them to their relations and other persons in whom they are interested, and that a certain portion thereof is set aside for the use of those inhabitants or villagers who are employed in the forced culture of coffee or in other feudal services. But it is not in such general statements that my present intention will be answered. I flatter myself that in your report I shall find a satisfactory elucidation on the following points.

Whether in fact the common Javanese looks upon his Regent as the early proprietor of the soil, with a right to appropriate to himself all the fruits thereof, or whether on the contrary, he thinks himself qualified and entitled with his fellow inhabitants of his Dessah or village to the possession and use of those lands by paying only a certain share of the fruits to his chiefs? What dispositions of the Regents respecting the lands and their tenure and produce are considered by the common Javanese as perfectly legal and what as contrary to custom? . . . Whether the existing possession of, and disposition over, the products of these grounds, do not prove that there subsists a certain right of property upon the grounds in the common Javanese?

Is it practicable to introduce a right of property on the lands and in what manner may the same be effected with the most facility?

Is it not practicable in such an event to satisfy the Regents by giving to them an actual property in a certain part of their districts only, granting the remainder of the lands in property to Javanese or to Europeans or to both indifferently?

Would it be most useful to divide the property in such cases in great, or small, parcels?

In the event of its being judged most eligible to divide the lands into large properties, could not the rice fields be easiest divided among the principal natives who are in rank next to the Regents, and the other inhabitants of those lands be employed on the terms of tenants or farmers, with fixed limitations respecting the term and hire of each farm, the manner of giving notice to quit, and the cases in which forfeiture of rent shall take place, in the same manner as such regulations exist in Europe?

On the contrary, would it not be advisable that the grounds which are already employed for the cultivation of coffee by Government and otherwise, and other parts of the country, should be granted in property to Europeans?

In that case, could not the cultivation of such lands or plantations be carried on by fixing on each property or parcel a certain number of Javanese families or villagers who should have no share in the property, but whose subsistence might be sufficiently ensured by their being granted the produce by the way of farm or paying a rent — or could not their industry

be sufficiently encouraged by ensuring to them by a Resolution of Government fixed daily wages for their labour to be demanded and given, and prohibiting all punishments and acts of oppression on the side of the landlord?

Could not the voluntary labour of those people be further ensured by their being left under the superintendence of their native headmen, who may in such cases continue and be the person through whom the landlords may direct the services of the labourers?

Is not the possibility of such a direction demonstrated by the manner in which at present certain villages and countries are employed in the cultivation of coffee for Government, in the felling of timber in the forests, in the salt-pans, and bird-nest cliffs? Could not the difficulty which exists from those people at present depending entirely or partly for their reward on the possession of a certain number of rice fields, be removed by giving to each parcel of property in land a certain extent of low ground calculated for the culture of rice, sufficient for the subsistence of the cultivators?

By what means the private property of land, if the introduction of the same be thought practicable, might be most easily and advantageously transferred either to Javanese or Europeans?

Whether the same could not be most advantageously transferred to the Javanese on condition of the payment of a yearly ground-rent to Government, calculated on the actual value of the lot?

Or whether the same, on the contrary, could not be most advantageously transferred to Europeans by public sale, after an accurate survey, measurement and valuation of the same lands should be made by Government, as well to foreigners as to the inhabitants of the colony?

What are the first steps which might be taken to serve as a proof how far the introduction of such a system of property of ground and of free cultivation is likely to answer?

And whether these steps could not in the first instance be most safely undertaken in the neighbourhood of the two principal towns of Java — Samarang and Surabaya —, where the European power will always be at hand to check any unexpected consequences that may arise? . . . .

By what means Government may under such a system of property of ground, free trade and free cultivation be indemnified for the loss of monopoly, forced deliveries of produce, and contingents? . . . . What are at present in each Regency the nature and amount of the taxes which are paid by the Javanese, whether in kind or in money, to their chiefs and Regents, and in the event of its being considered that the Javanese have not yet the faculty to bear a sufficient tax to

be levied in money, whether in that case they could not be subjected partly to a tax in kind, payable optionally in money?

The questions which Raffles set for the Commission show clearly the influence of Minto's instructions and hint at some sort of *Zamindari* settlement for the *sawahs* — a *Zamindari* settlement, however, in which the Regents were not to play the part of *Zamindars*.<sup>20</sup>

#### *The Early Meetings of the Mackenzie Commission.*

The members of the Land Commission met for the first time on February 8, 1812, near Surabaya. They decided that the best way for the Commission to proceed in its task was for the members to engage in a personal inspection of Java, "as the opinions of the Landdrosts, Regents & others interested in the results, cannot be alone sufficiently relied on".<sup>21</sup> Rothenbühler was appointed to investigate the Eastern Districts from Tuban to the Oosthoek; Knops from Tuban to Pekalongan, and Lawick van Pabst from Pekalongan to the Priangan, including Tjirebon. The results of the individual investigations were then to be considered by the Commission as a whole, and eventually forwarded to the Government. A letter was addressed to Raffles asking permission for the Commission to divide in this manner.<sup>22</sup>

Mackenzie himself was opposed to the breaking-up of the Commission. He would have preferred the members to have visited each district together, as this had been his experience of the Committee of Circuit on the Madras Establishment. But the Dutch members insisted that it would be only by close individual investigations that any useful information would be obtained. Mackenzie acquiesced finally because, as he told Raffles,<sup>23</sup> he had been impressed by the exertions of individuals, particularly of Read in the Baramahal and

<sup>20</sup> This qualification must be made to Wright, H. R. C., "Muntinghe's Advice to Raffles . . .", op. cit., 225.

<sup>21</sup> "Minutes of the Committee on the State & Amelioration of Java 1812—13", February 8, 1812, *Mack. Coll.*, (Pr.), Vol. 35, No. 1. Another copy is in *Bengal Civil Colonial Consultations*, March 19, 1814.

<sup>22</sup> Mackenzie to Raffles, February 9, 1812, "Letter Book [of the] Commission", *Mack. Coll.*, (Pr.), Vol. 35, No. 21, Letter No. 1; and *Java Public Consultations*, February 21, 1812.

<sup>23</sup> "Commission for the Affairs of Java — Report of the President", August 11, 1812, *Mack. Coll.*, (Pr.), Vol. 35, No. 20.

Munro in Kánara and in the Ceded Districts, in analysing the mode of revenue collection in British India. Mackenzie's proposal for periodical meetings of the Commission at some central point for personal communication between the members was also over-ruled by the Dutch members. They thought that such meetings would hinder the actual work of the investigation.<sup>24</sup>

The Commission met for a second time at Surabaya on February 9, when it was decided that the Dutch members would prepare Heads of Enquiry to facilitate the investigation.<sup>25</sup> Mackenzie suggested that the queries already circulated by the Government to the civil authorities in November and December should be referred to on such points as were suitable for the investigation, and that Raffles should be requested to forward any replies for the information of the Commission.

