

The Triumph of the 'Munro System'.

The decision-making process of the  
East India Company  
with special reference to the  
Administration of Madras, 1790-1827.

by  
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS.

The purpose of this study is an analysis of the administrative system of the East India Company from 1780 to 1827 with special reference to the Madras Presidency. The questions examined are all essentially concerned with the decision-making processes, both in London and in Madras. How did the different bodies who together administered India relate to each other? How were policies conceived, adopted and implemented? To what extent were the formal, official channels of communication and authority adhered to, bye-passed or simply ignored? Could individuals within the Company influence its policies and, if so, what methods might they employ?

The developments that occurred in the Company's revenue and judicial administrations in Madras during a period of British expansion and consolidation have been selected for this study. The ideas behind the Permanent Settlement of Bengal and the reasons for extending it into the territories of Madras are examined together with the development of the Village Lease and Ryotwari Systems in South India. Similarly, the introduction of the Cornwallis Legal System into Madras and the subsequent attempts to modify it are investigated.

At the same time, the relationships between the interacting components of the British administration of India are scrutinised. Within this context, a number of interest or pressure groups in centres as far apart as Madras, Westminster and the Company's headquarters in Leadenhall Street are identified and their impact on the Company's policies evaluated.

Because of the central role that he came to play in the debates and the significant influence he exercised on the local and home authorities, the career of Thomas Munro has been employed to chart the developments in the Company's administration and the changes in its structure and policies. In the course of the close examination of Munro's career for the light it sheds on these and the decision-making processes of the British administration of India, other aspects of the Company's administration are also analysed, in particular recruitment and promotion in its services. The operation of patronage and influence on career structures is evaluated and a number of conclusions about the ways in which the East India Company's bureaucracy was staffed and operated are drawn. In addition, the attempts by the Company to introduce a coherent training programme for its employees in India, especially the attempts to encourage its civil servants to master the local languages and the impact of these on appointments, are examined.

Lastly, in the course of this study, a general survey of the relations between the British and the Indian rulers and peoples of South India between 1790 and 1827 emerges. The research of various authors on different aspects of the history of South India and of the Company in Britain during this period are brought together.

The thesis is based on research into a wide range of contemporary sources, official and unofficial, including the Munro Papers.



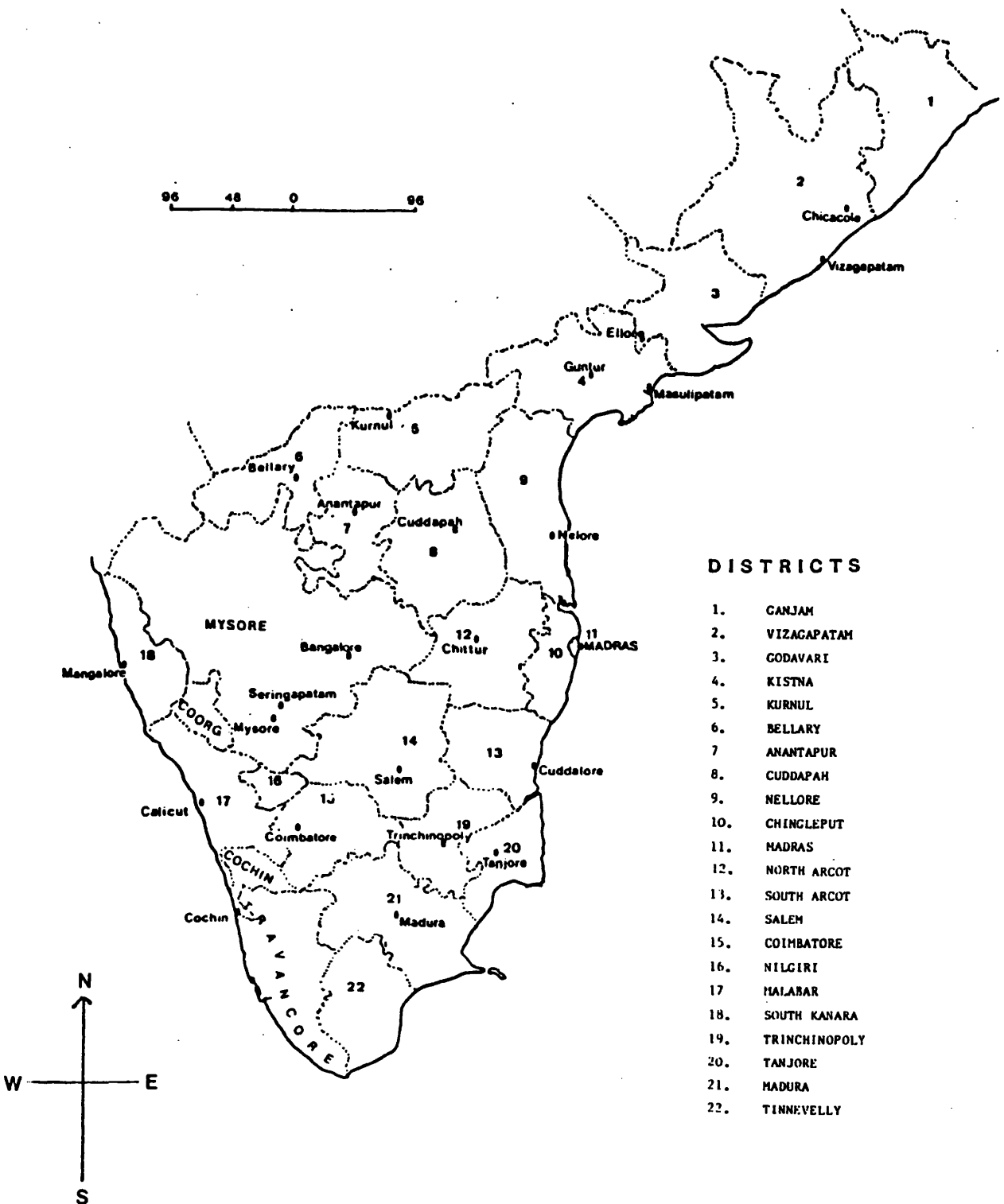
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# MADRAS PRESIDENCY



## DISTRICTS

1. GANJAM
2. VIZAGAPATAM
3. GODAVARI
4. KISTNA
5. KURNUL
6. BELLARY
7. ANANTAPUR
8. CUDDAPAH
9. NELLORE
10. CHINGLEPUT
11. MADRAS
12. NORTH ARCOT
13. SOUTH ARCOT
14. SALEM
15. COIMBATORE
16. NILGIRI
17. MALABAR
18. SOUTH KANARA
19. TRINCHINOPOLY
20. TANJORE
21. MADURA
22. TINNEVELLY

Introduction.

In his study of Munro's career T H Beaglehole described the development of the ryotwari system of revenue settlement and the changes which were introduced into the East India Company's judicial administration in Madras.<sup>1</sup> He was principally interested in tracing the manner in which 'a system of administration emerged (in Madras) in many ways markedly different from that established in Bengal'.<sup>2</sup> Correctly assessing the importance of the part played by Thomas Munro in this process, Beaglehole used his career as the framework of reference in which to place his study of how a body of ideas on administration grew up and was eventually adopted. However, at the time that he was writing, the Munro Papers were not available to historians and it therefore proved impossible for Beaglehole to achieve his principal objectives. He was unable to analyse the way in which Munro's ideas developed or the manner in which they were adopted as administrative policy by the home government. In consequence, Beaglehole's research left unanswered a number of important questions regarding the operations of the East India Company, in particular ones concerning the methods employed by individuals and parties to influence policy decisions and their subsequent

implementation. Dealing almost entirely with the formal operations of the Company which were recorded in the official records, he examined the controversies which divided the administration in the terms of conflicts of ideas rather than of personalities and ambitions. He therefore devoted little attention to the private motives behind individuals' advocacy of specific policies and consequently produced a somewhat oversimplified picture of events.

Some of the questions which were incompletely analysed in Beaglehole's book had already been fully examined by C H Philips in his study of the East India Company's home government.<sup>3</sup> In the course of a detailed account of the organization, activities and influence of the home government, this book had thrown considerable light on the decision-making processes of the Company in Britain. In particular, it illustrated how powerful groups were formed for the promotion of special interests and the influence these had on how policies were formulated and which were adopted. However, because Philips was primarily concerned with the operations of the home authorities and relations between the Board of Control and the Court of Directors, he was unable to devote as much attention as they deserve to the changes which took place in the Madras administration.

It is the purpose of this study to attempt a new analysis of the administrative system of the East India Company from 1780 to 1827 with special reference to Madras in the hope of achieving a clearer understanding of how decisions regarding

the allocation of resources and the selective adoption of values were reached. While Philips was principally concerned 'to estimate the influence exerted by the home government...on British policy in India', 'to assess the relative value and importance of the parts played by these authorities' and to analyse the influence of East India interests in Britain on the administration of India,<sup>4</sup> this study intends to concentrate on analysing the influence that men working in the Madras Presidency had on the activities and decisions of both the local and home authorities. In the course of this investigation a number of general questions are examined, all of which are essentially concerned with the decision-making processes. How did the different bodies who together administered India relate to each other? How were policies conceived, adopted and implemented? To what extent was the decision-making process contained within the formal structure of the Company and the official channels of communication and authority adhered to, bye-passed or simply ignored? How far did individuals within the Company influence its policies and what methods did they employ in their attempts to do so? What were the factors which governed their activities and the considerations which influenced their support or opposition to new ideas?

In order to make this analysis of the decision-making process, a framework of reference similar to Beaglehole's is employed insofar as the career of Thomas Munro is closely examined. There is some justification for approaching the questions from this angle. First, the study of Munro's career reveals much about the ways in which the East India

Company's bureaucracy was staffed and operated. Secondly, it illustrates the extent to which individuals could influence policy as well as the principal means by which they did so. Thirdly, it supplies new information about the influence and interactions of the many parties or interests which formed in centres as far apart as Madras, Westminster and the Company's headquarters in Leadenhall Street. Last but not least, a clearer picture emerges of the events which dominated an important and formative period of British rule in India in an area which has hitherto been incompletely researched.

In chapter one the formal administrative structure of the East India Company is analysed. Its constitution, the regulations governing relations between the various bodies which composed it, the chains of authority and channels of communication are described. In the second chapter Munro's childhood and early career in India are examined. The experiences which had a formative influence on his character and ideology and so conditioned his responses to events and his perception of his environment are investigated. Chapters three and four trace the early development of the ideas behind the policies which, when eventually adopted, were to form what become known as the Munro System. In chapter five the first attempts to have these ideas adopted as official policy are reviewed. From these chapters a picture emerges of the formal and informal operations of the Madras Government. The relative importance of personal as opposed to policy factors in decision making is revealed. The role of personal factors such as career considerations, the

desire for wealth, status, influence and authority, and involvement with external interests as motivating forces behind individuals' participation in the Company's politics is evaluated. In chapter six the events surrounding Munro's first visit to Britain, during which he was instrumental in getting significant changes made in the revenue and judicial policies of the East India Company, are described. These throw new light on the relationships between the bodies which together composed the home authorities. Chapters seven and eight, which deal with the introduction of the Munro System into Madras, analyse relations between the home and local governments. In the conclusion the important features of the Company's administrative structure, which influenced its operations and had a considerable impact on the decision-making processes during this period of its history, are distinguished and analysed. In particular the manner in which these encouraged the development an informal system alongside the formal is examined. Finally, the importance of the operations of the informal system on the decision-making processes is evaluated.

This new study of the developments that took place in the Madras administration between 1780 and 1827 and the reappraisal of Munro's role in the formation and adoption of policies which influenced them has been made possible by the recent availability of Munro's papers at the India Office. The close investigation of Munro's career that access to these permits not only reveals many of the motives behind his actions and much about the perceptions that governed his ideas but also considerable information regarding the daily



twists and turns which characterized the Company's politics.

Throughout the text, the spelling of proper names has been modernized. This has however been done with a view to keeping these names recognizable to the non-specialist.

## Chapter One

## The Background:

The Formal Organization of the East India Company.<sup>1</sup>

The East India Company, which had been founded in 1601, had originally been a purely commercial organization, a joint stock trading company with its head office in London and factories, as its local headquarters were called, in India at Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. The British State initially had no concern with its internal affairs or with its relations with the Indian rulers within whose territories it operated. The day-to-day business of the Company and the management of its finances had belonged exclusively to the Court of Directors, a body elected by the Court of Proprietors. In 1764 Major Hector Munro had won the decisive battle of Buxar against a coalition of Indian princes in the course of which he destroyed their armies. This victory marked a new development in the history of the Company which became a government as well as a trader even if it at first refused to admit that it had territorial responsibilities.

William Pitt had taken the opportunity of this change in the East India Company's circumstances to announce that all

Indian territory must be brought under the sovereignty of the crown. In the ensuing debate, the role of the East India Company and its relations with the State had become political issues. However, the political climate in Britain at that time had not been ready for any radical reform of the situation and Grafton's settlement with the Company in 1767 had done little more than give the government a share in the profits of India. In 1772, the Company's affairs had again become a political issue and the government had once more announced its intention to bring the administration of India under the control of the State. Yet at the same time the general opinion was that the State might not itself take over the direct administration of India. It was believed that the Company's stake in Bengal, Madras and Bombay was still a trading one to which the complicated problems of administration were, so to speak, fortuitously tacked on. Lord North's solution to this problem, which was contained in the Regulating Act of 1773, had therefore been a compromise which had left the East India Company responsible for the administration of British interests in India.

By 1780, the East India Company had, in response to the pressures placed on it by these circumstances and by geographical factors, evolved a complex bureaucracy composed of a set of inter-related bodies designed to perform the various and sometimes antagonistic tasks of operating both a commercial concern and a political organization. Relations between these bodies were governed by rules and regulations, some of which derived from the Company's constitution while others had been laid down in specific Acts of Parliament.

This was the formal organization of the East India Company.

Before 1784, the home government of the East India Company consisted of the Proprietors of India Stock and the twenty four Directors of the Company. The Proprietors, and anyone who possessed shares in the capital stock of the East India Company was a Proprietor, were entitled to attend the meetings of the General Court of Proprietors where, provided they possessed £500 of stock or more, they might cast up to four votes on motions introduced. The predominant interests in this Court were the banking, shipping and commercial concerns of the City of London,<sup>2</sup> which had invested money in the Company's operations, and the men returned from India, the 'Nabobs', who often acquired India Stock, 'either as a convenient form of investment yielding a sure dividend of 8 per cent or as a means by which they could gain influence, ...power and patronage in the Company'.<sup>3</sup> Although the Court of Proprietors might reverse the Directors' decisions and could, until 1784, pass resolutions binding on them, its most important official functions were those of electing every April the Directors who formed the executive body of the Company, declaring the dividend and sanctioning by-laws. The Court of Proprietors had however another important role to play within the overall structure of the Company, that of providing a forum or arena in which debates on policy could take place. These debates enabled interested parties to bring the activities and the measures adopted by the Court of Directors to the public attention and also opened opportunities to the home authorities to test opinion.

Since 1709, twenty four Directors had made up the Court of Directors. The Regulating Act of 1773 had established a system whereby six Directors were annually elected to replace six retiring Directors who were ineligible for re-election before the following April. The Court of Directors had early developed a tendency to become co-optive and it was customary for the Directors in office to ensure the return of those out of it by annually issuing a 'House List' of recommended candidates to the Proprietors. In consequence the Direction consisted of thirty members virtually elected for life. In five yearly cycles, these men held office for four years and then stood down during the fifth.

Only the deaths, retirements or disqualifications of Directors opened vacancies and competition for these was always fierce. Candidates frequently announced their intention to stand for election some years before the first opportunity actually presented itself. Once a candidate had determined to seek election, he was faced by the prospect of a long and often expensive canvass for votes which, in view of the scattered constituency of Proprietors throughout Britain, had to be largely conducted by post. Even then, if the candidate could not depend upon the support of one or more of the East India interest groups, he had little chance of being elected. There were exceptions to the general rule and, as C H Philips observes, personal merit could occasionally secure a man's election.<sup>4</sup> Although obvious bribery was not a feature of the Company's elections, a considerable amount of behind the scenes trading always

occurred. 'Help in the canvass was often afforded only on the condition that the candidate, if successful, would repay his helpers in patronage'<sup>5</sup>.

It appears that control of the Company's patronage was one of the principal attractions of a Directorship. Although the Directors received salaries, the Chairmen £500 a year and the other Directors £300, these cannot be considered to have been a sufficient inducement to men usually already wealthy.<sup>6</sup> Other considerations such as those of status and involvement in Indian affairs were no doubt important but hardly to be compared with that of control of the patronage. The patronage at the disposal of the Directors in theory extended from the right to appoint the Governors, Army Commanders and Members of Council to the selection of the most junior civil servants or writers, cadets and assistant surgeons. The Directors also appointed the officers of the Bombay Marine, barristers, attorneys, chaplains and the Company's staff in both East India House and the warehouses. All this patronage was annually apportioned amongst the Directors according to customary rules of seniority by which the Chairmen received double that of the ordinary Directors who, it has been estimated, might expect to have an average of six or seven appointments a year at their disposal.<sup>7</sup>

The main considerations guiding the Directors' distribution of patronage were those of family, friendship, politics and commerce. Of these, that of family was the most important. The allocation of Chinese writerships was a striking example of this in operation. These writerships were considered the

most valuable, so much so that a Director accepting one relinquished his other patronage for the season, and they were nearly always given to immediate relatives. In 1795, 12 of the 20 writers stationed at Canton were near relatives of the Directors.<sup>8</sup> The examples of individual Directors also illustrate this point. Laurence Sullivan hoped to use his position in the Court to restore his family's fortunes by employing his influence to advance his son's career in India.<sup>9</sup> Henry St George Tucker, whose career with the Company spanned over 60 years, sent five sons to India. Colonel Alexander Lawrence, who was related by marriage to the Director John Huddleston, obtained appointments in India for four of his six sons through his relative's generosity.<sup>10</sup> On average, 23 per cent of all appointments to the civil service and the army went to the Directors' relatives.<sup>11</sup> This tendency of the Directors to employ their patronage on behalf of their families exercised a considerable influence over the Company's policies as well as its composition. According to Warren Hastings, while he was in Bengal, 'there were...so many sons and cousins of the Directors' in India, it was impossible for him to prune the administration without provoking 'an army of opponents'.<sup>12</sup>

The Directors, apart from sharing the responsibility and privilege of disposing of the Company's patronage, also formed its highest executive body. They met together as the Court of Directors at least once a week in East India House. In the Court all letters from India were read, appeals from the Company's employees heard, final decisions taken and despatches to the local governments approved and signed. All

points at issue were decided by ballot and important, controversial decisions required the presence of at least thirteen Directors to form a quorum before they could be settled. When the numbers in a vote were equal, the Treasurer's lot decided the question. The only supervisory controls exercised over the Court were those granted Parliament in Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773. The Directors were required to lay before the Treasury all correspondence from India dealing with the revenues and they had also to supply the Secretary of State with everything that dealt with or concerned the civil and military administrations.

To expedite the Court's business, the Directors divided much of their work among a number of Committees of which the most important was the Secret Committee. Established, as C H Philips's research reveals, in 1683, the Secret Committee dealt with matters which appeared to require the quick and efficient management which only a small, expert group of men can readily give.<sup>13</sup> It was therefore generally composed of the Chairs and one or two of the most senior Directors. In time of war, the Committee directed the Company's military and naval operations, conducted negotiations with Indian states and frequently represented the Court. From 1778, the Committee exercised extensive political powers after the Directors authorized it to 'consider and proceed upon all matters relating to the Company as shall appear to them of a secret nature'.<sup>14</sup> There were twelve other Committees, each dealing with specific areas of the Company's business, and these were each composed of nine Directors and the two



Chairmen, who 'were of all Committees'. The criterion guiding the appointment of Directors to the various Committees was seniority and neither merit nor qualification were considered. Thus the nine senior Directors sat on all the major Committees, including those of Correspondence and Treasury.

Presiding at the head of the Court, and sitting on all the thirteen Committees, were the Chairman and Deputy Chairman. Although their annual election by the Court of Directors constituted some check on their power, these men exercised a considerable control over the Court's proceedings. According to custom, no subject was initiated, officially debated or decided without the Chairman's sanction. Richard Atkinson observed in 1784 that 'the Chairman brings forward what he pleases, when he pleases' and this situation enabled the better tacticians among them to determine the Company's policies.<sup>15</sup> They could carry measures they felt desirable by waiting for the absence of their opponents or defer the consideration of those they objected to for as long as they remained in office.

Supporting the Directors in their role as the Company's executive body were the office staff of East India House. There were about 150 of these men and they were divided into departments that corresponded with the Committees of the Court. The most important of these departments were those of the Secretary and the Examiner of Indian Correspondence. The Secretary's department took charge of the bulk of the business conducted by the Court of Directors while all

despatches for India were prepared in the Examiner's department. The Examiner and his chief assistants often exerted considerable influence in the preparation of replies to letters from India. These, when they arrived at Leadenhall, were first read in the Court and then distributed by the Secretary among the branches of the Examiner's department. Here they were abstracted and copies of these abstracts, together with extracts from the records and copies of documents which might be useful for the preparation of replies, were sent to the Directors. Draft despatches were originated in the department, sometimes under the supervision of the Chairs who always scrutinized them carefully with reference to the documents on which they were based before they were presented to the Court. It would not be an exaggeration to claim that, when important issues or interests were not at issue, the Court frequently did little more than rubber stamp the work of the Chairs and the departments.

The organization of the local governments was, of necessity, somewhat different to that of the home government. Prior to 1773, the highest executive body within the administration of each of the three Presidencies was formed by the President and his Council. The Presidents and the members of the Councils were all appointed by the Directors under the powers delegated to them by the early charters of the British Crown and Parliament. The Councils, which varied in size from between ten and sixteen members, consisted of the Company's most senior officials in the Presidencies, including the Chiefs of the subordinate settlements.

Unfortunately there was an inherent defect in this system. 'All power was lodged in the President and Council jointly and nothing could be transacted except by a majority of votes'.<sup>17</sup> This conspired against the uniform application of consistent policies. Small changes in allegiance could result in major shifts in the balance of power and this encouraged the formation of parties within the Councils. The tendency was for personal interests or animosities to predominate, often to the extent where they interfered with the conduct of the Company's public business.

To overcome these problems whose inconvenience the exigencies of conflict had exaggerated, Select Committees with much smaller memberships were formed - in Bengal in 1756, later in the other Presidencies. These, each composed of the President and three senior Council members, at first only dealt with important military and political matters. However they gradually assumed most of the powers of government until the Councils were left with responsibility for little more than the conduct of the Company's commercial functions.

The Regulating Act of 1773 significantly restructured the Bengal Government and altered the balance of power between the three Presidencies. The Government of Bengal was constituted the Supreme Government and the President promoted to the position of Governor-General. The large Council was dismantled and the Governor-General and his four new Council members instructed to assume responsibility for the business previously conducted by the Select Committee.

This substantially reduced the possibility for faction but the decision to continue majority rule did not completely remove it. More significantly, the Act gave the Bengal Government a controlling authority over the other two Presidencies. Their governments were prohibited from declaring war or making peace without the consent of the Bengal Government in all cases except those where 'imminent necessity' should make it dangerous to postpone a decision.<sup>18</sup> Unfortunately the Act fell short of its intentions and only gave a superintending power which was hedged about with exceptions and limitations. In practice, the Governor-General and his Council only had the power of saying 'yes' or 'no'. It still lay within the power of the subordinate governments to follow policies which could render war or peace inevitable and they also had at their disposal a variety of ways of frustrating the Supreme Government's wishes. In particular, it was left to the subordinate governments to decide when 'imminent necessity' should be applied to the individual situations they were required to deal with.

From 1777, the Government of Madras consisted of a President and Council, the latter being composed of the five most senior civil servants in the Presidency.<sup>19</sup> In 1781, the Council was enlarged to eleven members, one of whom was a military employee of the Company.<sup>20</sup> In practice however, this did not greatly affect the operation of the system. Of the five oldest and most senior members of the Council, all Chiefs of subordinate settlements, only one resided in Madras and regularly attended the Council's meetings.<sup>21</sup>

Whatever the theoretical strength of the Council, in reality it was often a considerably smaller body. Macartney, when he arrived as Governor in Madras in 1781, informed Warren Hastings that, on his arrival, he only found 'Messieurs Smith, Johnson and Williams in Council; all the other members happened to be absent except Mr Sadleir, who had been suspended'.<sup>22</sup>

The Madras Government also had a Select Committee similar to Bengal's, operating as a cabinet within the Council. From the same letter of Macartney, it appears that the members of the Select Committee were chosen by the Governor. Only one rule limited his freedom to select which members of the Council should serve with him, that which 'incapacitated from sitting in such committees persons married into French or Dutch families'.<sup>23</sup>

Prior to 1784, there were no firmly established rules governing promotion in the Company's Indian administrations and patronage, which was exercised in a peculiarly demoralizing manner, played an important role. As Dodwell observed, the Directors, 'not content with having the nomination of the persons who were to enter the Company's civil and military services, also sought to control their promotion. Covenanted and military officers would take a trip to England in order to gain admission to council, appointment to some lucrative office, or the command of a regiment or an army out of their turn.... The necessary result was that the government in India lacked the most salutary power of rewarding merit by promotion'.<sup>24</sup> In

addition, it was not unusual for the Directors to appoint men in Britain who were not members of the covenanted services to special posts in India. Thus men with powerful connections or influence were constantly appearing in India where they expected to be provided for. The only general rule to apply, until Macartney's appointment, had been the customary one of appointing a member of the Company's covenanted civil service in Madras to the post of President or Governor of that Presidency.

Certain features of the East India Company's structure at this period deserve particular notice. Firstly, while Parliament could exercise some supervision of the Company through Select Committees and at such times as the Charter came up for renewal, it had no direct means of controlling the Court. Likewise, the principal means at the Ministry's disposal for controlling the Directors was the use of its influence amongst the Proprietors during the elections to the Court. Secondly, while the system was essentially an adjudicative one, delays resulting from geographical factors undermined the arrangements. Authority was divided among too many people in the various bodies and this introduced stresses into the system. Parties in dispute were encouraged to push disputes up the hierarchy and this, together with the system's failure to clearly define the components' powers and responsibilities, made the implementation of consistent policies difficult. Thirdly, the structure generated dependency. The importance of patronage and influence in the selection process and their impact on the career structure resulted in the Company's employees

perceiving themselves peculiarly dependent on the higher levels.

By the 1770's, the Company was in financial difficulties, receiving aid from the Treasury and struggling to meet an abnormal number of bills drawn on London. In India, Hasting's government had been marked by bitter and perpetual disputes within the Bengal Council and between the Council and the chief of the Judiciary. Pressure emerged in Britain for a greater degree of government regulation of the Company. Public opinion, the Reports of the Select and Secret Committees of 1781 and the apparent failure of the Regulating Act forced Parliament to seek a new system of administration for both the home and Indian governments of the Company. The decision to do this was in part defended on the grounds that the state had a just interest in administrative revenues in India, that the stability of the Company was essential to the London money-market, and that sound administration and peace were the concern of the public. However, all attempts to bring the Company under state control encountered the great prejudice of the period against an increase in the powers of the executive. Initially this defeated attempts to reorganize the East India Company until, in 1784 after the failure of Fox's two bills, Pitt introduced a bill of his own. The apparent idea behind Pitt's bill was that 'the state should take the Company into partnership, assuming the position of controlling and predominant partner in all matters relating to the higher branches of government, but leaving to the Company the monopoly of trade, the disposal of its valuable

patronage under Crown sanction and the details of the administration'.<sup>25</sup> By leaving essential points, such as the exact division of authority, ambiguous and ensuring that the patronage of the Company, at least in theory, remained with the elected Directors, Pitt carried his bill through the two Houses.

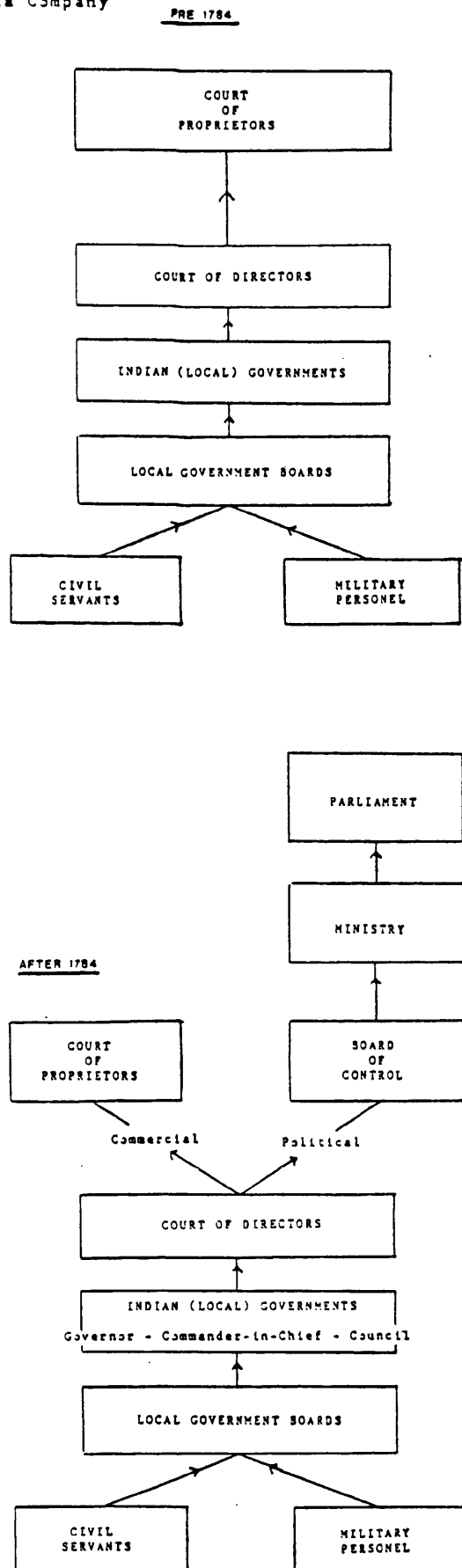
Pitt's India Act of 1784 substantially changed the formal structure of accountability in the East India Company by more directly bringing it under the control of the State (diagram 1, p 27). The Act created a Board of Commissioners, more commonly referred to as the Board of Control, to supervise the Company's civil and military administrations. Although composed of one of the Secretaries of State, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and four other members of the Privy Council, all of whom were unpaid, actual control of the Board soon passed to its President. This de facto position was formalized in 1786 when the ex-officio members withdrew from attending the Board's meetings. However, even after Dundas had achieved the ambition which he expressed when he wrote that he hoped he would 'not only in reality but declaredly, ...be understood as the cabinet minister for India',<sup>26</sup> the President still required the formal assent of two, later only one, of his colleagues to legalize his proceedings.

The Board exercised extensive powers. It had access to all the Company's papers and its approval was required for all despatches dealing with matters not strictly of a commercial nature. In special cases, especially those concerned with



# ACCOUNTABILITY STRUCTURE

Diagram showing the hierarchy of accountability in the formal structure of the East India Company before and after 1784.



war, peace and negotiations with Indian rulers, the Board might send its own despatches to India through the Secret Committee of the Directors which could be required to sign these and despatch them in the Company's name. When the Board chose to exercise this power, the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors had neither the right to discuss nor to disclose the Board's orders. The Board's powers were, however, restricted in certain significant ways. Most importantly, it was not entitled to give orders to the Company's employees in India. Furthermore, though the Board of Control could alter the Directors' instructions to conform with its ideas, it was not entitled to send instructions of its own in its name. Officially the Court of Directors was the 'organ and channel...for governing India'.<sup>27</sup> In addition, the India Act stated that the appointments of Governor-Generals, Governors and Commanders-in-Chief were to be made by the Court of Directors alone, the Crown merely having a power to recall. Lastly, the Directors were given the right to appeal to the Privy Council against the decisions of the Board. However, since the six Commissioners of the Board were all members of the Privy Council, this privilege hardly represented a significant restriction of the Board's authority.

Under Dundas's supervision, the Board quickly evolved an administrative structure to cope with its work. The President was assisted by paid Assistant Commissioners, a Secretary, a personal secretary and a number of office clerks. The work itself and the records were divided into departments dealing with each of the Presidencies

separately. C H Philips observes that this was done almost immediately and that, from September 1784, following the office routine of the Treasury, the Board's correspondence (Public, Revenue, Secret and Commercial) was conducted on this geographical basis.<sup>28</sup> In many respects it was this development that was to prove the most significant consequence of Pitt's Act. Prior to the creation of the Board of Control, the Directors had been required by the Regulating Act of 1776 to lay before the Treasury all papers relating to the Indian revenues. They had also been required to keep the Secretary of State supplied with everything that concerned the Company's civil and military administrations in India. The 1781 Act had extended state control in a clause which permitted the Government to amend orders concerning relations with Indian states. However, lacking a specialized staff to handle this material, the Government had been unable to take advantage of the information available to it to exercise any detailed control over the Company's activities and its powers had never been fully used. It may with justification be argued that it was not so much the creation of the Board of Control as that of its specialized bureaucracy which marked a significant development in relations between the State and the Company.<sup>29</sup> Without the expertise of its staff, the Board of Control would have found itself no more able to superintend, direct and control the civil and military administrations of India than the Treasury and the Secretary of State had been, even in the years after 1781.

The Board's principal means of controlling the Court rested

in the Act's requirement that all despatches should receive its approval. Under the terms of the Act, the Board had however to return draft despatches to the Court within a fortnight. This was quickly discovered to be too short a period and an informal practice soon developed as a pragmatic solution to the problem. Proposed courses of action were informally discussed by the President and the Chairman. The latter then proposed an unofficial draft despatch which, together with the material on which it was based, was sent to the Board. This, known as a Previous Communication, was referred by the Board's Secretary to the appropriate department, examined, revised and given to the President who then discussed it in private with the Chairs. After this stage, during which significant revisions of the original draft might be made, the Previous Communication was returned to India House to be reworked into a Draft. Once this was done, the Draft entered the official phase of its existence. It was submitted to the Committee of Correspondence who revised it again before the Court as a whole examined it. The Draft was then sent to the Board of Control which now found little difficulty in returning it within the statutory fortnight to the Court. Once back in the hands of the Court, the Draft was re-examined by the Committee of Correspondence who studied any alterations made by the Board and either accepted or appealed against them. On the occasions when the Court appealed against the Board's changes, an official correspondence between the Court and the Board occurred. Ultimately however, the Board held the power to force the Court to accept its decision and could secure obedience by obtaining a mandamus from the Court of

King's Bench.

Pitt's Act did more than just create the Board of Control to supervise the Company's activities. It significantly altered the pre-existing structure of its administrative system in Britain. The Court of Proprietors lost the right to veto the Directors' proposals once these had received the Board's approval. Its most important function, apart from electing new Directors, was now to act as a forum in which public opinion might be expressed on the Company's measures in Britain and India. The Secret Committee of the Court was established as a statutory body and its composition defined. Henceforth it might consist of no more than three Directors, the Chairmen and one other senior Director. Although the new Secret Committee's powers were much more limited than the extensive ones its predecessor had exercised, its position vis-a-vis the Court was somewhat different. It became, in effect, the Company's cabinet and was able to exert a considerable influence over policy. Its members had the right to consult with the President of the Board and the Ministers on Indian matters. On occasions the Committee actually originated secret despatches and it was not infrequently able to force the Board to modify its orders. When unable to alter the Board's decisions, it still retained the right to record in minutes its reasons for dissenting with the higher authority's policies.

It was not only the home government of the Company that was re-structured by Pitt's Act. Significant changes were made in the internal structure of the Bengal Government and the

balance of power was shifted further away from Madras and Bombay to Calcutta. The Governor-General's Council was reduced from four to three members, one of whom was to be the Commander-in-Chief of the Company's forces who now received 'a voice and precedence in the Council next after the Governor-General'.<sup>30</sup> The Governor-General's ability to control his Council was considerably strengthened. Besides holding the casting vote, his privileges were extended. He could secure prior consideration of his proposals by postponing the discussion of his Councillors' propositions for up to forty-eight hours.<sup>31</sup>

At the same time, the Act of 1784 extended the powers of the Supreme Government over the subordinate Presidencies. These were specified and significantly enlarged. The Governor-General in Council was given the power to superintend, control and direct the operations of the governments of the other Presidencies where they related to the 'transactions with the country powers or to war, or peace, or to the application of the revenues or forces of the Presidencies'.<sup>32</sup> The Act also specified that the Bengal Government might assumed control of other areas of government in the subordinate Presidencies on receipt of orders from the Court. The subordinate governments were directed to promptly obey the orders of the Supreme Government unless they had received 'positive orders and instructions' from the Court to the contrary.<sup>33</sup> To enable the Bengal Government to efficiently supervise their activities, the governments of the other two Presidencies were required by the Act to send the Bengal Government exact copies of all

their orders, resolutions and measures.

Under the terms of the Act, the Government of Madras was re-structured on the Bengal model. From 5 February 1785, the full Council consisted of the Governor, Commander-in-Chief and two covenanted civil servants from the Madras Presidency.<sup>34</sup> The Council divided its work among three committees; a Political Committee to manage civil and revenue matters, a Military Committee and a Commercial Committee. Each of these committees had its own secretary who organized its business and supervised the administration of the its department. In addition to these three secretaries, there was a fourth who acted as the Chief Secretary to the Government and fulfilled a role in the Presidency's administration similar to that of the Secretary of the Court in London. Like his counterpart in the Court's structure, he had a department of his own. While in theory the civil administration was split into independent branches, in practice this rarely was the case. Under Webbe and then later under Buchan and Thackeray, the secretaries of the Madras Government were really only deputies of the Chief Secretary, by whom all the important business of each office was performed.<sup>35</sup>

The Council presided over and, at least in theory, controlled the Company's civil and military administrations in the Presidency. The civil administration of Madras employed 160 European civil servants who were assisted by approximately 1600 Indian officials. The Company's military department employed 800 European officers and 4000 European

soldiers together with a substantial force of Indian sepoy<sup>36</sup>. In practice, the two branches of the Company tended to be mutually antagonistic towards each other and their quarrels made it difficult for the Council to impose its will on either. The civil servants, significantly outnumbered by the military, feared that officers would be employed in what they regarded as strictly civilian posts and that, in consequence, their own prospects and status within the overall administration would be destroyed. The army resented its ultimate subordination to a civil authority and frequently complained of intolerable civilian interference in military affairs. Matters were further complicated because the army itself was divided into two distinct establishments by the presence of Company and Crown forces in the Presidency. This twofold division of the army did not always have altogether happy consequences. In particular, the ascendancy given the King's officers over the Company's led from time to time to jealousy between the two establishments. The Company's officers resented, for example, the King's officers higher emoluments and their right to issue orders to the Company's officers of equal rank.