When the Commission reassembled a week later to consider the drafts of the Heads of Enquiry, Mackenzie agreed to have them translated into English, and circulated to the Civil Commissioners and other authorities on the island.<sup>26</sup> De Haan has published an almost complete list of the Queries, but wrongly attributed their authorship to Raffles.<sup>27</sup> An English version of the original Dutch Queries is in the *Mackenzie Collection, (Private)*, Vol. 35, No. 4.<sup>28</sup>

The Commission adjourned on February 17, pending the arrival of Raffles' permission that the Commission could divide. In the meantime, Mackenzie and Knops travelled to Banjuwangi "for the purpose of obtaining a general view of the country";<sup>29</sup> Lawick van Pabst returned to Djapara, and Rothenbühler remained at Surabaya to have the Queries copied for circulation.

Raffles readily granted permission for the Commission to break-up, but insisted that before it did so, the members should first answer the general question contained in their instructions, — whether or not a change in the existing system of trade and cultivation in Java

<sup>24</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>25</sup> "Minutes of the Committee . . .", op. cit., February 9, 1812.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., February 16, 1812.

<sup>27</sup> De Haan, F., *Priangan*, II, 681. The Queries are on pp. 683 et seq.

<sup>28</sup> Another English copy is in *Bengal Civil Colonial Consultations*, March 19, 1814. In some cases the English Queries are fuller than those published by De Haan. Some of the Dutch Queries are in *Eindresumé*, II, Bijlage NN, pp. 166—75. Queries in Malay were also circulated.

<sup>29</sup> "Minutes of the Committee . . .", op. cit., February 16, 1812.

was possible. "As the superior ability & information of the Gentlemen composing the Committee," he wrote,<sup>30</sup> "afford sufficient grounds to believe that they are already adequately prepared to discuss the principal point of the Investigation, namely to ascertain the possibility or impossibility of adopting a different system of agriculture & commerce, I have no doubt you will be able to treat this question with every important consideration previous to separation." Raffles was doubtless anxious to show Minto that something concrete was being attempted in the way of land reform, but his letter displays not only an impatience for a programme of reform, but also a rather doctrinaire attitude to the whole investigation. On February 17, he burdened the Commission with the additional task of investigating all applications made by individuals for the purchase of lands in the neighbourhood of Semarang and Surabaya.<sup>31</sup>

When the Commission met at Pasuruan on March 9 to consider Raffles' requests, the Dutch members replied to the first rather abruptly. "[Although] a change might be made in the Commerce & Agriculture directed by the wisdom of Government," they stated,<sup>32</sup> "... it is impossible at this moment for [us] to declare in what & which manner that ought to be fixed." The Commissioners agreed, however, that some investigation of the lands about Surabaya and Semarang would have to be made if sales were contemplated, and Mackenzie prepared a "Memorandum" of questions which they would have to keep in mind during this investigation.<sup>33</sup> The "Memorandum" showed Mackenzie's awareness of the dangers of disposing of lands, so far as their occupants were concerned. On March 22, the Commission again discussed the subject of the Surabaya lands.<sup>34</sup> Two days earlier the Dutch members had handed

<sup>30</sup> Raffles to Mackenzie and the other members of the Committee, February 17, 1812, *Mack. Coll.*, (Pr.), Vol. 35, No. 3.

<sup>31</sup> "Report of the President...", op. cit.

<sup>32</sup> "Minutes of the Committee...", op. cit., March 9, 1812. This opinion was conveyed to Raffles in a letter of March 26, "Letter Book [of the] Commission", op. cit., Letter No. 5.

<sup>33</sup> "Memorandum by the President for the Members proceeding to Soorabaya", *Mack. Coll.*, (Pr.), Vol. 35, No. 6. Note question 5: "Will any individuals suffer by the sale of these lands; to what extent, & what compensation has been usually made in such cases to persons occupying the lands?...". A Report answering these queries is in *Ibid.*, No. 8. See also "Report of the President...", op. cit.

<sup>34</sup> "Minutes of the Committee...", op. cit., March 22, 1812; and "Report of the President...", op. cit.

in a long „Advice”<sup>35</sup> on this and other questions relating to reform. They pointed out that they could hardly advise if lands at Surabaya and Semarang should be transferred to individuals, because Raffles had stated in their instructions that such questions were not to be decided upon until the conditions of tenure and cultivation had been carefully investigated. It seemed further implied in these instructions that until the general question regarding free trade and cultivation had been answered, no transfer of lands to individuals was to take place. If it was now the intention of the Government to dispose of lands during the current year, then the Commission could hardly advise on a decision which had already been taken. They thought that until they had come to some conclusions about the question of free trade and cultivation “the lands ought to be kept in some degree on the present footing in order to leave the opportunity to the Native Regents to deliver to government the taxes to which they are bound; for tho’ it is true . . . they could be provisionally released from a part of their taxes, who is the man that can give exactly . . . what are the real charges & revenues of the Native Regents?”<sup>36</sup> There was, they said, “a dark cloud” spread over the whole subject. Moreover, care would have to be taken if sales of land were eventually decided upon, to make certain that purchasers possessed enough capital to invest in their properties, otherwise little would be achieved in the way of improving cultivation. An investigation would be necessary before such a sale to determine

- (i) what proportion of the produce on the private estates the people would be required to pay to the proprietors,
- (ii) what quantities of land should be set aside for the sustenance of the Regents and chiefs,
- (iii) what lands should form the *Ommelanden* of the towns, and
- (iv) the fertility and cultivation of the lands proposed to be sold.

This investigation, the Commissioners concluded, would require much time, and divert their attention away from the more fundamental question regarding free cultivation. They suggested that the Commission should continue to receive applications for the purchase of lands, but that they should reserve their judgement about the

<sup>35</sup> “Advice given in by the Members of the Commission on the 20th March 1812”, *Mack. Coll., (Pr.)*, Vol. 35, No. 13.

<sup>36</sup> *Loc. cit.*

applications until they had submitted a comprehensive report on the matter of free trade and cultivation.<sup>37</sup>

In a covering letter of March 26 in which the "Advice" was forwarded,<sup>38</sup> they referred to Raffles' request that they should commit themselves to a definite statement about a new system of cultivation before they separated for their individual investigations. "We have considered it," they wrote, "[but] are unanimously of the general opinion that altho' a change in the trade & culture may be most desirable & necessary, we cannot as yet determine on any manner how it could be immediately effected". They hoped that Raffles would agree to "the expediency of further investigation previous to [a] final decision on so important a subject", and informed him that although they would carry out individual investigations, they would meet as a combined Commission to draw up a comprehensive report on a new system of cultivation. In the meantime, they requested that Javanese writers be attached to the Commission to facilitate their work. They separated finally, after a meeting at Surabaya on April 7.<sup>39</sup>

*Raffles realizes that reform must proceed slowly.*

The unwillingness of the members of the Mackenzie Commission to commit themselves to any doctrinaire programme of reform, made Raffles realize that land reform would have to proceed slowly. At this time, he himself had no panacea for Java's ills, and although he showed some impatience in demanding from the Commission suggestions for reform, he was doubtless content to continue the old system of monopoly, forced deliveries and contingents. Raffles had not yet felt the financial pressure caused by a failure of exports, and the consequent depreciation in the paper currency. On March 19, 1812, he had written privately to the Chairman of Directors of the E.I.C. giving a rosy picture of Java, but complained of the difficulty "of applying what may be considered as the more enlightened principles of the British Government".<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> By this time twenty eight applications for land had been received by the Commission. One was from De Wilde for the purchase of part of Bandung. See p. 83.

<sup>38</sup> Members of the Commission to Raffles, March 26, 1812, "Letter Book [of the] Commission", op. cit., Letter No. 5.

<sup>39</sup> "Minutes of the Committee...", op. cit., April 7, 1812.

<sup>40</sup> Raffles to the Chairman of Directors, March 19, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 67. Parts of this despatch are in Lady Raffles, *Memoir*, pp. 105—6.

“The great quantity of Prize Property and particularly of Coffee which still remains on this Island”, he wrote, “renders any change in the present System of Coffee culture, as recommended by Lord Minto, impracticable, but I have great hopes that the accomplishment of the grand plan of amelioration in this and other respects respecting the agriculture and cultivation of this Island is not far distant. I have an intelligent Committee of which Colonel Colin Mackenzie . . . [is] President, now sitting in the Eastern Part of the Island, and from the result of their labours I trust to be possessed of such additional lights as may lead eventually to a complete change of the present system of landed property, without which little can be expected”.

The two important points upon which Raffles wanted the Mackenzie Commission’s opinions were

- (i) the exact rights of the Regents to their lands, and
- (ii) whether these rights could be satisfied by granting them small estates, and so permit the remainder to be distributed as private property either to the Javanese and/or to the Europeans.

During the early part of 1812, although he knew of the theoretical claims of the Company to the sovereignty of the ground in its own districts, Raffles was not certain how far usage had given the Regents a proprietary right to the soil. He expressed his private opinion to Minto that the “Chiefs and Regents . . . may be considered in the light of extensive Landlords who deliver to Government the cash and rice . . . for the use and *right* of the Districts entrusted to their charge”.<sup>41</sup> And in his letter of March 19 to the Chairman of Directors he had explained that

with the exception of the estates in the neighbourhood of Batavia, and of a few lately sold at Sourabaya, the whole landed property in Java is held on an acknowledged feudal tenure. The Soosohonan and Sultan are the lords paramount in their districts; and although the Company are literally so in the districts properly termed the Company’s provinces, the power is transferred universally to the Regents, who on condition of furnishing a certain quota or contingent of produce, and in some cases of money, and rendering with their people

<sup>41</sup> Raffles to Minto, January 29, 1812, *Java Public Consultations*, February 1, 1812. Italics mine.

certain feudal service when required, are possessed of absolute authority within their respective districts.<sup>42</sup>

Because of these supposed rights, Raffles thought that caution would be necessary in attempting a plan of reform. "Although a material change may be gradually introduced," he informed the Secret Committee of the E.I.C. on March 25,<sup>43</sup> "and an entire change of System eventually contemplated, it will be evident that a sudden alteration in this System would be, if not impossible, at least highly dangerous, and that therefore the revenues of the Island will, at least for some years to come, be closely connected and entirely dependent on its mercantile management under the Honble. East India Company." Therefore, when Raffles presented his first financial estimates to Minto at the end of January 1812, he based them upon the assumption of a continuation of contingents and forced deliveries.<sup>44</sup> He estimated that the contingents of rice would amount to 20,000 koyans, and coffee to 130,000 pikuls. On the latter produce he calculated a profit of 25 %.<sup>45</sup> He also expected high profits from the Government sales of opium, from a monopoly of Amboina spices, which he hoped would be shipped via Batavia, and from customs and mercantile speculations, including a voyage to Japan.<sup>46</sup> But in order to secure immediate finance for his administration, Raffles suggested to Minto that a partial sale of lands be made for "the encouragement of cultivation".<sup>47</sup>

Minto's instructions on the subject of the coffee lands had become fairly general knowledge by 1812, and many applications from both European and Chinese had been received by the Government for parcels of land all over the island. These had been forwarded to the Mackenzie Commission for consideration. In the meantime, Raffles had to make up his mind about a sale of lands which had already taken place under Daendels' administration. This was the sale of Besuki, Panarukan and Probolinggo to the Chinese.

<sup>42</sup> Raffles to the Chairman of Directors, March 19, 1812, op. cit.

<sup>43</sup> Raffles to the Secret Committee, March 25, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 67.

<sup>44</sup> Raffles to Minto, January 29, 1812, op. cit.

<sup>45</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>46</sup> On Raffles' commercial ventures to Japan, Paske-Smith, M., *Report on Japan to the Secret Committee of the English East India Company, 1812—1816*, (1929).

<sup>47</sup> Raffles to Minto, January 29, 1812, op. cit.

*Raffles recognizes Chinese proprietorship in the Oosthoek.*<sup>48</sup>

In the middle of 1810, Daendels had disposed of the lands of Besuki and Panarukan to the Captain China of Surabaya, Han Tjan Pit. The lands had previously been rented to him for life. The sum which he agreed to pay for the purchase of the lands was 400,000 Sp. drs., a quarter more than the estimate made by the Government Committee appointed to value the lands. Payment was to be made by Han Tjan Pit assuming the Government's debts at Surabaya, and by paying the remainder in instalments.<sup>49</sup>

The success of the sale encouraged Daendels to dispose of Probolinggo which produced only scanty revenues. The brother of Han Tjan Pit, Han Kiko, the Captain China of Pasuruan, offered 600,000 Sp. drs. for the district, but under the final terms agreed to pay one million Rix drs. to the Government in twenty instalments of 50,000 Rix drs. each. To gain an immediate financial benefit from the sale, Daendels issued a paper currency to the value of the total sale, and proposed to withdraw it in proportion to the amounts of half-yearly instalments paid by the Chinese. Discount on the notes was strictly forbidden, but the exceptions made by the Government Treasury in receiving this paper for payment, and its unacceptability in the Principalities, resulted in a sharp depreciation. By the time the British arrived in Java, the paper money had depreciated to 50 % of its original value.

Minto helped restore some degree of confidence in the paper currency when he recognized it as a circulating medium, and fixed its value by proclamation at 6½ Rix. drs. paper to 1 Sp. dr. silver. But specie was in short supply, and the shipments of prize property and the payment of the military forces in silver, accentuated its scarcity, and caused a further depreciation.

During the early months of his administration, Raffles had to decide whether he would recognize Daendels' sales in the Oosthoek. The recognition of the paper currency by the Government did not necessarily mean recognition of the sale of lands. Raffles therefore sought the advice of various Dutchmen on the question. One of these, P. A. Goldbach, who had lived twenty years in Java, and had much

<sup>48</sup> For further details on this subject, see my "The Chinese Estates in East Java during the British Administration", to be published in *Indonesië*, during 1954, and Wright, H. R. C., "Improvement in the East Indies", *The Cambridge Journal*, (August, 1953), Vol. VI, No. 11, pp. 688—94.