Pitt's Act did more than just re-structure the Company's administration. It also introduced other important changes which had a considerable impact on the decision-making process. The Directors' exercise of their patronage was curtailed and an attempt made to establish a career structure. The Act forbade the Court to fill vacancies in the Councils with other than covenanted servants except in



the cases of Governor-Generals, Governors and Commander-in-Chiefs. In other than exceptional cases, promotion was in future to be strictly in due order of seniority. Concurrent with this reform, the practice of making appointments from Britain to special posts was also curtailed. These changes marked the beginning of a redistribution of responsibility within the Company's administration. 'Save as regards the highest posts of all, the tendency was for the Directors to be limited to the recruitment of their services by the nomination of writers and cadets, while the executive governments in India determined their promotion and employment'.<sup>37</sup>

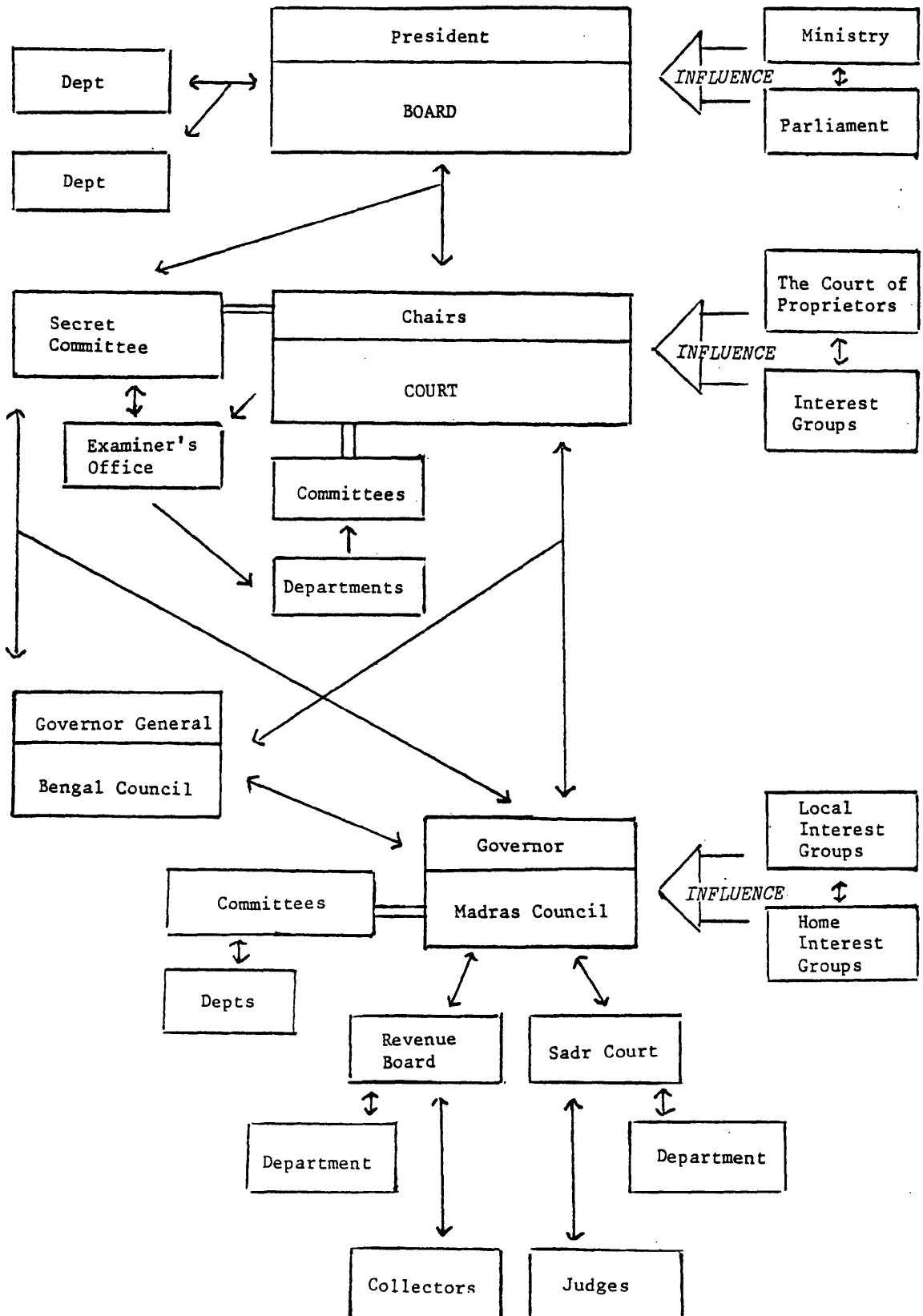
This development significantly altered the balance of power between the Governors of the Presidencies and the Court. As observed earlier, the principal attraction of a directorship was the patronage it gave to individuals who usually exercised it to secure positions in India for their families and friends. Now that the opportunities open to the Directors in Britain to secure advancement for their proteges in India was limited, they were forced to rely upon their influence with the local authorities to achieve this, to them, important goal. It is clear that this was an influential factor governing the Directors' formulation of policies. They deliberately sought, whenever possible, not to antagonize their Governors, Commanders-in-Chief and Councils who might retaliate by attacking the Directors' proteges under their authority or refuse to assist people recommended by individuals in the Court. Although this proved to be one of the most significant consequences, it

was not one of the principal intentions of the Act. The intention behind this reform appears to have been a desire to strengthen the authority of the local governments over their respective staff.

The Amending Act of 1786 introduced two more changes. Firstly it invested the Governor-General and the Governors with power to override the decisions of their Councils and act without their concurrence in 'extraordinary' cases. These were defined as those in which it was the Governor-General's or the Governor's judgement that the interests of the Company or the tranquility of the British possessions in India were threatened. Secondly it limited the nomination to vacancies in the administrations to the Company's employees on the spot and laid down prescribed rules for appointments to various offices. These required that employees should have served specified numbers of years before becoming eligible for posts with certain rates of pay.

The formal structure of the East India Company as it emerged after 1784 (diagram 2, p.37) had two distinctive features. Rising up through the Company, there were official channels of communication. Starting from the lowest levels in the administration, each unit was required to inform that above it of its activities in order that they might be examined and approved or disavowed. They were also required to make proposals and send general information concerning matters under their responsibility to their immediate superiors. At each level, decisions might be taken and orders given but

The Administrative Structure of the East India Company



all of these, with the exception of those originating from the Board, were subject to confirmation and possible revision. Where a superior body disagreed with the proposals of an inferior authority or issued orders that the inferior authority questioned, it was open to the subordinate body to request that the matter be referred to a yet higher one. Subordinate bodies were officially forbidden to breach the formal channels of communication by directly approaching any authorities other than those placed immediately above them in the hierarchy. When individuals or bodies failed to adhere to the official channels of communication and attempted to enter into direct relationships with higher authorities, there were nearly always protests from those passed over. In particular, the Court objected strongly to attempts by their local governments or individuals in them to communicate directly with the Board of Control, members of which were not averse to encouraging the practice.

Running parallel but in reverse to the official channels of communication, there was a formal chain of command stretching down through the Company's administration from official body to official body. Just as authorities were, in theory, not permitted to communicate directly with any others apart from those immediately above them in the organization, superior authorities were prohibited from sending their orders directly to the lower echelons. Any attempts to by-pass points in the formal chain of command were strongly resisted, often with success. In 1802 Castlereagh, then President of the Board, twice tried to send sealed orders to India through the Secret Committee,

thereby indirectly bye-passing the Court. On both occasions the Court was able to force him to reveal the contents of his despatches.<sup>38</sup>

These two features of the Company's formal organization were the direct consequences of its hierarchical structure in which authority was concentrated at the apex while responsibility was delegated downwards. This structure reflected 18th century political thought in Britain which was characterized by suspicion and fear of executive power. Inspired by the philosophy that human nature is so essentially corrupt that men will always abuse whatever executive power is granted them unless closely supervised, the formal structure of the Company was constructed to allow the operation of a government of checks. Consequently the formal decision-making process of the Company was conceived in terms of adjudication. The intention of the system was that parties at every level in the organization should regard those bodies immediately above them as adjudicating authorities. They were expected to offer these authorities the information, opinion and argument which would enable them to formulate the policies which were to allocate resources. Eventually the adjudicating authorities were expected to pronounce decisions which had always to include summaries of the information and explanations of the judgements. The proceedings of each of these adjudicative bodies were in turn subject to the supervision of superior bodies which might either sanction or reverse their decisions.

While the formal structure of the East India Company successfully created clearly defined arenas to which disputes over the selective adoption of values might be referred for settlement and succeeded in supply the means by which decisions could be formally sanctioned, it suffered from a number of inherent defects. Firstly, it was cumbersome and slow. To some extent, any system constructed at this time would have suffered from these defects since geographical distances and primitive communications imposed unavoidable limitations. The problem was however exacerbated by the deliberate imposition of checks. This feature of the Company's administration was recognized at the time but the supposed advantages of the system were considered to outweigh the disadvantages. Secondly, in attempting to ensure that the decision-making process should be strictly adjudicative while at the same time acknowledging the concept of checks and therefore permitting unsatisfied parties to appeal against decisions taken at every level, the formal structure generated internal stresses which its arrangements proved too narrow to accommodate. Thirdly, the system deliberately emphasized the 'dependency' of subordinate individuals and bodies in the structure on superior authorities. This had a number of consequences. It generated feelings of ambivalence in people and bodies towards superior authorities and was the cause of tensions in relationships between subordinates and superiors. More importantly, it had a detrimental impact on the total system's ability to gather information and evaluate its performance. Subordinates' perception of the importance of obtaining positive evaluations discouraged them from

reporting on the adverse effects of policies and from submitting information likely to elicit a negative response in their superiors. Last, but not least in importance, the formal system required that a fairly high degree of consensus concerning its purposes and goals should exist among the people operating in it. Without such consensus, the adjudicative system broke down as stresses generated within the structure threatened to tear it apart. While such a consensus appears to have existed in the first half of the eighteenth century, with the conquest of India the situation changed. Parties emerged at all levels of the administration composed of men who were determined to take control of the Company and adapt its policies to their own ends, ends often at variance with those of other groups equally anxious to seize control.

In the following chapters the ways in which decisions were actually taken in the Company are examined. The different parties and interests which emerged within its administration and those which operated on it from outside are distinguished. The extent to which these influenced the decision-making process and the means by which they did so, together with the considerations which determined the policies they pursued, are analysed. In the course of this, evidence is produced which reveals that the various bodies which composed the Company and the individuals employed by it frequently failed to observe the formal arrangements which were supposed to define their powers and regulate their activities. At the same time, significant features of the Company's administration, in particular the important

role played by reciprocal requirements of patronage, are discussed.



## Chapter Two

### The Formative Years:

#### Munro's Childhood and Early Career.

In his introduction to his study of the introduction of the 'Munro System' Beaglehole observes that, 'though the system marked a reaction against that of Cornwallis, the reaction was one which, for Munro and those of his contemporaries at Madras who shared his views, was the result more of the study of the institutions of their part of India than of any theoretical objections to the Bengal system'<sup>1</sup>. He qualifies this statement with the remark that it must be remembered that Munro's perceptions were 'to some extent determined by his character and preconceptions'<sup>2</sup>. However, having made this observation, Beaglehole does not return to it but consistently treats the development of Munro's ideas outside the context of his personality. In this chapter an attempt is made to distinguish some of the formative experiences of Munro's childhood and earlier career and to examine them for the information they supply about his personality development. At the same time a picture emerges of the important role played by private influence in determining promotion within the Company. In addition, the origin and

development of significant divisions within the structure of the local administration are traced.

Thomas Munro was born in Glasgow on 27 May 1761, the second son of Alexander and Margaret Munro. His father was a successful Glasgow merchant who, in partnership with a Mr Cumming and a Mr Mackenzie, was extensively involved in trade between Scotland and Virginia. He was a moderately prosperous representative of the mercantile bourgeoisie whom social and economic developments in Britain were establishing as the rising class within society. The head of a small household of family and servants, Alexander Munro owned his house in Glasgow and rented a second, called Northside, a few miles outside the city near the banks of the Kelvin. Both he and his wife, whose maiden name was Stark, were distantly related to families which belonged to the gentry and the aristocracy. Like the majority of people at all times, Alexander Munro seems to have held no very strong political convictions and was content with affairs as they were provided they left him in peace to conduct his life and business as he wished. Even so, he clearly believed in the possibility and responsibility of the individual to advance his status and, in consequence, placed a high value on education.

His father's prosperity, his expectation that his son would enter the family business and his appreciation of its benefits ensured that Thomas Munro received a very good education. He was first sent to an English day school and then went to the grammar school of Glasgow.<sup>3</sup> At the age of

13, he left the grammar school and was enrolled at the College and University of Glasgow where he studied mathematics under Professor Williamson and chemistry with Doctor Irvine. By the time he left the university, Munro had learnt French, Italian and Spanish, the last of which he had taught himself so that he might read Cervantes's Don Quixote, one of his favourite books, in its original language. He had also studied classics, history, geography and political economy. At the completion of his formal education, Munro was a well-read young man acquainted with a wider range of subjects than was usual for the period.

During these same years, Munro's character began to be formed. His family, composed of his parents, four brothers and two sisters, was the predominant influence on his life. It was an extremely close-knit family and Munro appears to have found it difficult to form relationships outside its intimate circle. He made few friends at the schools he attended and kept in contact with only a couple of these after he completed his education. His first biographer wrote that 'there was a degree of prudence about him which hindered him, even in boyhood, from indiscriminately lavishing his regards upon every playfellow'.<sup>4</sup> From preference, Munro spent much of his childhood away from his peers, staying either in the house with his adored sister Erskine or rambling alone in the countryside round Northside.<sup>5</sup> It is possible to detect an element of insecurity, even of estrangement, in Munro's psychology and it was probably this, rather than the prudence Gleig perceived, which made him so reserved. One of the sources of

this character trait can be traced to Munro's deafness, a disability with which a childhood attack of measles had left him for life.

In 1777, Munro entered the counting-house of Somerville and Gordon. Here, where he was very happy, he would have remained until he had gained sufficient experience to be able to enter his father's company had not events in the meantime overtaken his family. In 1776, the war between Britain and the American Colonies had led to the Congress of the United States passing the Act of Confiscation. The partnership of Cumming, Mackenzie and Company lost several shipments, was unable to recover outstanding debts and had insufficient capital to sustain these losses. The company collapsed and Alexander Munro, although he only held 12 of the 125 shares, was forced into bankruptcy.<sup>6</sup> For several years, Munro's father attempted to salvage something but only succeeded in adding numerous personal debts to those he had already incurred in his business. Indebtedness now became an established feature of Alexander Munro's life and he was never to completely extricate himself from a position of financial dependence.

The collapse of Alexander Munro's business had traumatic consequences for all the members of the family and the concealed strengths and weaknesses of their characters emerged under the stress. Alexander Munro, always a weak, rather credulous and naive man, now alternated between moods of unfounded optimism and acute anxiety. His sense of identity threatened by his bankruptcy, he placed an

exaggerated importance on being treated with the respect he considered his due. This made him slightly arrogant, very quarrelsome and extremely unforgiving. Margaret Munro was quite unable to come to terms with the sudden loss of wealth, position and friends or cope with the demands that the new situation placed on her. She appears to have suffered some form of mental breakdown and was left in a state of fairly severe depression for most of the rest of her life. Munro's latent insecurity and sense of alienation was encouraged to develop as all his expectations were destroyed. A tendency towards defensiveness began to characterize his social relationships though this was somewhat tempered by the emergence of an intense ambition to succeed.

After his father's bankruptcy, it soon became apparent that new careers would have to be found for Munro and his brothers Daniel and Alexander. Munro left the counting-house but not before he had been introduced to the economic theories embodied in Adam Smith's Wealth of Nations which were receiving wide currency in Scottish commercial circles.<sup>7</sup> These made a profound impression on him. They appealed to his individualism and his intense desire for personal independence which he expressed when he wrote of the frustration of being forced to comply with the wishes of men he despised.<sup>8</sup> A decision was taken that Munro's brother Daniel should go to the West Indies where his father had some influence. An old friend, Hercules Ross, was successfully building a fortune in Jamaica where his friendship with the Governor, General Campbell, placed him

in a position to advance Daniel's career.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, it was decided that Munro should go to India. In later life, when Munro wrote bitterly of parents who sent their children 'in pursuit of riches but in reality to encounter disappointment and poverty' and stated that 'the golden days...have long been over', he must have had in mind the considerations which had prompted his father to send him to India.<sup>10</sup>

Positions in the East India Company were very difficult to obtain and, without personal contacts, sources of influence or the ability to buy them, there was little possibility of securing a cadetship or a writership. Munro's father investigated the possibility of buying his son a writership but discovered that it would cost about £3000, a sum he could not hope to raise.<sup>11</sup> On 20 February 1779, Munro accepted the best post which could be found him and enlisted as a midshipman on the Company's ship Walpole. Shortly afterwards he left Glasgow and travelled to London to join his ship in the Thames. In the interval before his ship sailed, Munro's prospects were unexpectedly improved. His father was delegated by the Glasgow merchants to go to London and argue their claims to indemnities for losses sustained during the war with America. Although Alexander Munro failed to achieve this principal objective of his visit to London, he did become acquainted with Laurence Sullivan, a director of the East India Company. Sullivan, as a gesture of his friendship, gave Munro a cadetship with the Company's army of Madras.

While in London, Alexander Munro also met other influential men with East India Company connections. The family was distantly connected, through Margaret Munro's Sterling relations, to Lady Stuart, wife of Sir John Stuart who was himself an important figure in Scottish society. Through Lady Stuart, Alexander Munro had an introduction to her nephew, Andrew Stuart, a man actively involved in British politics and the brother of Colonel James Stuart who was to succeed General Sir Hector Munro as Commander-in-Chief of Madras.<sup>12</sup> Andrew Stuart promised to write to his brother and recommend Munro to him. Munro's father also met Sir William James, Chairman of the Court of Directors, to whom he was introduced by Laurence Sullivan. This man offered Munro's brother Alexander a Bengal cadetship, which his father was encouraged to accept on his behalf by a promise from Lord Blantyre's brother, Charles Stuart, that he would advance the young man's career when he received the appointment to the Bengal Council that he was expecting.<sup>13</sup>

Munro sailed for Madras in June 1779. He took with him letters of introduction to George Macpherson, John Lennox, Alexander Ross, David Haliburton, Deputy Adjutant General Burne, and General Sir Hector Munro.<sup>14</sup> The experience of his father's bankruptcy had left Munro a slightly embittered cynic at the early age of 19. He had seen his parents deserted by their friends, had had his expectations destroyed and learnt the true worth of empty promises. He seems to have felt himself in some measure socially inferior to his fellow cadets and to have been acutely conscious of his lack of influence. This, together with a desire to

assert his independence, explains why, though he hated the life, he continued to work as a midshipman on the voyage to India until some of the military officers on board persuaded him to leave the cockpit for the cadets' mess.<sup>15</sup> As a consequence of this outlook, Munro placed little confidence in his letters of recommendation though he appears to have entertained some hopes that the ten he possessed to the Commander-in-Chief would be useful. As he later explained to his sister, he had formed the erroneous idea that the General would not disoblige so many people with an apparent interest in his career.<sup>16</sup>

When Munro landed through the surf on the beach before Fort St George on 15 January 1780, he entered what, for the Europeans, amounted to a frontier society. The number of Britons in the community was small. The Company's civil establishment was composed of the Governor, his five Council members, 67 senior merchants, 38 junior, 11 factors and 71 writers.<sup>17</sup> The military establishment was only somewhat larger with 800 officers and 4000 European soldiers.<sup>18</sup> The territories of the Presidency of Madras were not extensive. In 1756 and 1763, the British had been granted the districts of the Jagir by the Nawab of Arcot for the services they had rendered him. In 1765, the territory of the Northern Circars, which consisted of the districts of Chicacole, Rajahmundry, Ellore and Cundapelly had been added. Although the British had attained military supremacy here as they had in Bengal, they had not followed this up by taking political control quite so quickly. The explanation for this seems to be that the area was not rich enough to bring the interests



of the Company's officials into direct conflict with those of the Nawab and so encourage them to take over the administration. Far from wishing to remove the Nawab, the Company's officials had discovered that their best interests lay in lending him money. By 1780 the position was such that the Nawab controlled a large portion of the local officials' private savings and was therefore able to exert a considerable influence over the Council and, through it, over policies.