<sup>49</sup> Daendels, H. W., *Staat, Bijlagen II, Finantiëele Zaken*, Nos. 7 and 10.

experience in the Oosthoek, warned the Civil Commissioner, H. Hope, in December 1811:<sup>50</sup>

[I]f there be a place where riot and rebellion may be apprehended, it is at Probolinggo, where there are still a number of relations of the former Regent, and who through his removal are deprived of the best rice fields, and *dessas*, on which they lived in indolence, and whose discontent with the Landholder has already been very evident . . . .

Besides this, the Landholder has dismissed a great number of Chiefs, who however they may have been in prosperity, are now feeling the want and means to maintain themselves, and their families; and who express the greatest dissatisfaction at the Chinaman Landholder of Probolinggo.

The Regents themselves, he admitted, had proved hopelessly indolent and contributed little to the prosperity of the districts, and so the Chinese had withdrawn the *desas* and fields from their control. But the proprietors had introduced new taxes, and hardship had resulted. The best solution, Goldbach thought, was for the Government to remove the Chinese, and administer the country directly.

Goldbach wrote to Raffles on March 8, outlining in detail his idea of establishing European proprietors in the Oosthoek. "If the lands of . . . Java's Oost[hoek] were the property of Europeans", he wrote,<sup>51</sup> "it is most certain that they would be the source of great wealth". But he advised caution in disposing of them. Lands heavily populated should not be sold, and any peasants who suffered by the sale should be adequately compensated. The Regents, if they continued to be useful, should also be provided with a reasonable subsistence. "So long as the regents still remain, they could proportionably be indemnified for the loss of their revenues by the sale of grounds, in the paying of recognition money, and contingents, or they might receive a salary from Government, with [an] addition [of] some *dessas*, from whence they could have the people for their pomp and service; in which case the poll money, . . . the farm money, . . . and that which is paid by the Javanese to the regents out of the produce of the ground, could be collected by the *drost* or others".<sup>52</sup> Goldbach admitted the dangers of European proprietorship

<sup>50</sup> Goldbach to Hope, December 1, 1811, *Java Public Consultations*, March 7, 1812.

<sup>51</sup> Goldbach to Raffles, March 8, 1812, *Mack. Coll.*, (Pr.), Vol. 13, No. 6.

<sup>52</sup> Loc. cit.

in causing hardship to the people, as he had already had experience of the matter on the private estates in the *Batavia Ommelanden*. He thought it would be necessary, therefore, for the Government to establish regulations preventing oppression by the proprietors. Although Goldbach's advice did not have any influence on Raffles' decision to recognize Chinese proprietorship in the Oosthoek, as it did not reach him until some days after he had taken that decision, it apparently exerted some influence on his ideas about the question of dispensing with the services of the Regents and compensating them with parcels of land.

In reporting to Minto his recognition of Daendels' sale of Probolinggo, Raffles stated that he had taken the decision only after mature consideration.

In the course of my investigation into the transaction, I have by no means been inattentive to the serious arguments, and objections . . . to the possession of so large a tract of land by one proprietor, a Chinese, but the present was not the only instance in which a similar grant had been made, and there did not appear any adequate ground for annulling so formal, and legal a sale, (*which in one point of view might be considered as an experiment of Private Industry against the feudal system, which so generally exists throughout the Island*) to be put in competition with the permanent advantage to be derived.<sup>53</sup>

At the time of Raffles' decision to recognize the Probolinggo sale, 950,000 Rix drs. were still in circulation on the security of the sale. If Raffles had repudiated the sale, he would not only have had to make arrangements for the withdrawal of this sum but would also have had to find compensation for the proprietor. Such a task, of course, was impossible, and so Raffles accepted the lesser of two evils. Lord Minto eventually approved the decision, reflecting that "this sale of public lands to a private purchaser is an approach at least towards a more general revolution in the tenure of landed

<sup>53</sup> Raffles to Minto, March 7, 1812, *Java Public Consultations*, March 7, 1812. Italics mine. Compare Daendels' rationalization of the sale of Probolinggo. The native administration of the district, he wrote, "[was] a bar to any experiments being made in Husbandry, it being confirmed by experience that great and useful experiments in agricultural pursuits may be only expected from free, and unlimited possession". (Daendels to the Minister of Marine and Colonies, December 1810. I have followed an English translation in *Java Public Consultations*, March 7, 1812.)

property, and a step in the transition so much to be desired from that vicious system which has so long shackled and repressed improvement by dependent and precarious possession in every district, and indeed, in every field or garden in Java, to that scheme of secure and independent property, the ameliorating powers of which display themselves so happily in every quarter of the world where it is enjoyed".<sup>54</sup>

*The first Land Settlement — Bantam.*

Among the applications for leases and purchases of lands sent to the Government during the early months of 1812, was one forwarded through Yule, the Resident of Bantam. The application was for a decennial lease of land lying to the north of the Great Bantam Road, bounded on the east and west by the Tjikandi and Onderandir Rivers. Because the lands were "almost entirely in a state of nature", Yule had given some encouragement to the applicant, and had suggested that he make a definite offer to the Government for the lease.<sup>55</sup> The members of the Council considered Yule's request on April 16, but resolved that although they were "desirous of throwing into the hands of private Industry a considerable portion of the waste or ill cultivated lands upon the Island", they could not decide on the matter until they had further particulars.<sup>56</sup>

Yule forwarded more information about the applicant some days later. The prospective lessee, it appeared, was a Chinese, who wished to extend sugar-cane cultivation in Bantam, and erect mills for its manufacture. He also wanted to establish a bazaar for the sale of his surplus, and hoped eventually to supply the Batavian market. Although he had offered only "loose and indefinite" terms,<sup>57</sup> Yule asked whether the Government proposed to encourage "so industrious and productive a race" as the Chinese in Bantam. "Under the present Revenue System," he wrote,<sup>58</sup> "I fear that Bantam will yield but little or nothing. The country of all others on the Island appears to me susceptible of the highest

<sup>54</sup> Minto to Raffles, June 5, 1813, *Ibid.*, October 15, 1813. Compare Minto to the Court, July 31, 1813, *Bengal Political Letters Received*, Vol. 10; and in *Bengal Letters Received*, Vol. 66.

<sup>55</sup> Yule to Davidson, March 24, 1812, *Java Public Consultations*, April 16, 1812. *Java Public Consultations*, April 16, 1812.

<sup>57</sup> Yule to Blagrave, April 20, 1812, *Java Public Consultations*, April 22, 1812.

<sup>58</sup> *Loc. cit.*

degree of cultivation, and under proper regulations there is no doubt but a considerable revenue will be derived from it. I am little qualified, however, to point out improvements in this line, and only wish to have the sentiments of Government with respect to the propriety of granting (either to Chinamen or Natives) leases for fixed periods. And in what proportion to the annual produce the rents ought to be calculated in the event of such leases being agreed to."

The Government decided against accepting the Chinese application.

[T]he late unsettled situation of . . . Bantam renders it . . . unadvisable that the proposal should be accepted, the nature and oppressive character of the Chinese in general having so often been experienced in this Colony as the principal cause of disturbances and insurrections among the Natives, that the same consequences are to be dreaded from their settlement as proprietors of so large a tract of ground as is comprehended between the Rivers.<sup>59</sup>

The Government's objection to Chinese proprietorship was also transmitted to the Mackenzie Commission.

In the meantime, acting on instructions from Raffles, Yule had removed *Pangeran Ahmat* from Bantam, and established *Sultan Bagus Mohamed*, originally appointed by Daendels, in charge of the Highlands.<sup>60</sup> His jurisdiction was limited to those districts, and two Regents were placed in control of the Lowlands. In effecting these measures, Yule attempted to avoid all appearances of introducing anything of a revolutionary change, and proceeded as if the decisions made were his own, and not those of the Government.<sup>61</sup> After publicly restoring the *Sultan* to the dignities which he had enjoyed before *Pangeran Ahmat's* usurpations, Yule asked Raffles to fix the establishments and salaries of the two Regents of the Lowlands, and to suggest what proportion of the annual produce of the lands should be

<sup>59</sup> *Java Public Consultations*, April 22, 1812.

<sup>60</sup> *Pangeran Ahmat* was a man of low birth, who had gathered many malcontents about him when Daendels appointed *Bagus Mohamed* to the throne. The *Pangeran* had afforded help to the British blockading fleet, and so received a pardon by the British Government. But his ambition was the sultanate, and he soon came into conflict with Yule.

<sup>61</sup> Raffles to Minto, May 1, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 68. Another copy of this despatch is in *Mack. Coll., (Pr.)*, Vol. 13, No. 7.

collected for the Government.<sup>62</sup> Raffles thought the favourable situation in Bantam now afforded "a fair occasion for making an attempt at a preliminary step towards the introduction of an Improved Tenure of Land and real property amongst the Inhabitants of Java".<sup>63</sup> He did not consider that he was bound to restore to the various relations of the last three *Sultans* of Bantam the whole of the property of which they had been dispossessed by Daendels and *Pangeran Ahmat*.

[But] as a new arrangement for the general Tenure of Land is desirable over the whole island, by which, instead of the feudal system under which the Regents hold their respective extensive districts, only an adequate portion of those districts should be granted them either in full property or a long lease, this mode of tenure of land may on the present occasion be tried in the Bantam Districts, and the Resident, Major Yule, be directed to report on the practicability of this measure and to propose a plan for the distribution of certain portions of land to the different *Pangerangs* and relations of the *Sultans* in recompense for the districts which they were possessed of formerly.<sup>64</sup>

Raffles was at last advocating a measure of reform which had already been hinted at in the Land Tenure Commission's instructions, and which Goldbach had advised him to adopt. This was to satisfy the claims of the Regents by granting them parcels of land, and to lease or sell the remainder to Javanese or European proprietors. For the moment, the Government did not specify what Yule was to do with the lands which would be left after he had made the distribution among the *Pangerans* and their relations.

As a prelude to the 1813 assessment, Yule seems to have been employed during most of 1812 collecting information about the districts under his charge. Nevertheless, during 1812 a rent in kind was collected in Bantam, although details about it are meagre. Raffles held out no hopes of great financial results from the first collections. He wrote to Minto in May 1812:

The general tranquillity and settlement [of Bantam] under European control is considered an object of sufficient impor-

<sup>62</sup> Yule to Raffles, April 18, 1812, *Java Public Consultations*, April 22, 1812.

<sup>63</sup> *Java Public Consultations*, April 22, 1812.

<sup>64</sup> Loc. cit. The passage is cited *Eindresumé*, II, Bijlage A, 15; and Wright, H. R. C., "Muntinghe's Advice to Raffles . . .", op. cit., pp. 227—8. The above was a resolution of the whole Council, but it was undoubtedly Raffles' idea.

tance to supercede at the present moment any view to immediate advantage, but altho' its present resources bear but a small proportion to its necessary expenses, there is every reason to expect that this extensive and fertile country, once reduced to order and system, will not only yield a revenue equal to its charge, but afford to the European Government a profit proportioned to that derived from other Districts of the Island.<sup>65</sup>

### *Crawfurd on the Sultan's Territories.*

While Raffles was engaged in settling affairs in Bantam, he received from John Crawfurd, the Resident at Yogyakarta, a report entitled "Observations on the Nature and Resources of the Territories under the authority of the Sultan of Mataram".<sup>66</sup> In this long and extremely competent document, Crawfurd gave Raffles his first authoritative information on agriculture and land tenures in Java. After describing the various methods of dry and wet cultivation, Crawfurd turned to the question of land revenues.

The taxes imposed on agriculture are of three different descriptions. The first is the rent of land, the second a sort of capitation tax levied on the husbandmen, and the third is nearly of the same description . . . , differing only in its name and amount.

Land Rent (Pajah):<sup>67</sup> The extravagant prerogatives which the Javanese Princes seem long to have claimed, and the debasement which a course of ages has produced in the minds of the people, would at this day make any other notion of property in the soil, except that which ascribed it to the Sovereign, unintelligible. The Sovereign is the undisputed proprietor. He gives one day and takes back the following, and these vicissitudes are so common and the principle so thoroughly acknowledged, that there is not an acre of land in the country to which the shadow of hereditary right or title could be made. It is, perhaps, in this that the nature of landed

<sup>65</sup> Raffles to Minto, May 1, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 68.

<sup>66</sup> A copy is in *Mack. Coll., (Pr.)*, Vol. 21, No. 4, but it is undated. However, Raffles sent a copy of the paper to Minto in his despatch of May 1, 1812, *Ibid.*, in which he referred to it as "an excellent paper". It was, therefore, probably forwarded to Raffles by Crawfurd in April. Another copy is in *Bengal Civil Colonial Consultations*, January 8, 1814.

<sup>67</sup> Javanese *Padjeg*. This is not only one of the first references to the term "land rent" that Raffles saw, but the whole principle of "hiring" is contained in the term *Padjeg*. See *Encyclopaedie van Ned.-Indië*, II, 354, sub "Land-rente"; Vollenhoven, C. van, *Het Adatrecht van N.I.*, I, p. 553.

tenure in Java differs more from that of Bengal, that the ancient authority of the Crown is less broken or diminished in Java, the sovereigns having contracted few obligations from their subjects. On this account, lands have never been given for life, as a reward for services, [thus] laying the foundation of perpetual and hereditary claims. . . .

The whole rent of the lands of the country from property [is] the revenue of the Sovereign, though they do not come into his coffers in the shape of money. A system similar to the Jageer System which prevailed under the Mogul Dynasty of Hindoostan exists under the Government of the Javanese Princes to a much greater length. The noblemen of all classes have allotments of land according to the importance of their trust and employment. All the military are paid in the same way down to the lowest soldier, and even the menial and other servants of the Prince are thus paid, a salary or stipend being very seldom given in any case.