The small British society in the Presidency was characterised by faction and intrigue, split by jealousies and riddled with power struggles. In 1776, the Governor, George Pigot, had been arrested by the army's second-in-command, Colonel James Stuart, apparently on the orders of a group of conspirators led by Paul Benfield and supported by the Nawab.<sup>19</sup> Pigot had arrived in Madras with orders to restore the district of Tanjore to its raja, orders which threatened the interests of many of the Nawab's European creditors. His determination to carry out his orders had brought him into conflict with these men. At the same time, he had alienated his own Council when he claimed the power of adjourning it and refused to follow policies he disagreed with. Faced by a determined resistance, the Governor had next attempted to strengthen his position by excluding his principal opponents from the Council. His arrest served to reveal how unstable the Madras Government had become. The power of some of the interest groups in the Presidency was further illustrated by the ability of certain sectors of the Company to openly oppose a succeeding

Governor, Sir Thomas Rumbold. Rumbold had ordered the zamindars of the Northern Circars to come to Madras to make their revenue settlements. In doing this, he had taken a very profitable business out of the hands of the local chiefs. These men retaliated by seeking his disgrace and eventually succeeded in having a bill of pains and penalties exhibited against him in February 1783 which was not abandoned until the following June.<sup>20</sup>

The administration of the Presidency was further destabilised by the deteriorating relations with the Kingdom of Mysore. Haidar Ali's hostility had been aroused by British attempts to gain possession of Guntur, their expedition against the French settlement of Mahe which he regarded as under his protection, and their refusal to renew the treaty of offensive and defensive alliance they had concluded with him in 1769.

For a short time after his arrival, Munro's prospects looked bleak. He was informed that he would have to wait at least three years before he might expect to be appointed an ensign.<sup>21</sup> He discovered that his letters of introduction were of little value insofar as the majority of them were to men with insufficient influence to advance his career. George Macpherson was dead, John Lennox only a writer, David Haliburton a junior merchant and Alexander Ross a private trader with no position in the civil administration. Burne, the Deputy Adjutant General, offered to ensure that Munro should be appointed to the regiment of his choice but was unable to do more for him.<sup>22</sup> General Munro, although he told

Munro that he would be glad to see him, politely declined to take any other interest in his career.<sup>23</sup> Munro ascribed the General's lack of interest to the apparently enormous number of his Scottish relatives who had appeared in Madras hoping to profit from his influence.

During the first months, Munro lived with Alexander Ross in Madras where he appears to have remained outside the mainstream of European society. His experiences of his father's bankruptcy had left him with a deep fear of debt and his extreme poverty prevented him from taking part in social activities. He was further discouraged from entering society by his personal insecurity and apparent feelings of alienation from his peers. Somewhat older than the majority of the other junior employees, better educated, more experienced and yet encumbered with a slight inferiority complex arising from the differences in social background, Munro throw his energies into study, in particular of Arabic and then Persian.<sup>24</sup>

The outbreak of the First Mysore War abruptly changed the course of Munro's career. In July 1780, Haidar Ali descended onto the Carnatic plains, burning crops and devastating villages until a cordon of blackened desert was formed round Madras from Pulicat in the north to Pondicherry in the south and extending 50 miles inland. The destruction of Colonel Baillie's detachment gave Munro an early appointment as an ensign.<sup>25</sup> More importantly, General Munro's and the Governor John Whitehill's disastrous handling of the war encouraged the Governor-General, Hastings, to send Sir Eyre Coote to

replace the former and to suspend the latter. Sir Eyre Coote arrived in Madras with his personal secretary, Thomas Graham. Thomas Graham was the son of one of Alexander Munro's oldest friends in Glasgow and his brother George was a constant visitor at the family house.<sup>26</sup> On arrival, Graham sought out Munro, re-introduced him to General Munro and persuaded the latter to appoint him, in November 1781, the quartermaster of the 5th Brigade.<sup>27</sup> He would have obtained for Munro the post of adjutant had not Munro's deafness given the General an excuse for refusing it. The appointment, although it was only temporary, represented a significant promotion for Munro and it also dramatically improved his financial situation. From only 48 pagodas a month, his income was increased to over 100.<sup>28</sup>

Even before Munro received his promotion, events had occurred which were to make the appointment precarious. Lord George Macartney had arrived at Madras on 22 June 1781 and immediately assumed the office of Governor. Macartney arrived determined to restore peace to the territory as quickly as possible. As Governor of Granada, he had been forced to unconditionally surrender the island to a superior French force and had then been held a prisoner for some time before he was released and returned to Britain.<sup>29</sup> This experience seems to have disposed him towards pacifist policies and persuaded him of the futility of war. The conditions he discovered in Madras strengthened his determination to avoid long drawn out hostilities. The Madras authorities were confronted with a serious refugee problem which was aggravated by a famine.<sup>30</sup> Land

communications with Bengal had been severed and all supplies had to be imported by sea, British command of which had not been absolutely secured.

Macartney's Council supported his view that peace should be restored to the Carnatic as quickly as possible. The army, however, opposed this policy which it felt to be against its interests. While the civil servants generally prospered in times of peace, the military did so in those of war. Casualties opened promotion prospects while campaigns created opportunities for men to make names for themselves. Opinion in the army tended to favour Hasting's view that hostilities should continue until the enemy was compelled to sue for peace. This conflict of interests between the military and the civilians quickly led to the emergence of ill-feeling between the two parties. Long held suspicions among the civil servants that the military would, given an opportunity, encroach on their privileges by occupying posts in the administration normally reserved for covenanted civil employees did little to allay the hostility.

The hostility between the two branches of the Company's administration was heightened at this critical juncture by the quarrel that developed between Coote and Macartney over the question of military command in the Carnatic. Coote, who had been invested with separate and independent powers, interpreted these in the widest possible sense, failed to attend the meetings of the Select Committee of which he had been a member since 7 November 1780, and refused to explain his conduct. At first Macartney had tried to humour the

Commander-in-Chief. 'The General and I', he wrote to John Macpherson in Bengal, 'are at bottom the best of friends.... I have courted him like a mistress and humoured him like a child'.<sup>31</sup> Soon, however, the relationship deteriorated. Coote complained bitterly that the Government was deliberately interfering in his management of the war and at the same time making his job impossible by failing to keep the army properly supplied. Macartney retaliated by accusing Coote of having, by his extravagance and poor management, exacerbated the situation. 'It is true', he wrote, 'that the army marched light but, notwithstanding all the complaints...with which Sir Eyre Coote's letters are filled, you see what can be done in case of emergency and what savings might be made if he added to his other great qualities that spirit of arrangement and detail which, however undervalued, is particularly necessary at this time'.<sup>32</sup>

It is clear that Coote was impatient of civilian control and had an exalted view of his position in Madras. Macartney's agent at Calcutta reported that Coote had declared that, unless he was given sole command, he must resign and return to Bengal.<sup>33</sup> It is equally obvious that the difficulties Macartney was experiencing as a result of Coote's truculent behaviour were making him unduly suspicious of the military. He appears to have allowed himself to be convinced by the civilians in Madras that the military intended to subvert the civilian government. He blamed the attitudes of the Supreme Government and the Court for the situation, claiming that they had encouraged the army to imagine itself independent of and superior to the civil authorities. He

wrote to Laurence Sullivan stating that 'the lead and authority which your military have been permitted to assume within these last few years, if not soon properly checked and regulated, may prove as fatal to the public interests as the attacks of the enemy'<sup>34</sup>. He excited himself with ill-defined fears of a military dictatorship.

The real threat facing the administration of Madras was not that of a military coup but of the collapse of the entire structure. The problems that the Council were experiencing with Sir Hector Munro clearly reveal this. General Munro had, in a fit of pique, taken a vow never to sit with Sadleir, a member of the Select Committee. Macartney wrote to Laurence Sullivan describing the difficulties this caused. It not only deprived the Council of the General's military advice, it also made it very difficult for it to issue orders. 'The difficulty lay', according to Macartney, 'in Sir Hector Munro's determination not to act under orders signed by Mr Sadleir. To obviate all objections and to accelerate the service, the Select Committee...very handsomely vested me with powers to enable me to carry any expedition.... The instructions, letters, etc, were regularly laid before the Committee, tho' only signed by me'<sup>35</sup>. To some extent Macartney sympathised with the General's feelings for Sadleir whom he described as being 'so obnoxious to the whole settlement and so much disliked that his standing forward in any measure is almost a certain method of defeating it'<sup>36</sup>. This did not however disguise the fact that the administration was collapsing as a result of the divisions appearing within it.

The disagreement between Coote and Macartney came to a head when the Select Committee, against Coote's wishes, ordered the Company's troops to take the Dutch settlements on the coast and the harbour of Trinkomali. Both Coote and Macartney complained to Bengal about the other's behaviour. Hastings, who had himself already quarrelled with Macartney whom he suspected was seeking to undermine his position at home with a view to securing the Governor-Generalship, preferred to support Coote.<sup>37</sup> On 11 March 1782 the Bengal Council recommended that Madras should give Coote the full powers he demanded and at the same time rather tactlessly observed that this recommendation could just as well have been an order.<sup>38</sup>

Although Macartney accepted this recommendation, he did so most unwillingly. The Governor-General's refusal to support him had both angered and disappointed him. He believed that Hastings was deliberately enhancing Coote's powers with the intention of undermining his authority and possibly even the independence of the Madras administration. At the same time however, Macartney felt unable to attack the decision on these grounds. He had insufficient evidence to support his suspicions. Instead he employed the argument that it threatened the very structure of the administration. 'I fear', he wrote to Warren Hastings, 'that...the barrier between the civil and the military is almost entirely annihilated. I cannot bring myself to imagine that it could be your intention to depress the civil and raise the military above it, but it may be worth while to reflect a little on what latitude the disposition of some men might



give to your letter of the 11 March on the subject of Sir Eyre Coote's powers'.<sup>39</sup> He warned Hastings that the recommendations of the Supreme Government might have disastrous consequences. 'It appears to me', he observed, 'that, having once parted with powers of such consequence as those which you have thought fit should be exercised by Sir Eyre Coote, an attempt to resume or overrule them in any material point, under the present circumstances of the army and of our situation in general, might be attended not only with serious difficulties but perhaps with a total convulsion'.<sup>40</sup>

Hastings refused to revise the Supreme Government's recommendations and the Madras Government was resentfully forced to accept them. Relations between the military and the civil branches did not, as a consequence, improve. Coote refused to attend the meetings of the Select Committee and left it in complete ignorance of his plans. He continued to send private letters full of censures on the Government to Warren Hastings and his public letters to the Bengal Government were hardly less critical. The general behaviour of his officers seems to have done nothing to alleviate the jealousy of the civil servants. Macartney informed Macpherson that the Supreme Government's policies generated discord between the two services. 'Since the General's late transfiguration', he wrote, 'the military of all ranks from a truncheon to a drumstick are so cock a hoop that they look upon a poor civilian with as much contempt as a tragedy king does a candle snuffer'.<sup>41</sup>

Looking for a scapegoat for his troubles and not wishing to be seen to ascribe them all directly to Coote, whom he knew had powerful supporters and a great deal of personal influence in India and at home, Macartney blamed Thomas Graham, Coote's secretary, for the quarrel between the General and the Government. Macartney personally disliked Graham whom he accused of being without honour, talents or even good character.<sup>42</sup> He was convinced that Graham had turned Coote against him and frequently observed in his letters that, while Graham was away from the General, relations were much more relaxed.<sup>43</sup> On the occasion of Graham's return from Bengal, where he had been presenting Coote's case against the Madras Government, Macartney wrote to Macpherson that he wished Graham had been kept at Calcutta because 'letters have increased considerably in length and peevishness since his return'.<sup>44</sup>

Munro, whose career prospects were already threatened by the Government's displeasure with his patron, Graham, regarded the next developments in the situation with alarm. On 28 September 1782 Coote returned to Calcutta, taking Graham with him. In the meantime Munro's only other friend with sufficient influence to promote his career, Deputy Adjutant General Burne, had died. Munro now saw little future for himself in India and he appears to have become very disillusioned with the army. 'The life of a soldier in the Carnatic', he wrote, 'is perhaps more laborious than in any other part of the world. In a few campaigns a young man has all the appearances of age and a broken constitution. He has no prospects to balance the fatigues he has undergone....

There is no profession in any part of the world amongst which fortunes are more uncommon'.<sup>45</sup> He was once more acutely aware of his lack of influence and bitterly complained that qualifications alone were insufficient to win promotion.<sup>46</sup> At home his father was doing what he could to advance his son's career. He held small meetings in Glasgow at which he read Munro's letters to acquaintances and encouraged them to mention him in their correspondence with friends and relatives in India. His efforts were, however, barely rewarded.

At this time, probably because he felt that his career prospects had been destroyed, Munro started to play an active role in military politics. The hostility and suspicion that existed between the military and the civil authorities were open opportunities to disappointed men like him to find some vent for the resentment they harboured against the whole system. From the time that he assumed the governorship of Madras, Macartney had been beset by financial problems. The Treasury was empty and the troops' pay in arrears.<sup>47</sup> Neither the Nawab nor the Raja of Tanjore were disposed to contribute whole-heartedly to the war effort. The situation was so serious that Macartney had constantly to appeal to Bengal for funds. In January 1782 he actually informed Macpherson that if Bengal did not speedily send large sums to Madras, the army would have to be disbanded.<sup>48</sup> He claimed it was already on the edge of mutiny. Later in that year however, Macartney allowed the army's pay to go a full twelve months into arrears and he then cancelled the half batta allowances.<sup>49</sup> Although he justified

his acts with the argument of economic necessity, there seems little doubt that they were also partly inspired by his irritation with the military in general and Coote in particular. His measures produced widespread discontent within the army and the officers of both the Company's and the King's regiments formed committees of correspondence to petition the Government. Munro acted as the secretary for one of these.<sup>50</sup>

In the meantime, upon Sir Eyre Coote's return to Bengal, General James Stuart was appointed the new Commander-in-Chief. Stuart was the officer who had arrested Pigot in 1776 and he had only been cleared by a court martial of the charges resulting from this action in 1780. News of Stuart's appointment seems to have immediately restored Munro's optimism. He and his family now entertained hopes that their relationship to Lady Stuart would encourage the General, her nephew, to advance Munro's career. Munro started to fill his letters with praise for the new Commander-in-Chief and his father showed these to Lady Stuart in Scotland and to Andrew Stuart in London. Andrew Stuart, who was interested in any correspondence which supported his brother, in turn showed these letters to the Secretary of War, the Secretary of the Treasury, William Pulteney, John Robinson who was Lord North's confidant, and Laurence Sullivan who was then the serving Chairman of the Company.<sup>51</sup> In Madras, Munro presented letters of introduction from Andrew Stuart to the General but initially received rather short shrift. He reported to his father that he had heard the following story from Colonel Elphinstone. When the

Colonel asked the General whether he had received any letters from England, the latter replied, 'Jesus Christ, Colonel Elphinstone, would you believe me I have not received a single confidential line from my brother Andrew...not a single line but a long faldrum daldrum application for an aunt's cousin's grandson or devil and he desires me to make his fortune. Jesus Christ, does he think I will make aunt's cousin's and so forth's fortunes before my own'.<sup>52</sup>

Faced with this apparent rebuff, Munro turned to other avenues. However, before doing so, there is evidence that he attempted another direct approach to the General. This second time, having heard that Stuart and Alexander Ross hated each other and probably worried that his known connection with the latter might prejudice the General against him, Munro appears to have abandoned his former benefactor.<sup>53</sup> Rebuffed a second time and concluding it was a bad time to approach the General who was extremely busy having only just succeeded Coote, Munro attempted to attract his attention by less direct methods. Taking advantage of the hostility that existed in the army towards Macartney, Munro contrived to promote himself as a spokesman for its grievances.<sup>54</sup> He believed that the General was in sympathy with the military's aspirations and that, by stoutly defending them, he would attract Stuart's favourable attention. There is evidence that he was achieving considerable success when the entire situation changed.

From the start Macartney's relations with Stuart were worse

than his with Coote had ever been. After the troubles he had experienced with Coote, Macartney was determined that the new Commander-in-Chief should not be granted powers that would enable him to challenge the Government. He had even written to Laurence Sullivan at the Court asking him to try to ensure that the new Commander-in-Chief should have no seat on the Council or the Select Committee.<sup>55</sup> Although this request was not granted, Macartney was able to ensure that Stuart did not receive the special powers which Coote, when Commander-in-Chief, had been invested with. The Select Committee assumed control of military affairs. Stuart deeply resented this, paid the Committee most unwilling obedience and even departed in some points from its actual instructions. He went so far as to announce that, as Commander-in-Chief of the King's forces, he would obey the orders of the Company's civil servants as he saw fit.<sup>56</sup> In addition, Stuart corresponded directly with Coote in Bengal, criticising the Select Committee's management of affairs. Coote placed these letters before the Council in Bengal where Hastings used them in his disputes with Macartney.<sup>57</sup>

Personal animosity soon clouded the issues. Stuart appears to have had little but contempt for the civilians. 'I have', he wrote to the Directors, 'at the age of fifty, cheerfully dropt a bloody limb while others at their ease are only dropping ink on their paper in black characters'.<sup>58</sup> Macartney was markedly hostile to Stuart. He wrote to John Sullivan that; 'ever since Major General Stuart has had a seat in the Select Committee for military and political affairs, I have experienced nothing but opposition and vexatious

counteraction from him.... Under Stuart there is little to be expected. He is old, over cautious, totally unenterprising and, I think, a good deal impaired'.<sup>59</sup> When Macartney used the word 'impaired', it was as a synonym for senile. Referring to the amputated leg which Stuart was so proudly regarded as honourable evidence of service to the Company, Macartney merely observed that the General had 'made the last campaign in a go-cart' and added; 'I need not tell you the little respect which either the conveyance or his personal character will entitle him to from the troops'.<sup>60</sup> By now Macartney had a profound contempt for soldiers and for what he was pleased to term their 'silly trade'.<sup>61</sup>

At first Macartney exercised considerable forbearance in his dealings with Stuart. His reasons for doing so were not quite so admirable as he would have wished people to believe. It seems that regard for the influence Stuart's brother Andrew had with the Ministry and for the possible trouble that the General's supporters in India and Britain might cause for him, played a greater role than the moderation of his temper to which he ascribed his actions.<sup>62</sup> However Macartney soon felt that the situation was becoming intolerable and decided that drastic action was now unavoidable. When news reached Madras from Europe that peace had been concluded with France, Macartney ordered Stuart to relinquish command of the army and return to the capital. On the 2 July 1783, Mr Sadlier, still a member of the Council, and Mr Stanton, Macartney's private secretary, relieved Stuart of his command.<sup>63</sup> In Madras the dispute developed with vigour and threatened the stability of the Government until

Macartney had the General arrested and returned to Britain.

With Stuart's departure, there is evidence that Munro found himself in a difficult position. He had openly espoused what was now seen as a defeated cause. Having been deputed by his fellow officers to complain to Lord Macartney about their arrears of pay and loss of batta, he had become in the Government's eyes a prominent figure in the military opposition to the civil authorities. A letter he had written to General Stuart in his capacity as secretary of a correspondence committee had greatly angered Macartney.<sup>64</sup> Huddleston, who was then Secretary to the Government, harboured such ill-will towards Munro that, 30 years later when he was serving as a Director, he alone dissented to Munro's appointment as a Special Commissioner.<sup>65</sup> Munro could no longer rely on Thomas Graham's influence to protect him and had not yet managed to find another patron. In the circumstances, it was hardly surprising that Munro, encouraged by his father, considered the possibility of resigning from the army and entering a trading house.<sup>66</sup>

To extricate himself from this awkward situation, Munro tried to ingratiate himself with General Bruce. He wrote to his family asking them to furnish him with an introduction.<sup>67</sup> While he waited for their replies, he sought to win the favour of John Erskine, General Bruce's nephew and secretary.<sup>68</sup> His father persuaded Lady Stuart to write to him about Munro while his mother encouraged her friend Lady Christian Erskine, John's brother, to do the same.<sup>69</sup> Alexander Munro suggested that Munro approach Erskine and ask him for



a commission to supply the army, these being particularly lucrative. He believed that an offer from Munro to share the profits of such a venture with Erskine or, as he put it, 'to run smacks with him', would prove irresistable.<sup>70</sup>

At the same time, Munro continued to play an active role in the dispute between certain influential factions in the army and the civil administration, clearly siding with the former. When the Madras Government dismissed Stuart in September, Macartney had appointed Sir John Burgoyne as the new Commander-in-Chief. Stuart insisted on retaining command of the King's troops and Burgoyne, who questioned the Governor's right to remove the commander of the King's forces, declared that he would only obey Stuart. To escape from this impasse, Macartney and the Select Committee nominated Colonel Ross Lang of the Company's service to the post of Commander-in-Chief. Several general officers withdrew from the army but not before they had directed their subordinates to obey orders issued by Lang. Macartney, who was unable to accept this situation, had Burgoyne placed under arrest and ordered that the dissenting officers were to be refused staff allowances until they should submit. All this generated considerable discontent amongst the military who resented what they considered to be unwarranted interference by the civil authorities in military matters. Some of the officers' hostility was directed towards Lang himself, who was regarded in these quarters as the willing tool of the civilians, the instrument with which they intended to subvert the military's independence. Munro, who referred to Lang as a 'despicable old woman', linked his

fortunes with those of the discontented.<sup>71</sup> The fact that he had lost his post of quartermaster as a result of Lang's army reforms probably encouraged him to take this course of action.<sup>72</sup>

However, while his activities undoubtedly brought him to the attention of many senior officers who sympathised with his opinions, they damaged his immediate career prospects. Munro, who believed that he had as good a claim to them as other men, was passed by when posts were distributed. In particular, General Lang, who had 'the disposal of more appointments than any of his predecessors', refused to give one to Munro.<sup>73</sup> His successor, General Dalling, also refused to advance Munro despite the fact that he had promised Alexander Munro's friend Hercules Ross, to whom he owed £2000, that he would do so.<sup>74</sup>

Munro's father did not understand the situation Munro had placed himself in. He blamed Munro's failure to advance his career on a lack of social grace. He insisted that Munro was not persistent enough in his efforts to put himself forward and accused him of failing 'to flatter the great' sufficiently.<sup>75</sup> He urged Munro to leave the Company's service and set up as an independent trader. There is little doubt that there was some truth in Alexander Munro's remarks. Munro was staunchly independent and could be obstinate in his adherence to views once he had espoused them, even when they clearly opposed those held by the people in power. Disappointment with his career and resentment towards the establishment in which patronage, the one thing he lacked,

played so predominant a role, alienated Munro from his peers. He reacted by proclaiming a determination to rely on his own abilities and industry. Optimistically, he expected to achieve success and fortune in eight years.<sup>76</sup>

Only a fortuitous series of events appears to have saved Munro's career. In England Sir Adam Ferguson, an old friend of Munro's father and a sitting member of Parliament, was appointed to the committee deputed to investigate the recent events in Madras.<sup>77</sup> This man, a political ally of Andrew Stuart and therefore interested in the fortunes of General Stuart and his supporters, seems to have been of some assistance to Munro. John Muir, an old classmate of Munro, had recently been elected with the Duke of Hamilton's patronage to Parliament and was using what influence he possessed in London to help his former school fellow.<sup>78</sup> In Scotland Captain Alexander Park married Thomas Graham's sister and, when introduced to Alexander Munro by George Graham, took an interest in Munro's future.<sup>79</sup> Since Captain Park was actively participating in an extensive business with a £200,000 capital, a business in which several of the Directors were also deeply involved, his support for Munro carried some weight.<sup>80</sup> In Bengal Charles Stuart, a distant relation of the Munro family who had been newly appointed President of the Council of Commerce, also took an interest in his career.<sup>81</sup> It was even mooted at one point that he might take on Munro as his secretary if Munro could manage to obtain a civil appointment in place of his military one.

The event to have the most significant impact on Munro's

early career was Macartney's resignation. From 1782 there had been serious disagreement between the Governments of Bengal and Madras over the assignment of the Nawab's revenues to the Madras Government, which had delegated their management to a Committee of Assigned Revenue. Hastings attempted to annul the assignment but the Madras Government obstinately refused to obey the orders from Bengal until they had been confirmed by the Court of Directors. Hastings failed to overcome the opposition in his own Council to his plans to suspend Macartney and the parties remained deadlocked until the matter was settled in 1785 by the arrival of orders from the Court that the assignment was to be cancelled. Macartney, unwilling to carry out policies he was convinced were wrong, resigned and returned to Britain. Munro, who blamed Macartney for his disappointments and harboured a grudge against him, was relieved to see him leave. His opinion of the Court of Directors was not raised when he heard later that they had granted the ex-Governor a £1500 annuity and he seems to have taken a vindictive pleasure in the news that Colonel Stuart had severely wounded the unfortunate man in a duel in Hyde Park.<sup>82</sup>

A year earlier Munro had heard from his father that Sir Archibald Campbell was to be the next Commander-in-Chief.<sup>83</sup> This news had raised his hopes because Campbell, while serving as Governor of Jamaica, had formed a close friendship with Hercules Ross, Alexander Munro's West Indian contact and friend. As a mark of his friendship, he had taken an active interest in Ross's protege, Daniel Munro.<sup>84</sup> While in London Campbell had continued to concern himself in

the affairs of Munro's brother. When Daniel was tried at the Old Bailey for the murder of Archibald Maclane, a man he had killed in a quarrel while returning to Britain on the Hero Captain Sinclair, Campbell sent two of his aides-de-camp to support him during the trial.<sup>85</sup> For a while Alexander Munro was certain that Campbell would take Daniel to India with him on his staff. Munro now heard that Campbell was to be appointed the next Governor of Madras as well as Commander-in-Chief. Although he knew Campbell came from a close Argyleshire clan, had a host of relatives hoping for patronage and was best approached in Gaelic, Munro clearly believed his fortunes had changed.<sup>86</sup>

Other news also encouraged him in this belief. His father had breakfasted with Colonel Mackenzie, Lord Macleod's brother, and this man, after reading some of Munro's letters, promised to secure him a post.<sup>87</sup> The new Adjutant General, Colonel Whyte, came from Glasgow and Munro believed that this would give him a good introduction to the officer.<sup>88</sup> Colonel Stuart, who was now at home and under the immediate influence of his sister-in-law, Lady Stuart, continued to take an active interest in Munro. He wrote to his great friend, Cornwallis, who was now Governor-General of Bengal and asked him to see if he could help the family's distant relative and protege.<sup>89</sup>

Initially Munro's expectations were again disappointed. Sir Archibald Campbell lived up to his reputation as a nepotist. Munro wrote to his father telling him: 'I have no well founded hopes of anything being done for me during this

administration for I have no interest. The General has so many relations that there is always one ready to step into every vacancy. He has created three bazarmasterships, useless appointments but the most lucrative of any held by military men, and they have been filled by two Captain Campbells and a Captain Ramsay. Another Captain Campbell is Muster Master and another, his nephew, is Town Major of Madras'.<sup>90</sup> In a second letter he wrote that 'there is such a northern inundation, such a chain of clannish and political connections about the General that it is ridiculous for an unsupported stranger to think of breaking through or even sneaking into it'.<sup>91</sup> Munro's career had reached such a nadir that, when it was decided at his station that one officer must lose his post to make way for a Fort Adjutant, he was selected.<sup>92</sup> Munro's bitterness was on this occasion tempered by a belief that his transfer to Vellore had saved his life. Had he not been removed, he would have had to take part in expeditions against local refractory rajas, expeditions during which it was usual for two-thirds of the force to die or contract incurable fevers.

Alexander Munro, who had originally raised Munro's hopes with his news of Campbell's appointment, now claimed that he had always feared the General would do little for him. He reported that the man was notorious for favouring his relatives and that complaints had been received at the Court of Directors about his behaviour.<sup>93</sup> Unfortunately the General commanded so much interest at the Board of Control, it was impossible for the Directors to do much about his nepotism. Campbell's close friendship with Dundas, the President of

the Board of Control had originally gained him the Governorship. Dundas had informed the Directors that, were they to exercise their prerogative and send orders appointing one of their servants, Holland, to the post, the Board would recall him. To ensure the appointment of his friend, Dundas made the first use of the power of recall Pitt's India Act had vested in the Crown and which was to finally put the superior appointments in India completely into the Ministry's hands.

For a while it looked as if Munro's luck had begun to change. He became acquainted with Lieutenant Macauley, the Persian Secretary to the Government. Macauley wished to resign his office and return to Britain and he promised to try to persuade Campbell to give Munro the vacant post.<sup>94</sup> During the long periods of enforced inactivity, Munro had continued his studies of the local languages, studies he had begun with Haliburton's encouragement when he had first arrived in Madras. Haliburton, who was himself appointed Persian Translator to the Government in 1795, had continued to help Munro, sending him interesting and instructive documents.<sup>95</sup> Munro's description of his studies to his friends understated the importance he attached to them but it did not conceal his motives. 'I have', he wrote, 'been for some years past amusing, or rather plaguing, myself with the Hindustani and Persian languages. I began the study of them in the hopes of their being one day of use to me'.<sup>96</sup> Munro had in fact been taking his studies very seriously indeed, translating Persian from 10am to 1pm every day and spending the afternoons until sunset talking with Indians.<sup>97</sup>

Linguistically, he was well qualified for the post Macauley wished to obtain for him.

Munro's hopes however were soon dashed again. He had been so certain that he would receive the appointment, he had turned down the offer of a lesser post. Now that another officer, whom Munro claimed had greater interest than he, had obtained the office he so wanted, he bitterly regretted his hasty rejection of the other.<sup>98</sup> By now Munro had developed a thoroughly cynical attitude towards the Company and its administration in Madras. He greeted the news that General Meadows was shortly to arrive as the next Governor with no enthusiasm even though his father wrote to him that a friend, Mr Young, had written to his brother John, a confident of the General, on Munro's behalf.<sup>99</sup> 'Experience', he replied to his father, 'might have taught men, at least in this society, to build less upon great names for they have seen so many impositions on the understanding of mankind invested with high offices and recommended by common fame as were enough to prejudice them against many who come among them with such credentials'.<sup>100</sup>

Under such circumstances, it was hardly surprising that Munro should feel depressed. 'I am sitting here in the midst of this desert', he wrote to his mother, 'advancing fast in years and as obscure and unknown as when I left my father's house.... I consider how little progress on the road to fortune I have made - sixteen years have now passed over my head without my having been able to do anything of consequence'.<sup>101</sup> He begged his parents not to send his younger



brothers to India. He assured them that there were no futures for young men in the country any more. 'Hardly one in fifty of those who come from Europe return to it with a fortune', he informed his brother James.<sup>102</sup> Only two considerations seem to have sustained him. Munro was driven on by his determination to restore his family's fortune. Almost every letter he received from his father catalogued fresh horrors to which his family had been subjected by their poverty - constantly dunned, unable to pay household bills, without even sufficient money to buy clothes decent enough to leave the house in. Under such circumstances, Munro felt his own poverty to be a trifling consideration and wrote to his parents that 'the only cause that I have for repining is my inability to assist my father as I would wish'.<sup>103</sup> He also, despite all the evidence to the contrary, maintained confidence in his ability to eventually succeed. 'I am', he wrote, 'a great castle builder and cannot get it out of my head that I should do something very grand one day or other'.<sup>104</sup>

In 1788 an event occurred that was to be a turning point in Munro's career. Captain Alexander Read, who had not yet met Munro but knew of him through his friendship with Munro's sister Erskine, heard about his proficiency in Persian and Urdu.<sup>105</sup> Read asked that Munro might be appointed to the intelligence corps he was commanding. Read was a rising figure in Madras. He had joined the Madras army in 1770 and in the following years had established a reputation for himself as a proficient linguist and an expert in Indian political affairs. In 1786 he had been involved in

negotiations with the Court at Hyderabad and later he had been specially consulted by Sir Archibald Campbell about the occupation of Guntur. Now, as commander of the intelligence corps, Read was in constant communication with correspondents at the courts of the Nizam and Tipu.

Munro had reservations about accepting the appointment. He believed that the expenses would outweigh the allowances and he was far from certain that the intelligence corps had any future. 'All the members of the Government except the President', he wrote, 'say that the Company ought not to be burdened with charges for intelligence during the most profound peace'<sup>106</sup>. In addition, Munro considered the job a dull one which promised few opportunities of attracting attention to himself. He would be principally engaged in translating reports sent in by spies the Company employed in the towns and armies of the Nizam and Tipu. However, despite of his inclination to decline Read's offer, Munro allowed his friends to persuade him, with hopes of where the job might lead, to accept it in July 1788.

During the next four years Munro made a number of friendships with men who were to play significant roles in his later career. General Stuart sent him letters of introduction to his nephew, Basil Cochrane, and to the Deputy Adjutant General, Barry Close, who had been appointed Stuart's personal Persian Secretary after he attracted the General's attention with his linguistic expertise.<sup>107</sup> Munro took advantage of these introductions, observing of Close: 'He is a rising character whom it is desirable to have on

your side'<sup>108</sup>. The intimate friendship he formed with his superior, Captain Read, was of greater consequence for his immediate future. Read was rapidly emerging as one of the rising stars of the Madras Presidency. In 1789, he sent Sir Archibald Campbell an elaborate report on the Country Powers which was well received. In the following years he established his reputation as an efficient and completely honest administrator with the work he did when organizing transport for the army and with his temporary management of Kolar and Bangalore during their occupation. In the course of his duties, he regularly corresponded with the Governor-General. Cornwallis was impressed by Read's 'zeal and ability in conciliating the good will of the inhabitants and in arranging the settlements of the districts that (had)...been placed under (his)...management' as well as by his integrity.<sup>109</sup> Cornwallis believed that the latter ensured that Read was incapable of 'attempting to obtain the smallest emolument beyond that which is open and allowed'.<sup>110</sup> The decision to appoint Sir Charles Oakeley as General Meadow's successor to the Governorship absolutely ensured Read's further advancement. Read was Lady Oakeley's uncle.<sup>111</sup>

While Munro was laying the foundations for his future career by attaching himself to men whose own careers were in the ascendant, an event occurred whose consequences were to change the course of his life. When, on 29 December 1789, Tipu launched an attack on Travancore, he precipitated a crisis which, apart from throwing the Company's home and Indian authorities into political turmoil, directly influenced later decisions regarding the employment of

military officers in the civil administration. The raja was, under the Treaty of Mangalore, an ally of the British but the Madras Government initially refused to intervene. This prompted Cornwallis, who was indignant at the disgraceful sacrifice that he believed 'had been made of British honour', to intervene in person. He sent a letter to the Government in which he condemned its conduct, claimed orders sent in November had been disobeyed, preparations not made and allies betrayed.<sup>112</sup> More importantly, he ordered that sums set aside for the payment of the Nawab's debts were to be employed in the war effort. His actions offended many of the Company's civil servants and alienated the Nawab's creditors. Edward John Holland and his brother were deeply involved in illicit dealings with various Indian princes while other men like Taylor, a member of the Council, were so embroiled in the Nawab's financial intrigues that the suspension of the payment of his debts threatened them with bankruptcy.<sup>113</sup> Cornwallis's decision to prosecute the war against Tipu, although it delighted the military, threatened the interests of many in the Company's civil employ. Many of these men retaliated by deliberately delaying the preparations for war.

Cornwallis considered that the situation, which he believed clearly revealed that the Madras civilians could not be trusted, required immediate attention. He planned to leave Bengal and assume command in Madras. 'I thought myself called upon', he wrote, 'to take so decided a step from its being consistent with my knowledge that there was not a sufficient harmony and mutual confidence between the Civil

and Military departments and that there was evident backwardness in the Civil part of the Government to consult the officer commanding the troops under the Presidency.... I thought myself called upon by a sense of duty to the Company...to stand forth and endeavour to avert the misfortunes with which the negligences and misconduct or jealousies between the Civil and Military departments might be attended'.<sup>114</sup> Only the arrival of Meadows prevented him from immediately leaving for Madras. He hoped the appointment of the new Governor, with a military background, would lead to reforms in the Government which, in his opinion, had been conducting itself in a very criminal manner. He blamed the behaviour of the civil servants on the Company's policies. In a letter to Henry Dundas, the President of the Board of Control, he wrote that 'the whole system of the Presidency is founded on the good old principles of Leadenhall-street economy - small salaries and immense perquisites'.<sup>115</sup> In another letter to Dundas, he spoke of the 'wretched policy of the Company (which) has invariably driven all their servants to the alternatives of starving or taking what was not their own'.<sup>116</sup>

The controversies which now raged in India had repercussions in Britain. Disgruntled civilians complained to their friends and patrons at home who saw opportunities to use the discontent in Madras for their own purposes. The matter became embroiled with British political issues. The Ministry was assailed in both Houses on the question of the Company's responsibility for the war. John Coxe Hippisley, a retired Madras civilian who appears to have suffered a severe

financial loss as a result of the sudden fall in the value of the Company's stock consequent to the outbreak of hostilities, blamed the Board of Control for the war. 'Any peace', he argued, 'where the honour of the country is not bartered away, is better than the most successful war'<sup>117</sup>. In the House of Lords, Lord Porchester claimed that the 'war was planned and determined by the Board of Control before the pretences existed'<sup>118</sup>. The Opposition seized the occasion to attack their opponents. The Ministry however was easily equal to the occasion and Dundas was able to completely vindicate both the Board's and Cornwallis's conduct by proving that Tipu had been long planning aggression against the British and that the war was a direct consequence of his actions.

In his letters to his father and friends in Britain, Munro had frequently been critical of the civilian administration in Madras. As early as 1780, he had written accusing them of 'violating their public faith with the same ease and unconcern as they do their private promises'<sup>119</sup>. His active participation in military politics had encouraged him to take a jaundiced view of the administration. He had also consistently argued that the British should follow an aggressive policy of expansion. His belief that any other policy could only lead to disaster had hardened into a conviction during the period that he had worked in the intelligence corps. In addition, like many other officers, he believed that war would improve his chances to make his fortune. He told his father that he had managed, with great difficulty, to save one thousand pagodas but, if a war

should last twelve months, he could certainly double this figure.<sup>120</sup>

On 17 January 1790, Munro wrote a letter to his father.<sup>121</sup> In it he roundly criticized the Madras Government. He claimed that the Presidency was quite unprepared for war. 'I fear', he wrote, 'that we are not yet in the state of readiness which we ought to be.... Since the conclusion of the late war, we have acted as if we had been to enjoy perpetual peace. The distresses and difficulties which we then encountered...have not cured us of the narrow policy of preferring a present small saving to a certain, though future, great and essential advantage'. He criticized the Government's failure to do more to support the raja of Travancore and claimed that their excuse for inaction was no more than 'a subterfuge of Government to cloak their dread of war under a pretended love of peace'. He urged an immediate assault on Tipu and attacked the view many people held that Tipu's state should be preserved as a buffer between the British and the Marathas. To support such a policy was, he argued, 'to support a powerful and ambitious enemy to defend us from a weak one'.

By the time that the letter reached Alexander Munro, treaties had been signed with the Marathas and the Nizam. From June the Company had been openly at war with Tipu. It was already clear in Britain that the Ministry was going to easily defeat the attacks on it and that both the Board's and Cornwallis's actions would be completely vindicated. The prevailing, predominant opinion was that Tipu should be

destroyed and the Company's territories substantially increased. Dundas himself favoured the complete extirpation of Tipu's power and claimed that 'a patched-up peace would be a sad policy'.<sup>122</sup> Alexander Munro immediately recognized that the contents of his son's letter supported the views of predominant party. Before its arrival he had been doing what he could to assist Munro's career by taking advantage of every opportunity to interest influential men in his future but had found that his lack of contacts and his political and social insignificance were preventing him from having much success in his direct approaches. Neither he nor Munro had enough to offer in return to gain the active patronage of men in a position to effectively assist the career of an unknown junior officer. He now thought that he could advance Munro's career by publishing his letter.<sup>123</sup> He believed its publication would make his name more widely known and win him the favour of both the Board and Cornwallis's supporters.