By far the largest proportion of the lands of the country are thus distributed, and the share which the Prince himself holds is inconsiderable.

Whether the Prince hold[s] the lands himself or they lie appropriated as now mentioned, they are most generally farmed to a class of people . . . under the denomination of Demans, Bukuls and Looras. There are few who farm their own lands; that class of people farm the lands to its peasantry at an advanced rate. *It is probable that the office of these people is similar to that of the Zemeendars of India at their first institution before . . . the Mahomedan Government of that country had fixed the revenues, and . . . before the power of the Zemeendars themselves was extended by hereditary possessions of their offices.* With these subjects, however, I profess to be unacquainted . . .<sup>68</sup>

Those who hold immediately from Government usually receive their rent from the farmers in money. The farmers receive it from the husbandmen, sometimes in money and sometimes in kind, where in the latter manner, the usual terms are one half of the crop to the landlord.

The condition of the two last classes is but very indifferent, particularly the husbandmen. The farmers will generally make a profit on each [jung] of three or four Spanish Dollars. Even to enable them to do this they are forced to oppress the people

<sup>68</sup> Italics mine. Crawford remarked earlier in his paper: "[T]here is a class of people above the labouring poor that deserve to be mentioned. These, according to the extent of their authority, are called Deman, Bukul or Loora. *These men are in fact the Zimeendars of Hindoostan, stript of their hereditary claims.*" See pp. 118—9.

who, generally speaking, can gain no more than a bare subsistence.

The same arbitrary conduct which the Sovereign observes to those who receive land from him is practised by those upon the Demans, Bukuls, and Loozas, and these exercise the same privilege over the husbandmen. Leases are altogether unknown. He who gets possession today may be removed tomorrow. Instances of the greatest oppression and injustice originating in this System are of daily occurrence. They are carried to such a length that even the tameness of the Javanese is unable to submit to them, and bloody quarrels are the frequent consequence.

The fear of such results, and some attention to self-interest, appear the only bounds to the tyranny and exactions of the Javanese rulers. The rents are raised at pleasure and fines imposed on every trifling pretext.

Notwithstanding all this, and the indifference, sloth and indolence which such a state of society breeds, a stranger will be surprized to see the rich and fertile appearance of the Country, an appearance indeed, so flattering that it were no easy matter to convey an adequate impression of it. One may travel a hundred miles in this country, and hardly see anything but the most luxuriant cultivation. To the truth of this observation all who have visited Java will bear ample testimony. To account for so extraordinary an appearance, apparently contrary to all principle and experience, it should be remembered that the soil of the country is so uniformly rich and productive, that a man finds it here no difficult matter to provide for a family, that population has consequently increased rapidly, that new land must be necessarily cultivated for the subsistence of these new mouths, and that almost all the labour of the community is bestowed on the soil, because food is indispensable, and there is neither trade nor manufacturers which procure it from abroad.

Crawfurd went on to discuss the other levies imposed on the people, such as the tax on doors, and the contributions demanded for the up-keep of the roads. He concluded that the radical defect of the native administration was that "the labourer not only cannot be sure that he shall enjoy the fruits of his labour, but it is even *certain* that he shall be plundered of the greatest part of them. He has consequently little inducement to toil for more than a bare subsistence, and idleness makes him the stupid and indolent being which we observe a Javanese in common with all who live in such a state of society to be". The first step towards the improvement of the situation of the peasants, Crawfurd thought, was the granting of

leases. In time, when capital had been increased, lands could be sold. He had in mind a permanent settlement of the revenue on the Bengal pattern. But he advised Raffles to proceed carefully if this course were adopted, because there was no class in Java who could make similar claims to proprietary rights to the soil as the *Zamindars* had done. With the security resulting from definite leases, the condition of the Javanese peasant would be much improved.

The fruits of his toil once secured to the labourer, we might reasonably expect rapid improvement in a country with so numerous a population, and where the necessity of providing for a family will soon become an additional spur to industry. It indeed deserves to be remarked that the operation of this last cause has within the memory of many people now alive increased to a surprising degree the agricultural industry and skill of the Javanese, a circumstance which they themselves do not fail to observe.

Raffles was undoubtedly in receipt of Crawford's "Observations" before he ordered Yule to introduce a land lease system in Bantam, and there can be little doubt that it exerted a considerable influence upon his ideas on the question. If nothing else, it removed any doubts which he had regarding the rights of the Regents to their lands. Crawford's report convinced Raffles that the rights of the other Regents in Java could be treated in a similar way.

*Raffles suggests the Bantam Settlement for the rest of Java.*

On April 22, Raffles wrote to Mackenzie asking him to enquire among the Commission's members how far they thought the principles of the Bantam settlement could be applied throughout Java as a means of improving cultivation, and whether it was advisable to grant lands to the Regents and other chiefs in full property, or long lease, pending the final report of the Commission.<sup>69</sup> When the query was circulated, the Dutch Commissioners showed some impatience at Raffles' continual pestering. Rothenbühler stated quite bluntly that he knew nothing of Bantam, and would have preferred to have arrived at some solution to the more general question relating to free trade and cultivation, before attempting an answer to the more

<sup>69</sup> Raffles' letter to Mackenzie does not exist. Its contents can be gathered from a letter of Mackenzie's to Rothenbühler dated May 7, 1812. "Letter Book [of the] Commission", *op. cit.*, Letter No. 9.

specific query. Nevertheless, he thought that as the Regents were "in general little fit[ted] for the promotion of diligence & industry",<sup>70</sup> there could be little objection to resigning to them and their families, and other principal chiefs, lands in propey, at least until their deaths. The Government could extend the grants to their heirs if it thought fit. The adoption of such a plan, Rothenbühler argued, would have the advantage of raising the Regent class from idleness by requiring them to take an active interest in their lands. The remaining grounds left after distribution to the Regents should be let or sold, preferably to Europeans, and thereafter sparingly "to such Natives of whose diligence one can be fully assured, as they are . . . in general so lazy & indifferent that little good is to be expected of them in regard to the improvement of agriculture".<sup>71</sup> Rothenbühler considered that the Chinese, being an industrious race, might have some lands sold to them, but not in great quantities because they oppressed the Javanese. Moreover, their "exorbitant thirst after wealth" could hardly encourage among the people those characteristics of diligence which Raffles had in mind. The Government should always have the right, Rothenbühler concluded, to transfer lands wholly or in part for services rendered.

Lawick van Pabst, in his reply to Raffles, reiterated Rothenbühler's objections to Chinese proprietorship, but stated that he knew nothing of Bantam, so could not offer anything specific in the way of an answer.<sup>72</sup> Knops apparently did not reply to Raffles' query.

#### *Raffles informs Lord Minto about Land Reform.*

The early months of the British administration of Java had been a busy time for Raffles. He had not only to master the intricate details of government in the Company's districts, but had also to conclude treaties with the *Susuhunan* and *Sultan*.<sup>73</sup> The result was that he did not have time to tell his patron of his plans for land reform. In February 1812, Minto had written hinting that he would like to hear something on the subject.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Rothenbühler to Mackenzie, May 30, 1812, "Letters read in Committee on the 12th August 1812", *Mack. Coll., (Pr.)*, Vol. 35, No. 18, Letter No. 6.

<sup>71</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>72</sup> Lawick van Pabst to Mackenzie, no date, *Ibid.*, Letter No. 7.

<sup>73</sup> Deventer, M. L. van, *N.G.*, pp. 314—9.

<sup>74</sup> Minto to Raffles, February 26, 1812, *Raffles Collection*, I, No. 14.

At the end of January, Raffles had sent an estimate of the proposed revenues of Java, together with some other information to Bengal, but the arrival of Minto's February letter made him take time off to give his superior a full account of the changes which had been effected in the administration. This despatch of May 1, 1812, was one of the longest that Raffles ever wrote.<sup>75</sup> In it he informed Minto of the measures taken by Yule to pacify Bantam, but he did not refer specifically to the instructions which had been issued on the subject of leasing lands. Instead, he enclosed the whole of the documents relating to the Bantam settlement. Unfortunately they never reached Bengal.<sup>76</sup> Raffles did, however, enter fully into the question of the rights of the Regents with respect to their lands, and the subject of land tenure generally. The Dutch Company, he explained, had possessed the same rights as the *Susuhunan* and *Sultan*, who were regarded as "the ultimate Proprietors of the land" in their own territories.<sup>77</sup> The Company had, therefore, drawn its revenues and services from the Regents, who in turn had been granted allotments of land. But their tenure was unstable, and Daendels had only theoretically strengthened their rights by issuing them with Government commissions. Raffles condemned Daendels' partial abolition of contingents such as indigo, cotton yarn and pepper, while at the same time he transferred to the Government the right to the extortions formerly practised by the Company's servants. But a measure more pernicious was "that by which the Native Regents were each of them subjected to a contribution in hard cash, while at the same time, the power of levying taxes on the inhabitants of their district was left in their hands." "It would be unnecessary to point out," Raffles continued, "... the source of iniquity and vexation which thereby was opened on the country, and though the dread of an arbitrary power above them, may have restrained the Regents from many an act of oppression to which they were induced by this arrangement, the measure itself seems no less essentially liable to censure".<sup>78</sup> All these circumstances, Raffles concluded, made him look forward with "impatience" to the report of the Mackenzie Commission. Until that report was available he would reserve any further consideration on the various branches of

<sup>75</sup> Raffles to Minto, May 1, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 68.

<sup>76</sup> *Bengal Civil Colonial Consultations*, January 8, 1814.

<sup>77</sup> Raffles to Minto, May 1, 1812, *op. cit.*

<sup>78</sup> *Loc. cit.*

the administration, and "in particular, in the Tenure and Regulation of landed property and cultivation, to which my attention has been so immediately directed by Your Lordship".<sup>79</sup>

*Continuation of Contingents and Forced Deliveries.*

Raffles' condemnation of Daendels' policy of granting commissions to the Regents, is hard to reconcile with his own actions. He had himself six months previously issued commissions to the Regents in the Jakatra and Preanger Regencies,<sup>80</sup> and in a private letter to the Chairman of Directors in March, had actually praised Daendels' measures regarding the Regents.<sup>81</sup> It is possible, perhaps, to explain the inconsistency if we remember that during April, Raffles had become more convinced of the justice and policy of removing the Regents, and compensating them with lands. But although this measure was consistent with Minto's wishes,<sup>82</sup> Raffles remained content in his May despatch to hint at it, doubtless hoping that he would receive guidance on the matter from the Supreme Authorities. Because reform had to proceed slowly, Raffles told Minto that the system of forced deliveries and contingents would have to be continued, if a colonial revenue was to be expected. Thus, while Raffles criticized Daendels' collection of contingents in money, he nevertheless based his own budgets on the assumption that they would continue to be collected. "The Contingents in money and rice from the Sultans of Cheribon and the different Regents," he wrote to Minto early in June 1812, when he presented an estimate of receipts and disbursements for the financial year 1812/13, "may be considered as the permanent Revenues of the Island, & calculated upon accordingly. The prosperous state of the Island and the favourableness of the season, added to the security afforded to the Inhabitants, enables these Chieftains to pay their Contingents without default".<sup>83</sup> In an enclosed estimate, Raffles listed the following as the contingents which could be reckoned as forming part of the revenue

<sup>79</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>80</sup> *Java Public Consultations*, November 23, 1811.

<sup>81</sup> Raffles to the Chairman of Directors, March 19, 1812, *Java*, 67. The relevant passage in the despatch is cited by Wright, H. R. C., "Muntinghe's Advice to Raffles . . .", op. cit., 226; Lady Raffles, *Memoir*, 105.

<sup>82</sup> See pp. 181—2.

<sup>83</sup> Raffles to Minto, June 5, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 60, Part II.

for 1812/13.<sup>84</sup> Raffles, in fact, found the utmost difficulty in collecting them,<sup>85</sup> and the arrears in payment continued to be made by the Regents long after the land rent system had been introduced. In order to give some sort of comparison, the contingents in money and kind, and the forced deliveries ordered by Daendels in 1809 are placed alongside.<sup>86</sup>

RAFFLES			DAENDELS	
<i>Regents of</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i> <sup>87</sup>	<i>Kind</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>
TJIREBON (the three <i>Sultans</i> together)	20,250	1,650 Koyans of rice for nothing	24,000	1,000 Koyans of rice for nothing <sup>90</sup>
TEGAL	5,063	1,400 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan	5,400	700 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan
PEMALANG	1,875	375 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan	2,000	250 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan
BREBES	1,312 <sup>88</sup>	100 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.	1,400	50 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.
PEKALONGAN <sup>89</sup>	6,750	661 <sup>13</sup> / <sub>17</sub> Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.	7,200	300 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.

<sup>84</sup> "Estimate of the Probable Receipts & Disbursements of... Java from the 1st May, 1812, to the 30th April, 1813", dated May 18, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 60, Part II.

<sup>85</sup> See p. 115.

<sup>86</sup> I have taken these figures from an estimate made by the Accountant-General, Bauer, in April 1812, *Bengal Civil Colonial Consultations*, January 8, 1814. I have added various details from lists in *Mack. Coll.*, (*Pr.*), Vol. 26, Nos. 3 & 4; Vol. 38, No. 2; *Java*, Vol. 59; *Sub.*, 178.

<sup>87</sup> In this table Daendels' Sp. drs. are to be reckoned @ 60 Stivers; Raffles' @ 64.

<sup>88</sup> This figure appears as 1,213 in the list in *Java*, Vol. 60, Part II.