The letter was published on the front page of the London Chronicle on 9 September 1790. When Munro heard what his father had done, he was horrified and wrote forbidding him to repeat the experiment.<sup>124</sup> It is clear that Munro was not upset that his father had tried to bring his letter to the attention of influential people who might appreciate the support it offered to their policies. He had never complained before when his father had privately circulated his letters amongst men in London interested in Indian affairs and there is some evidence he wrote a few of his letters with just such a wider audience in mind. It is also



clear that he had not changed his opinions in the meantime. In August 1791, he wrote to George Brown arguing the case for the destruction of Tipu and further British expansion. 'Shall we then', he asked, 'alarmed by an idle dream of policy and balance of power, hesitate to crush, while we can, such a rival?... Our strength and our security would be augmented in a very great proportion by the conquest of Baramahal and Coimbatore with a part of the Malabar Coast because these countries are rich'.<sup>125</sup> It is clear that it was not publicity per se that Munro objected to but only the indiscriminate publicity his letter's appearance in a newspaper guaranteed.

Munro had three reasons for regretting the publication of his letter. First, he feared that it would offend men in the Madras administration who could only see it as public criticism of themselves by a junior officer with a reputation as a dissident. They might retaliate and, in a system where appointments were dependent upon influence, they could threaten his career prospects. Secondly Munro realized that the views expressed in his letter would offend the powerful minority factions in Britain who had so recently attacked the Ministry. Munro had had sufficient experience of the Company's politics to know that they were unstable. Today's minority might easily be tomorrow's majority and he was distressed to be so publicly associated with one side. Munro's third reason for regretting his father's action was much the most important. The letter was almost certainly guaranteed to also offend the very people his father hoped to impress with it.

Amongst his criticisms of the civil administration, Munro had also attacked the recent moves to increase the numbers in the King's forces at the expense of the Company's army. He claimed that European troops did not fight efficiently in India and were less effective than the Company's forces.<sup>126</sup> He also argued that the officers in the King's forces lacked experience and knowledge of India and consequently acted in ways which brought the ridicule and hostility of their soldiers down upon them. It is impossible to be certain whether Munro believed these claims or not. They might have just reflected the strained relations which existed between the Company's and the King's forces. In 1782 Macartney had informed Laurence Sullivan that the mixture of the two forces was causing problems. 'The King's troops', he wrote, 'look upon themselves as having a separate interest from the Company, are full of jealousies and vanity, and give us almost every trouble and embarrassment they can'.<sup>127</sup> What is however clear is that Munro was trying to defend his own interests as an officer in the Company's army by attacking the retrenchments which he believed were threatening his career prospects and present status. Unfortunately these views were certain to irritate Dundas who held quite different ones.

Early in 1785, when the Home Authorities were planning economies in the Indian establishments, Dundas had insisted on a reduction in the Company's forces which had resulted in 600 of the Company's officers being thrown out of active employ on half-pay.<sup>128</sup> In 1787 Dundas had urged that the King's

forces be greatly increased and the Company's correspondingly reduced. The Directors had objected strongly. The measure not only threatened to severely restrict their patronage but also promised to be expensive for the Company. The Company was required to pay £20,000 a year to the Treasury for each royal regiment sent to India. The Directors regarded the whole policy as being a disguised plan to increase the King's forces at the Company's expense. A power struggle between Dundas at the Board of Control and the Directors had ensued in which the Court challenged Parliament to define the limits of the Board's authority over the Company. Pitt had been forced to introduce a bill into the Commons with the express purpose of 'removing all doubt as to the power of the Board to order payment of any expenses which might be incurred in sending out and maintaining such troops as should be judged necessary for the security of the British territories and possessions in India'.<sup>129</sup> In the House, Pitt was accused by Fox of deceitfully grasping the Company's patronage by underhand methods and only amendments to prevent any increase in ministerial patronage had saved his bill.

Although Dundas had triumphed, his victory had been a narrow one. He could hardly have been expected to welcome the publication of a junior officer's letter containing what might be regarded as a direct criticism of a policy he had been pursuing. Fortunately his father's indiscretion appears to have done Munro's career little damage and it did not prevent Munro from continuing to write letters obviously designed for a wider audience than his immediate family. His

subsequent instructions to his father however make it quite clear that he expected his friends to be more selective when they circulated his correspondence. There is a revealing note from Alexander Munro to an unnamed friend attached to a letter from Munro, a letter containing a description of the recent war and criticisms of the Madras Government and the recent opposition to the war in Britain, which found its way into the India House records. Alexander Munro wrote; 'I must now request, because my son has requested it of me, that you will not allow any of these extracts to go into the papers - but, if you should think them worth the attention of your friends, I give you full liberty to read them to these friends'<sup>130</sup>.

The whole episode did not discourage Alexander Munro in his attempts to promote his son by bringing him to the attention of influential men. He constantly urged Munro to publicly support the views of the leading figures in the Home Administration. In 1792 he suggested to his son that he send a treatise on recent events in Madras to Pitt, a treatise so composed that Pitt might use it if he wished to combat opposition in Britain to the war.<sup>131</sup> He also urged him to try to maintain the friendly interest of people with sufficient influence to assist him. In particular, he encouraged him to write flattering letters to Lady Stuart.

In 1791, Munro heard of an event which must have raised his hopes of rapid future promotion. His father informed him that Thomas Graham's sister had married Mr Cherry, Cornwallis's Persian Secretary.<sup>132</sup> The Grahams had done more

for Munro than any other of his friends and patrons and Thomas Graham in particular had interested himself in his protege's career. Now he promised to use the influence his sister's marriage gave him with Cherry to have Munro recommended to Cornwallis. At the same time, Thomas Graham's own recent advancement in the Company also gave him opportunities to assist his friend. He had been appointed a provisional member of the Bengal Council during Cornwallis's absence and it had been ordered that he should be given a seat on that body at the next vacancy.

The appointment of Sir Charles Oakeley as Governor of Madras was, although he was unaware of it, another significant event for Munro. Oakeley was not a particularly outstanding administrator nor an able man. Cornwallis however, in a letter to Dundas, expressed a guardedly favourable opinion of him. 'Sir Charles Oakeley', he said, 'though not a very capable man, is, I believe, the best of all the civil servants of this establishment that could have been selected to fill the station of Governor'.<sup>133</sup> At the same time, Cornwallis recognized that it might be a mistake to employ a member of the Company's Madras Government in that post. 'It is very difficult', he observed, 'for a man to divest himself of the prejudices which the habits of twenty years have confirmed and to govern people who have lived with him so long on a footing of equality'. Though there is little doubt that Oakeley's career and experiences did not encourage him to attempt any radical reform of the Government or administration, he was persuaded to tackle one outstanding problem, the apparent refusal or inability of

the civil servants to master the local languages.

From shortly after its inception the Company had been anxious to encourage its employees to learn the vernacular and official languages of India. As early as 1671, the Company had offered an award of £20 to any of its employees who could demonstrate proficiency in an Indian language.<sup>134</sup> In 1714 the Court ordered that preference was to be given to employees who had learnt a local language whenever appointments were made to vacant offices.<sup>135</sup> They also made provision for the distribution of special rewards to employees mastering Persian. The Court placed considerable emphasis on the importance of their employees acquiring proficiency in these languages because they feared that the failure to do so always resulted in an over-reliance on Indian servants. The generally held opinion in the Company was that the Indians were essentially corrupt and, given any opportunity, would abuse their authority and oppress their countrymen unless closely supervised. To some extent this view was supported by the facts but it seems to have been also inspired by the Europeans' failure to recognize the fundamental differences between the two cultures. They failed to acknowledge the possibility of the existence of different but equally valid frameworks of perceptual reference.

Sir Charles Oakeley had become concerned with this problem during his career in Madras. He was worried that the civil servants' failure to learn the languages would have wider consequences than just the general employment of Indians in

responsible positions of authority. Convinced that these Indians were abusing the trust placed in them and indulging in corrupt practices, Oakeley feared that the British would become, possibly unwittingly, associated with their extortions. He believed that the Indian population would assume that the officials could not be acting in this manner without the knowledge and approval of their British masters. He feared that this would damage the high esteem in which he thought the Company's administration was held by its Indian subjects. Ultimately, he believed it might lead to the population failing to see any advantage in foreign rule and possibly withdrawing support for the British. In November 1790, he had entered a minute in which he proposed that promotion in the service should be more closely linked to linguistic acquirements. In 1791 his proposals, which also included one for the provision of an allowance to civil servants wishing to employ munshis, were sent to the Court of Directors for their consideration.<sup>136</sup> Oakeley's proposals aroused considerable interest in the Court which adopted them extremely quickly and returned their approval of them only eight months later.<sup>137</sup>

The interest generated by the issue was fortuitous for Munro and made possible the next step in his career by paving the way for the decision to employ linguistically qualified military employees in posts which would have normally been restricted to the civilian members of the Company's service. Only the combination of the Court, the Governor-General and the Governor, all convinced of the importance of proficiency in the local languages as a qualification for employment,

could have overcome the opposition in the civil service to the appointment of officers to what had been traditionally civilian posts.

By the end of the war, Munro's views of what British policy in South India should be had developed sufficiently for him to emerge as an advocate of expansion. 'There are times and situations', he wrote, 'where conquest not only brings a revenue greatly beyond its expenses but brings also additional security'<sup>138</sup>. He rejected the arguments of those who believed that, rather than defeat and replace them, the British should enter into alliances with the surrounding Indian states. Munro was convinced that these were too weak and unstable to guarantee or even maintain peace. 'Nothing', he observed, 'can be more absurd than our regarding any native governments as powers which are to last for ages'<sup>139</sup>. In another letter Munro claimed that people who seriously believed in the security of treaties knew little indeed of India.<sup>140</sup>

To some extent these views of Munro, in part derived from his analysis of the situation in Madras but also influenced by his perception of his own interests, were fairly commonplace among the military in Madras. They were certainly not unique to him and a number of influential men held views which were, to a greater or lesser extent, very similar to his own. Cornwallis opposed any idea of an inconclusive end to the war through a treaty with Tipu. He claimed that those who held the view that Tipu formed a useful buffer between the British and the Marathas would



mistakenly employ a tiger as a barrier against deer.<sup>141</sup> Dundas, before temporary setbacks in the British campaign caused unrest in Britain which seemed to threaten the uneasy peace between the Board and the Court, also held a similar opinion. In answer to Francis's allegation that 'the war was impolitic in so far as it went to aggrandise the Marathas by the demolition of Mysore',<sup>142</sup> Dundas replied that this showed a faulty grasp of Indian affairs. He claimed that the Marathas 'can never be dangerous to the British power. We, by preserving peace, can keep them all in the same disposition'.<sup>143</sup>

## Chapter Three

The Foundation of the Munro System;  
Read and Munro in the Baramahal, 1792-9.

As the war with Tipu Sultan drew towards an end, Munro had little reason to contemplate his career hitherto with any degree of satisfaction. He was still a junior officer with few, if any immediate and obvious prospects of further promotion. Temporarily charged with the command of a Prize Guard of two hundred sepoys, he suspected that this post might be abolished with the return of peace. However, although he as yet unaware of it, the foundations had, largely fortuitously, been laid for his future career in the Company's civil administration. In this chapter the factors which led to his selection to serve under Read in the administration of the Baramahal are examined. The origins of the ryotwari system of revenue settlement and motives behind Munro's enthusiastic support for it are analysed. An explanation is offered for the emergence of two distinct and mutually antagonistic schools of thought in the Madras administration, designated respectively as the 'Old' and the 'New School' by contemporaries. Their origins are traced and the considerations which determined the conflicting ideas

each group espoused are described. The influence that this and other divisions within the structure of the Company's Madras administration had on the decision-making process, both in India and Britain, is examined. In the course of the chapter, evidence also emerges of the methods employed men in the Company's service to influence policy decisions and to advance their personal and group or party interests.

Cornwallis signed the Treaty of Seringapatam on 16 March 1792. He had been under pressure from the Company's Indian allies to negotiate a peace as soon as possible and a number of considerations had encouraged him to do so. The alliance between the British, the Marathas and the Nizam was generally regarded by the British as fragile and it was believed that, under the circumstances, it would be unwise to test it by unnecessarily prolonging hostilities.

Cornwallis was himself unhappy conducting the war with Indian allies. 'I hardly need state to you', he wrote to the Directors, 'that in transacting business with people differing so much from ourselves in language, manners and customs ...(who are) so ignorant of military science and so liable to be biased from the pursuit of a general good by private and selfish views, many difficulties are unavoidably experienced'. The British forces had not been more than adequately supplied during the campaign and there were fears that, the longer it lasted, the greater the logistical problems would become. Cornwallis was aware that the war was also placing a heavy burden on the Company at a time when its finances were a source of anxiety in Britain. In addition, sickness in the army was beginning to take a toll.

and there were serious anxieties that this might undermine its strength to a point where its ultimate success would be threatened. Cornwallis had also to consider the orders he had received from Britain. At the beginning of the Mysore War Dundas had favoured the complete extirpation of Tipu's power but in September 1791 the news of temporary setbacks had caused him to alter his opinions.<sup>2</sup> He had orders sent to Cornwallis directing him to make an 'honourable peace' at the first opportunity. The Governor-General was told that, if it appeared necessary, he should even sacrifice all the gains the British had made during the war.<sup>3</sup> Although Cornwallis had been able to postpone the implementation of these orders, he could not totally ignore the wishes of the home authorities.

Under the terms of the Treaty, Tipu surrendered half his territory. A large portion of this went to the Marathas, the Nizam and the raja of Coorg, who was given the independent rule of his state. The Company also acquired extensive new territories. These included all Tipu's lands on the Malabar coast between Trancore and Kaway, the district of Dindigul and the area known as the Baramahal. Cornwallis's decision to incorporate these last two districts into the Madras Presidency was principally influenced by his desire to build a protective barrier between Mysore and the Carnatic.

The immediate problems facing Cornwallis and the Madras Government were those of how best to restore some form of order to the territories that the Company had acquired, settle their revenues and collect them. The conditions

prevailing in the area threatened to make this extremely difficult. The recent wars, which had seriously disrupted economic and social life in South India, had been the culmination of a long period of political instability in the area, itself the consequence of the incessant warfare which the decline of the Mughal Empire, the presence of two rival Europe powers and the resultant unleashing of disruptive forces had provoked in the country. Preoccupied with external affairs and internal power struggles, no ruler in the Peninsula had been able to devote much attention to administrative matters other than those concerned with the collection of the land revenues. The inhabitants had consequently been forced to look towards their own small communities for the provision of social and economic structures within which to organize their lives.

The social fragmentation that had occurred presented the Company with a serious problem. It meant that there were no centralized bureaucratic structures that it could assimilate into that of its own organization, a dearth of records and little other information easily available about conditions in the provinces. In addition the Company's Government in Madras was far from sure just what its position in the area vis-a-vis the property in the land and the administration of justice was. While the Company was satisfied that it had acquired all the rights of full sovereignty in the Jagir, which it had received as inam land under a Mughal firman in 1765, its position in the other districts was less well defined. As a consequence, the Company had little involved itself with the overall administration of its territories.

In the Northern Circars for example, the Chiefs and Councils only claimed the right to dispose of the haveli lands which they defined as those 'portions of territory not in the hands of zamindars...and in which it was therefore optional to adopt any system of management for collecting the land revenues'.<sup>4</sup> All other land was described as zamindari property. The British chose to define these lands as private property which, provided the revenues were promptly paid, might not be interfered with. Apart from the right to maintain public order, the Company laid no claims to the rights of sovereignty, least of all to that of the administration of justice. This had prevented the civil servants from acquiring more than a rudimentary knowledge about the socio-economic structures governing their territories.

The situation was further complicated by other factors which had disposed the inhabitants of the Company's new territories to actively resist efforts on the part of the central government to uncover information about current conditions. Principal amongst these were the consequences of the very high rates of assessment that Indian governments had imposed on the land revenues and the unfortunate methods they had employed to gather them. While the sastras authorized the state to collect 20 per cent of the gross agricultural product for its support, the actual percentage collected by most rulers was substantially higher. Haidar Ali had set the state's share at 60 per cent, the Maratha ruler of Tanjore took 80 per cent and, in 1784, Muhammed Ali, the Nawab of Arcot, enhanced the state's claim to 84

per cent.<sup>5</sup> In addition, the officials employed to collect the revenues had often imposed further levies on the population. In the course of collecting these revenues, officials frequently resorted to the use of torture, employing scourges, whips and thumb screws and sometimes even applying irritants to cause blindness.<sup>6</sup> Alexander Dyce, commander of Madurai, reported that 'numberless wretches are imprisoned and exposed to barbarous tortures. For some time past, myself and family have had our sleep totally destroyed by the most piercing cries of agony and distress throughout the whole night'.<sup>7</sup> These policies had encouraged the population to practice the tactics of evasion. They saw it as being to their advantage to prevent information about the true state of the economy from reaching the central government whose interest in such information was suspected of being closely connected with an intention on its part to raise the cultivators' rents.

The British were additionally handicapped. Their natural tendency to analyse everything within a European framework of reference complicated the entire situation. They brought with them from Europe the idea that property rights were inviolate and they were frequently exhorted by the home authorities to protect those of the Company's Indian subjects. The civil servants of each Presidency had, in particular, received orders to establish who possessed what rights in the land and to make their settlements accordingly, protecting these in the process. Unfortunately the entire structure of the Indian agricultural economy was alien to them and cultural and linguistic barriers prevented

them from quickly coming to an understanding of it. Faced by a multitude of different claimants to rights in tenure systems that were largely unknown to them, they found it extremely difficult to decide with whom to settle. Their task was made harder by the enormous number of terms, some Tamil, Telugu and Malay-al-~~am~~, others Arabic and Persian employed to describe the systems. In consequence, the British had tended to employ Indians who had had experience of collecting the land revenues under Indian rulers and to rely upon these men and personal dubashes to handle the Company's revenue business. This in turn had resulted in the British acquiring little knowledge about the territories under their control outside of that necessary for their own commercial activities.

Under the circumstances, it was natural that Cornwallis and the Madras Government should, in their search for solutions to their problems in the south, be significantly influenced by the policies which were in the process of being adopted in Bengal for the administration of that Presidency's revenues. For want of an understanding of the tenure systems of South India, the Madras Government was forced to operate within a perceptual framework of analysis derived from the Bengal experience. It is necessary to very briefly examine the developments in the revenue administration of Bengal and the debates that accompanied them in order to understand Cornwallis's policies in Madras.

The first unified policy of rural administration to influence the Company had been formed in Bengal by Warren



Hastings between 1771 and 1777 when he adopted a system whereby the land was divided into estates. The right to collect the State's share of the agricultural gross product from these estates had been auctioned and the highest bidders had received quinquennial leases which entitled them, in return for the payment of fixed rents to the Treasury, to collect the land revenues from the cultivators, keeping the balance on these as a commission. When Hastings introduced this system, he claimed that ownership of the land in India was vested in the state which had the right to appoint whomsoever it wished to collect the rents and pay these into the Treasury. From its inception Hastings's system had had its opponents. These men argued that the system was destroying the agricultural economy by, on the one hand, discouraging investment in the land and, on the other, permitting abuses, such as rackrenting, to run unchecked. They blamed the operation of these factors for the apparent decline of the Bengal economy and they claimed that only a permanent settlement of property rights in the land with a distinct class of landowners could reverse the trend.

Three distinct and yet ultimately interlinked socio-economic theories influenced the opponents of Hastings's 'farming' system as they developed arguments to support the introduction of a permanent settlement. The prevalent veneration of private property, which was believed to be 'the source of all industry among individuals and, of course, the foundation of public prosperity',<sup>8</sup> led them to follow Dow's and Rous's arguments that the State should make

no claim to ownership of the land but rather, by investing it in individuals, encourage the emergence of landowning classes.<sup>9</sup> The ideas of the Physiocrats were employed by the proponents of a permanent settlement to add weight to their arguments. These men had constructed a theory of value based on an analysis of agricultural production in which the difference between the value of labour power and the value created by its use appeared in its most tangible form. They argued that it was this difference, the net produce, that landowners appropriated as rent and which they then in turn employed to create wealth. If an economy was to expand, the Physiocrats believed that agricultural production would have to be raised through investment in the land. Patullo, applying these ideas to Bengal, claimed that this would not occur unless the potential investors were offered security of property.<sup>10</sup> The third concept influencing Hastings's opponents was one widely held by 18th century Whig theoreticians in Britain, the belief that an ideal society should be hierarchically structured, its apex and base connected by intermediate ranks of landed proprietors.

A most significant contribution to the debate which was splitting the Company's administration between supporters of Hastings's system and the proponents of a permanent settlement was made in 1776 by Philip Francis in his Plan. Francis's Plan hinged on the recognition of the right of the Bengal zamindars, a heterogeneous group composed of Mughal officials, local chieftains and firmly established renters who had claimed customary, hereditary rights in the revenues and the land, to landed property. His ideas represented a

synthesis of the socio-political theories of Whig England with the economic ones of the Physiocrats. He attacked Hastings's system, claiming that 'agency can never supply the place of proprietorship because many of the principal duties of a proprietor are such as an agent has no interest in performing'.<sup>11</sup> 'These duties', he observed, 'are essential to the permanent prosperity of the Government itself, since they belong to the care and improvement of that fund (land) from which the Government receives its support'.<sup>12</sup> He also attacked the official line that the ruling power was the proprietor of the land, claiming it was 'not less false in fact than absurd in theory and dangerous in practice'.<sup>13</sup> Francis's identification of the zamindars with the landed gentry of Britain was a crucial development. He imagined that, given the same privileges and responsibilities as those of British landowners, the Bengal zamindars would develop an ideology similar to their counterparts' in Europe that would include notions of agricultural improvement through investment and a relationship of 'reciprocal obligations of protection and dependence' with their tenants. He made no allowance for the cultural factors, not recognising that these would cause the Indian zamindars, in response to their own cultural values, to adopt different patterns of behaviour. Neither did he foresee that other factors might operate against the introduction of such a policy resulting in the transformation of the zamindars into a class of improving landlords somewhat similar in character to that which had developed in England. In particular, he failed to recognize that a rapidly expanding population might lead to a situation in which demand for land would

result in the zamindars perceiving it as more profitable to indulge in rack-renting and sub-letting than to invest in improvements and create of a relatively stable hierarchy of tenancies with fixed rents.

By 1785, the climate of opinion in Bengal was in favour of the introduction of some sort of permanent settlement and the idea had also received support from the home authorities. Cornwallis himself had arrived at Calcutta convinced of the need for changes and determined to find some means of unalterably fixing the revenue assessment on land. He was soon persuaded of the benefits to be gained from a permanent transfer of full property rights in the land to a class of substantial landholders in return for rents that would remain unalterably fixed irrespective of increases in agricultural production. Only this, he believed, would make land a saleable commodity by guaranteeing to its possessors a good return on the capital invested in its purchase and by at the same time encouraging the freeholders to make improvement. 'Landed property', he wrote, 'will acquire a value hitherto unknown in Hindustan and the large capitals possessed of many of the natives of Calcutta, which are now employed in usury and monopolizing salt and other necessities of life, will be appropriated to the more useful purpose of purchasing and improving land'.<sup>14</sup>

Cornwallis had a variety of reasons for proposing to make his settlements in Bengal with the zamindars. Choosing to regard them as the Indian landed aristocracy, he believed that by investing them with ownership of the land he would

make them loyal subjects of the British. He imagined they would see their interests as being tied to those of the Company. 'A landholder who is secure in the quiet enjoyment of a profitable estate', he wrote, 'can have no motive in wishing for a change'.<sup>15</sup> He also appears to have thought that his actions would re-establish in Bengal the 'intermediate graduation of ranks' Whig theoreticians believed essential to a well ordered society. At the same time, Cornwallis was a pragmatist. He not only recognized that there might be an influx of new men but actually welcomed the prospect. In answer to John Shore's objections that the zamindars would be unable to adjust to the new situation and merely ruin their estates through maladministration, he claimed that if 'bad management obliges them to part with their property to the more industrious, the better for the state'.<sup>16</sup>

Enthusiasm for the principles behind these ideas was united in the minds of many with a conviction that it would solve several pressing economic problems facing the Company in India. It was believed that the system would enable the Company to reduce its revenue establishments substantially and concentrate its limited human and financial resources on the protection of persons and property. The home authorities had been pressing the Indian governments to make economies since 1785 when Dundas had written from the Board of Control to the Chairmen that a financial reorganization of the Company involving stringent retrenchment of the Indian establishments was necessary. The Directors, on Dundas's suggestion, had agreed to set up in each Presidency standard, reduced establishments and had ordered Cornwallis

to put this policy into effect.<sup>17</sup> There can be little doubt that the Governor-General believed that the transfer of responsibility for the detail of the revenues to the zamindars would enable him to make a number of substantial economies in Bengal's revenue administration and allow, without any increase in overall expenditure, the establishment of a viable European judicial administration.

Cornwallis's proposals were not accepted by all the civil servants in Bengal without reservations. John Shore, while he agreed with the majority of Cornwallis's ideas, believed that decennial leases must be experimented with before a permanent settlement could be introduced. He argued that the Company possessed insufficient information about the economy to permanently divest itself of the right to alter its demands in the future. Cornwallis, while he generally admired Shore's grasp of revenue matters, was convinced that another temporary settlement must further damage the economy. He had been deeply impressed by what he considered the iniquitous conduct of a vast number of the European collectors and he anticipated that, at the expiration of decennial leases, further opportunities would be opened to these men to abuse their authority again.<sup>18</sup> By 1792 the question had been referred back to Britain as an issue requiring decision by the highest authorities.

Cornwallis appears to have been satisfied that his proposals would be accepted and he was sufficiently enthusiastic about the principles behind them to wish to see them extended to the other Presidencies. He wrote to Dundas immediately after

signing the Treaty of Seringapatam that he intended to introduce a zamindari system into the Company's new possessions. 'The rajahs', he informed Dundas, 'are not independent but now become our subjects and, if we can put them in some degree on the footing of the Bengal zamindars and prevent them oppressing the people under them, the commerce of the country...may become extremely advantageous to the Company'.<sup>19</sup> To this end Cornwallis decided to appoint two Bengal civilians who had had experience of zamindari settlements in Bengal to supervise the initial settlements of the Company's territories on the west coast. He recognized that this would be an extremely unpopular decision in Madras but considered that the exigencies of the situation justified his action.

The situation in the Baramahal was more complicated, the social and economic life of the area having been considerably more disturbed by the recent war. Cornwallis appears to have harboured doubts as to whether a civilian administration would be capable of restoring order in the district. At the same time, however, he was not sure he could take so controversial a decision as that of placing the Baramahal under military management. Cornwallis was uncertain of receiving support from the Directors who had recently reversed a number of his decisions. They had reinstated a civil servant whom Cornwallis believed to be corrupt, adopted plans which both he and the Board of Revenue had publicly rejected and refused to permit him to appoint his candidate to the office of Advocate General.<sup>20</sup> While he was sufficiently sure of Dundas's support at the

Board to be satisfied his proposals for a permanent settlement would be authorized by the home authorities, Cornwallis was aware that, should he make too many enemies among the Directors, the Court could seriously obstruct his government. His fear that this might occur encouraged him to adopt extreme views. 'If the Court of Directors cannot be controlled', he wrote to Dundas, 'I retract my opinion in favour of their continuance after the expiration of the Charter'.<sup>21</sup> His situation was made particularly uncomfortable for him by the fact that the exact limits of his authority were undefined at a time when he was anxious not to exceed them. He had recently been pointedly reminded by Landsdowne that 'it belongs to Ministers to plan, to Governors and Generals only to execute'.<sup>22</sup>

At this critical juncture, Munro persuaded Captain Read to apply to Cornwallis for the management of the Baramahal.<sup>23</sup> Read, who must have hoped that his relationship by marriage with Sir Charles Oakeley would have some influence on Cornwallis's decision, made his application. This was initially turned down, Cornwallis replying that 'he could not venture to interfere for it would bring all the civilians on his head'. Shortly afterwards he changed his mind and Barry Close, Secretary to the Madras Government, informed Read on 31 March that the Governor-General had appointed him the Collector of Baramahal.<sup>24</sup>

A number of considerations seem to have influenced Cornwallis's final decision. Principal amongst these was his distrust of the Madras civilians who had long had a



reputation for corruption that was not undeserved. Macartney had written of 'the universal intrigue and duplicity' which he had discovered in every department.<sup>25</sup> 'I don't love to enter into details of this nature', he wrote, 'but, good God, what is human nature if avarice can degrade it to the point it does in this country?'<sup>26</sup> Stuart Hill later reported a conversation he had in the 1780's with a poligar who told him that, though he paid his revenues to the government cheerfully, he was less enthusiastic about being forced to pay equal sums to the collector.<sup>27</sup> Cornwallis's own experiences with the Madras civilians, especially during Holland's governorship, had persuaded him that they could not be trusted. At one point he had written to the Court of Directors suggesting that nobody be admitted to the Council 'who will not declare upon their honour that they are not directly or indirectly creditors of the Naboo...and that they will not become creditors during the time of their continuance in government'.<sup>28</sup> In addition, Cornwallis was convinced that the civilian administration had been less than efficient and he was strongly critical of the activities of the Chiefs and Councils on the Madras Coast.

Another major influence on Cornwallis's decision to appoint Read was his distrust, which he shared with Read, of Indian officials whom he particularly wished to remove from all positions of authority or responsibility. The Governor-General shared the anxiety of the home authorities that the civilians' apparent inability to master local languages was causing them to depend too much upon Indian agents and translators in their management of the revenues.

The authorities suspected the Indians of corruption and evidence from the districts appeared to support this view. The same poligar who told Hill that the local European collector was corrupt also told him that the man's Indian officials, especially his dubash, employed their authority to extort money from the landholders. 'I have already', he said, 'buried three mothers of the collector's present dubash'.<sup>29</sup> In Cornwallis's opinion the native officials were not only abusing their positions and using them to oppress the population but also withholding information about conditions in the districts from the Government. Read had a reputation as a linguist. Cornwallis clearly believed that Read would be capable of personally supervising the details of the Baramahal's management, thereby replacing the indirect administration of the Chiefs and Councils with a more responsible, direct, European controlled structure. In a letter to Read, Colonel Ross, a close associate and adviser of Cornwallis, succinctly expressed the Governor-General's opinion of the situation. 'I am afraid', he wrote, 'there are not many Madras civil servants who have language enough to make either good judges or collectors'.<sup>30</sup>

The fact that Cornwallis not only knew Read but also liked and admired him must have also played a fairly decisive role in deciding the former to give him the appointment. He had been impressed during the war by Read's abilities, especially his efficient recruitment of native troops. He had written to Charles Oakeley in 1791 to express his pleasure at hearing of Read's safe return to the army and particularly referred to him as a 'zealous and active

officer'.<sup>31</sup> He was satisfied that Read might be safely entrusted with the responsibility of restoring order in the district and of uncovering the information required before a permanent settlement of the revenues might be introduced.

Read's appointment and the announcement that his assistants should also be military men was extremely unpopular amongst the civilians in Madras. Relations between the civil and military in Madras had been strained for a long time. Hill later described what had been happening in the districts in a letter to Castlereagh. 'The collector being jealous of the authority vested in the commanding officer and he, on the other hand, not infrequently interposing in the detail of revenue matters (has meant that) instead of exerting their joint efforts for the public service, they have often allowed their private interests to influence their public duties. Never was this more clearly evinced than in the years 1792 and 1793'.<sup>32</sup> At one point the split even threatened the Company's structure when the dispute between Captain Towns and the Chief and Council of Masulipatam caught the Government in a crossfire of accusations. Towns, breaking all the regulations, wrote directly to Pitt in an attempt to have the local civil authority suspended by the Ministry.<sup>33</sup>

Cornwallis clearly feared that the civilians would employ their influence in Britain and their connections in the Court to undermine his standing with the Directors and he took measures to defuse the situation. He announced that Read's appointment was only a temporary measure that would not be extended beyond one year after which collectors would

be selected from among the civilians. To allay fears that a military administration would be created independent of the civil authorities, Read was in effect transferred to the civilian establishment. He was made directly answerable to the Board of Revenue. This was very much in keeping with Cornwallis's overall policy. The previous year he had stated that 'no military men of any rank or description should be suffered to...affect the least independence of the civil power'.<sup>34</sup>

The Board of Revenue, which had been established in 1786, consisted of four members, three of whom were drawn from the civil service and a fourth, the Board's President, who was always a member of the Council. The only criterion governing appointments to the Board of Revenue appears to have been that of seniority, occasionally tempered by the considerations of politics. Consequently there was no guarantee that its members had any experience of revenue management or aptitude for it. One Indian critic wrote that 'the entire management of revenue affairs is vested in the Revenue Board, which is sometimes composed of qualified persons in revenue affairs and sometimes not'.<sup>35</sup> He observed that this was a result of the apparent adoption of the view that any civil servant must be 'fit for any situation whatever merely by residing a certain number of years in India', an indulgence that he noted was not extended to Indians. Robert Alexander, President of the Board of Revenue in 1816, admitted in a Minute that his whole experience of revenue administration had been limited to what he had seen in just two districts of the Northern Circars, districts

that had been 'held on ancient zamindari tenure'.<sup>36</sup> Even so, this did not prevent him from feeling competent to make sweeping generalizations concerning the role played by village headmen, a class of people he had never met.

By and large, the Board was ill-equipped to act as more than a clearing house for information and a link in the authority structure although in theory it was supposed to collate the reports of the collectors, analyse their accounts and advise the Council on revenue matters. It was inadequately housed, under-staffed and hampered in its activities by communication problems.<sup>37</sup> The majority of the collectors were stationed too far from the capital for the Board to supervise their administrations closely or check the information they were sending it. All too often it did little more than correspond with the collectors, accept the reports 'dictated in the best style' these men sent them with the sketchy calculations which represented their accounts and then applaud everyone's labours.<sup>38</sup>

The members of the Board of Revenue throughout this period all appear to have shared a prejudice which was common among the civil servants generally. They were extremely unwilling to admit, often in the face of overwhelming evidence, that British revenue officials could be either inefficient or corrupt. Accounts were rarely properly scrutinized and occasionally, 'sometimes out of delicacy' according to a contemporary observer, overlooked.<sup>39</sup> On at least one occasion, the Court was forced to officially reprimand the Board for this. When the Directors approved Macleod's appointment to

investigate Wynch's administration of Dindigul, they enquired why the Board had waited five months before suspending the latter even though it declared that it had long been convinced of his mismanagement.<sup>40</sup> This preoccupation with the reputations of the collectors could, and often did, influence the Board's operations. The damaging report Munro and Sullivan produced in 1816 on conditions in Coimbatore was initially withheld by the Board because they feared it contained imputations on the administration of the previous collector, Garrow.<sup>41</sup>

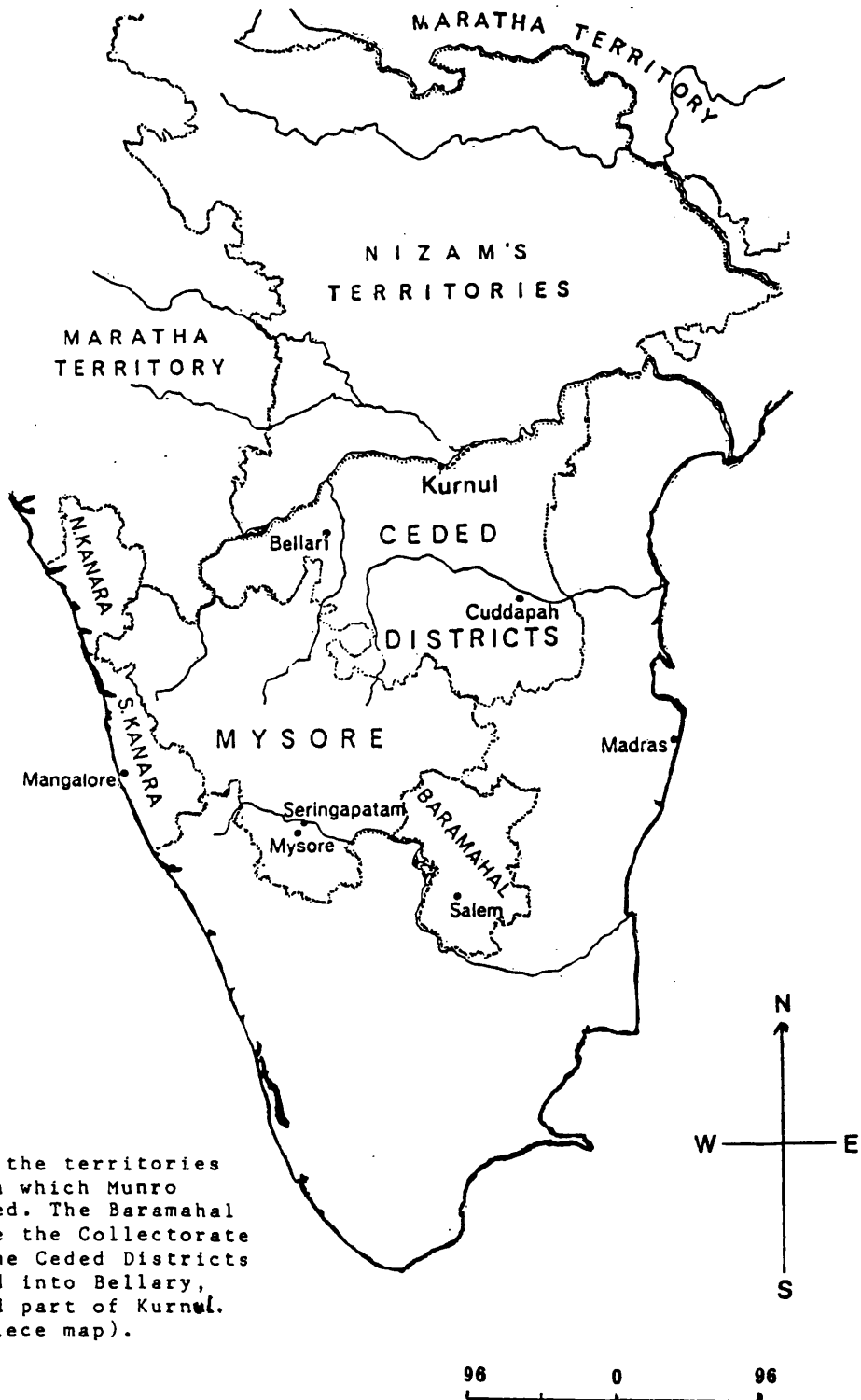
When Read received his appointment from Cornwallis to manage the Baramahal, William Petrie was President of the Board of Revenue and Thomas Oakes, William Oram and George Mowbray sat as the other three members. The Board's accountant was Lionel Place. None of these men had had much experience of revenue management and all which was theirs had been gained in the Carnatic, which was largely administered by the Nawab's Indian officials, and the Circars, where the Chiefs and Councils relied upon native agents and existing zamindars to do the detailed work of settlement. In consequence Read was given no instructions but left free to collect the current year's land revenues whatever way he could.

Read was also permitted to select his own assistants. He approached Munro twice and was turned down on both occasions because Munro believed that the war was not yet over and his best chances for advancement lay with the army.<sup>42</sup> Munro claimed that Cornwallis's treaty might have lost Tipu half

his revenues but had by no means destroyed half his power.<sup>43</sup> He was satisfied that it had merely left Tipu anxious to renew hostilities and believed that these were imminent. After his second refusal, Read took offence and would have chosen another assistant had not George Kippen, a mutual friend, prevailed upon him to ask Munro once more. By the time that Read made his third approach, it was clear to Munro that the war was over and, believing that proffered post at least offered some remunerative employment, he accepted it.