<sup>89</sup> In the list in *Java*, Vol. 60, Part II, the total of rice delivered from the Pekalongan to Kudus Regencies is given as 2,905 Koyans. The detailed figures above are taken from the list in *Mack. Coll.*, (*Pr.*), Vol. 26, No. 4. The total comes to 2,898 Koyans, and together with 6 Koyans of rice from Adilangu not recorded in the *Java*, Vol. 60, Part II list, gives us a total of 2,904 Koyans.

<sup>90</sup> The list in the *Mack. Coll.*, (*Pr.*), Vol. 26, No. 3, gives this figure as 2,000 Koyans, which is more likely to be correct.

RAFFLES			DAENDELS	
<i>Regents of</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>
BATANG	3,750	496 <sup>11</sup> / <sub>34</sub> Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.	2,000	125 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.
SEMARANG	586	40 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.	22,934	1,180 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.
KENDAL	—	100 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.		
KALIWUNGU	1,500	—		
DEMAK	5,625	1,000 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.	—	—
DJAPARA	4,219	60 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.	4,500	60 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.
PATI and GLONGGONG	5,625	400 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.	6,000	385 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.
DJUWANA	1,875	140 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. <sup>91</sup>	2,350 including Rembang and Glonggong	205 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs.
KUDUS	1,407	—	1,500	—
SURABAYA	10,312	Same as Daendels	11,000	168 Pikuls of Gemuti thread, half @ 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> Rix drs. & half @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 800 cans of earth oil for nothing 1,000 Koyans of rice for nothing

<sup>91</sup> Raffles estimated that the rice would be sold by the Government @ 30 Sp. drs. a Koyan; earth oil @ 5 Sp. drs. a can; green katjang @ 40 Sp. drs. a Koyan; and coconut oil @ 100 % profit on the 6 Stivers a can paid for it by the Government.

RAFFLES			DAENDELS	
<i>Regents of</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>
GRESIK	3,000	Same as Daendels	3,200	75 Pikuls of Gemuti thread @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 180 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan
LAMONGAN	1,875	Same as Daendels	2,000	25 Pikuls of Gemuti thread @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 220 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan
PASURUAN	2,813	Same as Daendels	3,000	98 Pikuls of Gemuti thread, half @ $2\frac{3}{4}$ Rix drs. & half @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 110 Koyans of rice for nothing
BANGIL	938	Same as Daendels	1,000	36 Pikuls of Gemuti thread, half @ $2\frac{3}{4}$ Rix drs. & half @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 43 Koyans of rice for nothing
PUGER	469	—	500	—
BANGKALAN	6,487	12,000 cans of coconut oil for nothing	6,000	252 Pikuls of Gemuti thread @ $2\frac{3}{4}$ Rix drs. a Pikul. 12,000 cans of coconut oil for nothing, & 2,000 cans @ 6 Stivers a can

RAFFLES			DAENDELS	
<i>Regents of</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>
PAMEKASAN	2,775	7,500 cans of coconut oil for nothing	2,000	65 Pikuls of Gemuti thread, half @ 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> Rix drs. & half @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 7,500 cans of coconut oil for nothing
SUMENEP	6,563	200 Pikuls of Gemuti thread, half @ 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> Rix drs. & half @ 3 Rix drs. 17,500 cans of coconut oil for nothing, & 2,000 cans @ 6 Stivers a can. 80 Koyans of green katjang for nothing	7,000	252 Pikuls of Gemuti thread, half @ 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> Rix drs. & half @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 17,000 cans of coconut oil for nothing, & 2,000 cans @ 6 Stivers a can
SIDAYU	4,688	Same as Daendels	5,000	50 Pikuls of Gemuti thread @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 270 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan
BAWEAN	—	Same as Daendels	—	6 Pikuls of Gemuti thread, half @ 2 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub> Rix drs. & half @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 2,500 cans of coconut oil @ 6 Stivers a can
BANJUWANGI	—	Same as Daendels	—	12 Pikuls of Gemuti thread @ 3 Rix drs. a Pikul. 50 Koyans of rice for nothing
TUBAN	—	—	1,600	60 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan
LASEM	—	—	3,100	—

RAFFLES			DAENDELS	
<i>Regents of</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>	<i>Money Sp. drs.</i>	<i>Kind</i>
WIRADESA	—	—	2,000	100 Koyans of rice @ 15 Rix drs. a Koyan
Chinese farmer of ULUJAMI	—	—	4,980	—

At the beginning of 1812, as we have already seen, Raffles expected to derive large profits from the coffee culture. He had estimated at the end of January that these profits would average about 25 %.<sup>92</sup> However, in presenting his financial estimates in the following June, he wrote:<sup>93</sup>

The large quantity of Coffee which has been thrown upon the market in consequence of the capture of the Mauritius and Java, added to the state of commerce in Europe, *precludes this Government from calculating with any degree of certainty on this hitherto important source of Revenue* which in favourable seasons has been known to throw into the Treasury of Java a clear profit of not less than two millions of Spanish Dollars in the year. The price paid to the cultivators . . . does not exceed three Spanish Dollars the picol, while the sale to the Americans and others was made at from 18 to 20 Spanish Dollars per picol, faster than the crop could be gathered.

Raffles hoped that when the glut had ceased, coffee would find an advantageous market at the Company's sales in England. But without calculating any profits from a peace-time disposal of coffee, or from the sale of spices, which he still hoped would be handled through Batavia, he placed the Java receipts at the ridiculously high figure of 5, 278, 373 Sp. drs., and the disbursements at only 631,032 Sp. drs.<sup>94</sup> He told Minto that there would be no need for the Java Government to draw bills of credit on Bengal during the ensuing

<sup>92</sup> Raffles to Minto, January 29, 1812, *Java Public Consultations*, February 1, 1812.

<sup>93</sup> Same to same, June 5, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 60, Part II.

<sup>94</sup> Loc. cit.

financial year.<sup>95</sup> It was this rash promise, later transmitted to the Secret Committee,<sup>96</sup> which caused Raffles unnecessary trouble later. Minto, of course, welcomed the news, although he cautioned Raffles on his January estimates, pointing out that only a defective collection of the revenue could be expected during the first year of the occupancy of Java.<sup>97</sup> But, he continued, “the evident capacity for improvement which is observable throughout that extensive country encourages a confident hope under the existing Government, that the Island will gradually yield increasing Revenues to the State”.<sup>98</sup> He agreed in all the circumstances, that there could not be any justification for the Java Government drawing further bills on Bengal.

It was into this impossible position that Raffles had talked himself by the middle of 1812. Before many weeks had passed, the failure to collect adequate revenues either from articles of export, or from the internal resources of the island, forced him into a drastic programme of reform. There was, besides Minto’s instructions for a general reform, the urgent necessity to produce an internal revenue adequate to carry on the administration, and to pay the military forces. There were many ideas current in Java about how the economic system of the island should be reformed, and it is to these that we must now turn our attention.

<sup>95</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>96</sup> The above despatch to Minto, together with the financial estimates, was forwarded to the Secret Committee on October 26, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 60, Part II.

<sup>97</sup> Minute by Lord Minto, July 4, 1812, *Java*, Vol. 60, Part II.

<sup>98</sup> Loc. cit.