Read and his three assistants, Munro, Macleod and Graham, entered the Baramahal in April 1792. The Baramahal district (page 114) covered an area of some 8,400 square miles, being approximately 140 miles long and having an average width of 60 miles. Its principal town, Salem, was a major centre of commerce. It commanded the trade routes between Madras and Pondicherry and those between Malabar and the eastern coast. In addition, it was an important centre of manufacture since there was a large population of weavers living in the town and its environs. However, with this exception, the district's economy was dominated by agriculture in which a large majority of the population was employed. Cultivation in the district followed the rains. The first three months of the year were usually rainless and the April fall was rarely great. That of May however was normally copious and marked the commencement of cultivation, the following three months being those of the largest sowings. Although the prevailing soil of the area was a red sand which, unlike that of Trinchinpoly and South Arcot, was as good as red

## SOUTH INDIA



Map showing the territories of Madras in which Munro was stationed. The Baramahal later became the Collectorate of Salem; the Ceded Districts were divided into Bellary, Cuddapah and part of Kurnul. (see frontpiece map).



loam, the level of cultivation was low. The bulk of the population were attaining little more than a subsistence from the land.<sup>44</sup>

On his arrival in the Baramahal, Read discovered that Tipu Sultan had, during his retreat from the territory, collected and removed all the village accounts and other revenue records. He had also taken with him his own revenue officials and a large number of the village karnams, the men who had been responsible for compiling the village accounts and keeping the records of previous settlements and harvests. The majority of those karnams he had not removed to Mysore had fled from their villages. Consequently Read and his assistants were faced by a dearth of information regarding previous assessments which they felt precluded them from even considering the introduction of other than the most temporary leases. These however were not favoured by either the Government or the home authorities and Read believed that his principal duty was the discovery of the true value of the district. He decided to attempt to do this by analysing three separate sources of information about the annual agricultural produce; the previous records where they were available, the valuations made by the village headmen or patels, and those of other 'respectable inhabitants'.<sup>45</sup>

In the meantime Read recognized that his first priority, after restoration of general order, must be the collection of the revenues for the fasli year 1792-93. Not only was this his principal duty in the eyes of the authorities, it was also the only means by which he might make his own

fortune. The Board of Revenue informed him in September that he and his assistants would share a 5 per cent commission on the net receipts of the revenue, he to receive 3 per cent while the other 2 per cent was to be divided equally between his assistants.<sup>46</sup> This was not the only reason why it should have been in his interest to collect the largest sums the district was capable of supporting. The one thing that the Board of Revenue took a close interest in was the gross revenue raised by their collectors. This was the yardstick by which they measured performance and they were quick to criticize employees who failed to realize at least as much as the Board believed the previous Indian administrations had levied. In 1790 the Board had suspended Hughes, Collector of Guntur, because, originally, they had been angered by his failure to collect revenues equal to those which Sadlier believed the previous Indian government had raised annually.<sup>47</sup>

The pressure on him to collect a high revenue was one reason why Read decided against adopting a 'farming' system similar to that which had been employed in the Jagir. He believed that, should he create a body of rent farmers and allow them to make the season's settlements, they would defraud the state by directing a substantial proportion of the revenues into their own pockets. In addition, he also believed he would lose an important opportunity to discover the real value of the district. He was convinced these men would 'sedulously conceal the amount of their collections' in order to negotiate better terms from the state in following years.<sup>48</sup> The only alternative Read saw to the employment of

rent farmers was for he and his assistants to make the settlements directly with the villages.

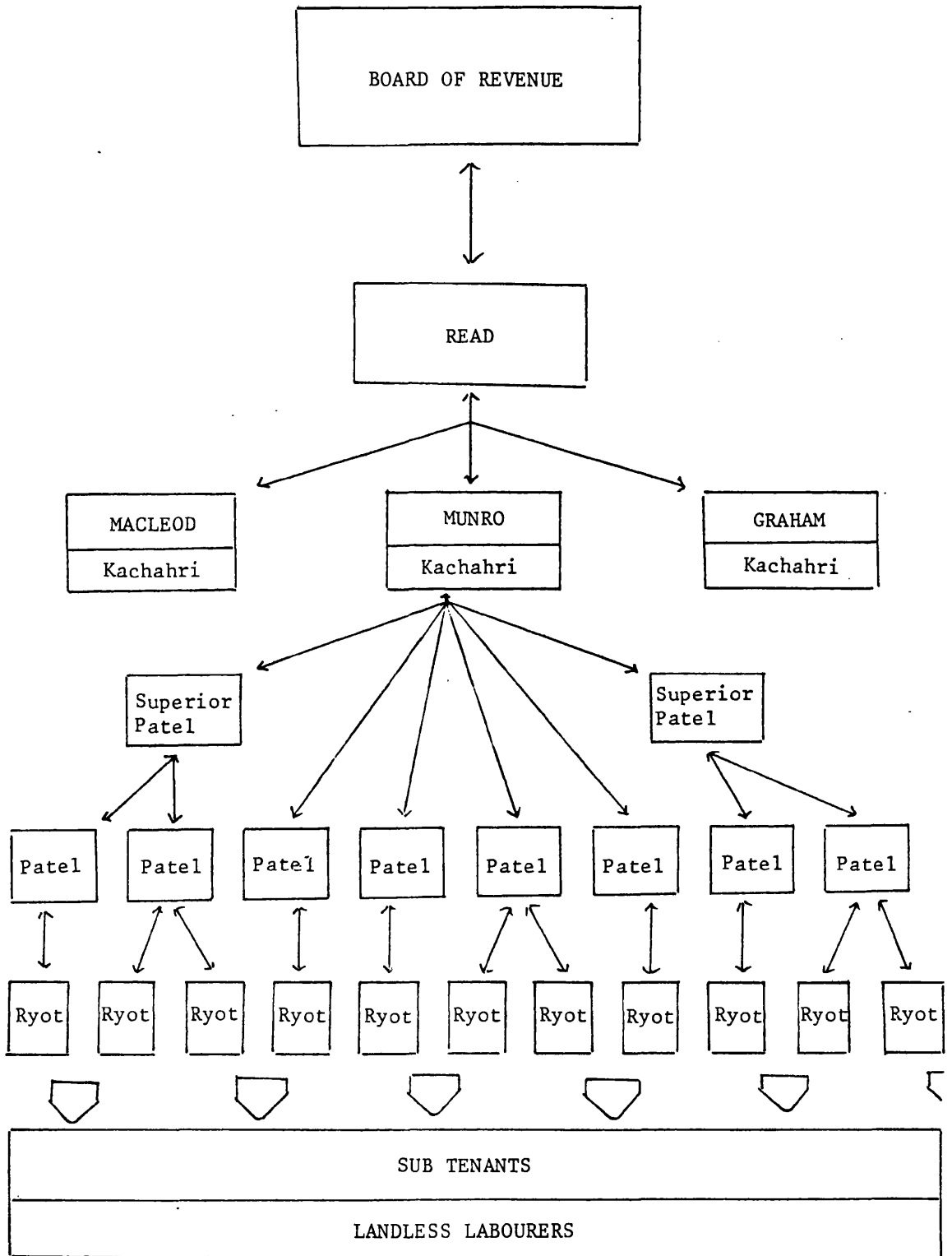
The prevailing mode of land control in the area was the gramawari or village system. The district appears to have been divided into individual villages or, more commonly, groups of villages with a single main settlement and several smaller ones attached to it. The socio-economic structure of these villages was hierarchical with privileged elites at the apex. The shareholders who composed these elites, under the leadership of their patels or village headmen, controlled cultivation, administered the villages and acted as intermediaries between the state and the bulk of the population. Acting as a body, they made the settlements of the rents to be paid on the land with the officials of the government. These men possessed what amounted to proprietary rights to the cultivated and uncultivated village lands which they distributed among themselves, either holding them jointly with the co-sharers cultivating temporary assignments (karaiyedu tenure) or individually after a permanent distribution of the fields (arudikarai tenure).<sup>49</sup>

Beneath the 'superior' landholders were two classes of tenants; the parakudi and ulkudi. The parakudi tenants were men from outside the village who cultivated some of its land, often being paid like hired labourers during the growing season before dividing the produce with the landlords after the harvest. The ulkudi tenants were permanent inhabitants of the village and, unlike the parakudi who were tenants-at-will, possessed

quasi-proprietary rights in the fields they occupied. They could not be dispossessed provided they rendered the customary dues to the 'superior' landholders. The lowest strata in the village society was composed of landless peasants whose position in the social structure was something between that of the independent labourer and the serf.

Read decided to make his settlements directly with the patels. He and his assistants agreed the rent each village was to pay to the government with these men and then left them to make their own settlements with the 'superior' landholders, the ryots as Read chose to call them. Diagram 3 (page 119) illustrates the structure of this settlement system which offered two clear advantages to the British. It reduced to manageable proportions the number of people with whom the British had to make settlements and enabled them to leave the detailed allocation of the rents to men with local knowledge. Read justified his decision with claims that it was not only economic to administer but also less open to abuse, it being unlikely in his opinion that the ryots would be oppressed by their own patels in the ways in which they would be by rent farmers or state officials with no interest in the villages other than the realization of revenue.

Read informed the Board of Revenue of what he had done in May 1792 and it appears to have adopted his ideas with enthusiasm.<sup>50</sup> The Board wrote to Government the following month that, though the ideal system would be one of settlement with the ryots, the intricate detail of such made



Structure of Read's initial Village settlements, in Baramahal.

it impractical.<sup>51</sup> The best plan was, in their opinion, to make village settlements. This, they claimed, was the customary mode of settlement in the Peninsula . At the same time the Board had clearly not yet adopted any fixed policy regarding settlements since it stated that 'local and other circumstances must determine the system most proper to be employed'. They informed the Government that they were content to leave everything to 'the experience and judgement of the collector'. In November, a month after Oakes replaced Petrie as the Board's President, an official policy began to emerge. Read was ordered, on the expiration of his first annual settlements with the patels, to make further triennial or quinquennial settlements with them.<sup>52</sup> In those villages where the patels refused to co-operate, either because they believed the revenue demands to be too high or because they did not wish to accept the quasi-official status and responsibilities attached to the privileges of administering their villages, Read was authorized to employ small-scale renters. Where employed, these men were to be rewarded with grants of rent free land equal in value to a commission on the collection. The following month Read was ordered to conclude quinquennial settlements with the patels.<sup>53</sup>

The emergence of an official policy was closely linked to developments elsewhere in the Company where support for the permanent zamindari settlements proposed by Cornwallis was growing. It was known that Dundas favoured this plan since he had already twice publicly announced his intention of adopting Cornwallis's views.<sup>54</sup> In August 1792 he had persuaded

Pitt to support him and arranged for orders to be sent to Cornwallis to make a permanent settlement.<sup>55</sup> The manner in which he did this is interesting for the light it throws on the relationship between the Board of Control and the Court. 'Knowing that the Directors would not be induced to take it up so as to consider it with any degree of attention and knowing some of the most leading ones among them held an opinion different both from your Lordship and me on the question of perpetuity and feeling that there was much respect due to the opinion and authority of Mr Shore', Dundas wrote to Cornwallis, 'I thought it indisputably necessary both that the measure must originate with the Board of Control and likewise that I should induce Mr Pitt to become my partner in the final consideration of so important and controversial a measure.... We settled a despatch upon the ideas we had formed and sent it down to the Court of Directors. What I expected happened; the subject was too large for the consideration of the Directors in general and the few who knew anything concerning it, understanding from me that Mr Pitt and I were decided in our opinion, thought it best to acquiesce'.<sup>56</sup>

When the news reached Madras that the home authorities supported the Governor-General, both the Board of Revenue and Read emerged as strong advocates of permanent settlements for Madras. The Board adopted the view that Cornwallis's zamindari settlement of Bengal was so excellent it might be taken as the model for all other settlements. 'A thousand advantages', the Board recorded, 'must result from a plan of permanency, not only exciting the people to

improvements but enabling Government to affect a reduction of the revenue officers...by reducing in general the charges of collection, by ensuring regular payments, by rendering the accounts more simple and, above all, by putting a stop to intrigue and corrupt practices'<sup>57</sup>. The Board told the Government that, at the end of the five years, the revenues would be permanently settled with a zamindari class. It seems clear that, in the absence of any existing body of zamindars, the Board intended to create such a class by treating the patels, who had previously only been the representatives of the 'superior' landholders, as quasi-landlords of their villages.

The system Read advocated was slightly different.<sup>58</sup> He wanted to permanently invest the patels with the responsibility of managing their villages but had no intention of conferring on them ownership of the land. He spoke of giving the perpetual management of the villages or divisions of districts to the patels and of recompensing these men for the responsibility by lowering the rents on their personal lands so as to give them a remuneration equal to a commission on the revenues they collected for the state. He intended that the patels should organize cultivation in their villages, equitably apportion shares of the village rents among the ryots and deliver the revenues to the collectors' kachahris. In this way Read imagined the collectors would be left free to administer justice rigorously enough to ensure that the patels should not abuse their quasi-official positions to oppress the ryots. Read's intention was not to make the patels quasi-landlords but to



establish them as the representatives of the government by incorporating them into the revenue establishment.

Read's proposals represented a compromise solution to a complex problem of conflicting social and economic considerations, an attempt to balance the requirements of the state against the interests of the ryots. He believed that the best settlements must ultimately be those made with the individual ryots since these would raise them from 'extreme indigence to comfort', from dependence to independence. He recognized however that, until the agricultural economy was stabilized, such settlements would not be in the state's interests. The ryots' poverty and vulnerability to crop failures in poor seasons would be 'detrimental to cultivation and make the revenue precarious'. As long as the economy was depressed, he acknowledged that 'the arguments in favour of improvements and the certainty of the revenues are...in favour of giving a number of villages in farm to wealthy individuals with security for, having stock at command, they enter into more extensive undertakings and make up for losses sustained in one or more villages by their profits on others'<sup>59</sup>. This was the classic zamindari system.

Read now suggested an alternative system which he believed would offer all the advantages of settlements with zamindars without the obvious disadvantage of the destruction of existing property rights. He suggested that the role played by the individual in the Bengal system might just as easily be filled by 'superior' landholders in the villages if they

were constituted into semi-official corporate bodies. 'The assigning whole villages individually or in number to the most responsible of their present tenants, giving each a grant of his farm or estate for the time of the lease on condition of paying the rent that may be regulated..., binding each to be separately answerable for the payment of their rent and jointly for the payment of their corporation's, is a mode that has occurred as the best for combining all advantages to the inhabitants in general and to the revenue'.<sup>60</sup> Read claimed that, were such settlements to be made, the ryots would naturally act like 'companies in Europe, selecting the ablest among them to conduct undertakings for improvement, to regulate contributions'.<sup>61</sup>

Read believed it was only necessary to discover the true value of the Baramahal by analysing the figures for a few years' harvests and to then, after a detailed survey of the cultivated and uncultivated lands, allocate permanent fixed rents to the different classes of land. Once this was done, he saw no reason to continue to make lease settlements at periodic intervals and argued that the present landholders could be invested with full proprietary rights to the land they had traditionally cultivated.

While Read was formulating his ideas for a permanent settlement, Munro's attention was fully occupied by a dispute he was engaged in with Robert Dashwood, the Company's Commercial Resident at Salem. Dashwood's principal duty as the Commercial Resident was the purchase of cloth and its transport to Madras for export to Europe as part of

the Company's Investment. He knew that his performance would be judged by the quantity of cloth he managed to purchase and by the prices he paid for it. These considerations encouraged him to attempt to control, even monopolize, the trade by forcing the weavers to work for the Company rather than independently. He feared that, should the Company be forced to compete with Indian merchants in an open market for the cloth, supplies would be uncertain and prices likely to be inflated. Dashwood therefore tried to dragoon the weavers into contracts with the Company under which, in return for advances, they were required to supply stipulated quantities of cloth. To this end, he asked Read to abolish house and loom taxes for weavers who worked for the Company while raising them for those who did not.<sup>62</sup> He informed Read that he had the Board of Trade's support for this measure.

Munro was a firm supporter of Free Trade.<sup>63</sup> During the short period that he had worked in Glasgow for the merchants Somerville and Gordon, he had been introduced to the economic theories which were embodied by Adam Smith in his book The Wealth of Nations and had espoused these with enthusiasm. He believed that the implementation of Free Trade policies was the sine qua non for economic development and the emergence of a stable social order. He had been particularly influenced by the arguments Smith advanced in his chapter entitled 'How the Commerce of Towns contributed to the Improvement of the Country' in which he had stated that a strong commercial and manufacturing sector had benefitted Britain in three ways: 'First, by affording a great and ready market for the rude produce of the country,

they gave encouragement to its cultivation and further improvement.... Secondly, the wealth acquired by the inhabitants of cities was frequently employed in purchasing such lands as were to be sold, of which a great part would frequently be uncultivated.... Thirdly and lastly, commerce and manufactures gradually introduced order and good government and, with them, the liberty and security of individuals'.<sup>64</sup> Munro revealed his position in a critical letter to Read. 'You have given all your attention to the ryots and adandoned the weavers', he wrote. 'Under all goverments in the world, the condition of the manufacturer is better, and ought to be better, than that of the ploughman for they are ten times more useful. It is they who make the produce of cultivation valuable - a population of ryots only will never make a country rich for, where there are no manufacturers, they will cultivate just enough to keep themselves from want'.<sup>65</sup>

Munro's adherence to Free Trade disposed him to oppose Dashwood's actions. Personal financial considerations probably supported this inclination. Munro informed his father that he was forbidden to trade in the Baramahal and that he had to rely on the returns he derived from investing in other peoples' activities for any increase in his fortune.<sup>66</sup> He must have recognized that, were Dashwood's example to be widely followed, the operations of independent European merchants would be curtailed and, with them, the opportunities to profitably invest his savings.

Munro accused Dashwood and his dubashes of forcing the

weavers to work for the Company and of extorting illegal payments from them. He claimed that Dashwood's servants deliberately graded the cloth of weavers who refused to bribe them as being of lower quality than it actually was.<sup>67</sup> The dispute became bitter when the Resident, still finding difficulty in recruiting weavers, asked that those working for the Company should be freed from thread taxes.<sup>68</sup> Read referred the dispute to the Board of Revenue who in turn referred it to the Government.<sup>69</sup> One of Munro's first friends in Madras, David Haliburton, was on the Board and it was he who recommended that the Government follow Munro's advice that the tax be applied to all the weavers or none. The Government decided to adopt Munro's advice and ordered that all the weavers were to pay the thread tax.<sup>70</sup> Dashwood retaliated by reporting to the Board of Trade that Munro was harassing the Company's weavers.<sup>71</sup> Munro denied the accusation and countered by informing the Board of Revenue that Dashwood's servants were deliberately preventing the independent weavers from buying the raw materials of their trade.<sup>72</sup> Read supported Munro and suggested to the Board of Revenue that all taxes on the weavers be abolished, this being the most likely policy to encourage an increase in overall production to the general advantage of the economy and the Company.<sup>73</sup> In September 1794 the Government finally adopted Read's suggestion and ordered the abolition of all duties on cotton, thread, looms and houses.<sup>74</sup>

The dispute, which had split the revenue and commercial branches of the Company's administration in the Baramahal for two years, clearly revealed the problems inherent in a

system whereby the different branches were responsible to two separate Boards, each with its own distinct and occasionally conflicting interests. Some of the ideas Munro was later to express about the unfortunate consequences of separating the judicial and revenue administrations were probably formed at this time. It is certain that Munro found the experience of competing interests unpleasant and resented the presence of Europeans with independent authority in what he considered his district. It is interesting that Munro made no attempt to involve the home authorities and that he did not write to his father about the business, even though he believed important policy issues were at stake. It appears that the reason Munro made no reference to Britain was his knowledge that what little influence he possessed was largely confined to the Board of Control, which had no right to interfere in purely commercial matters. Although it might be argued that this was a revenue matter, Dundas was engaged in trying to conciliate the Court and might have referred the question to them for their decision. Munro was aware that the Court would not have taken kindly to a junior employee apparently attempting to influence policy by going directly to the Board of Control and so he made a point of using only the official channels of communication.<sup>75</sup>

Munro's dispute with Dashwood was not the only reason for his lack of interest in land revenue affairs. He was certain that Read would not be permitted to continue to administer the revenues of the Baramahal beyond the first year and he shortly expected to be ordered to return to his regiment,

his brief career as an assistant collector permanently over. He informed his father that he and the other officers expected to be removed from their posts no later than July 1794, 'in order to conform to the system which requires that civilians only should be collectors'<sup>76</sup>. Had he not believed his post to be temporary, it is unlikely that Munro would have risked an argument with Dashwood, especially as he might have expected the latter to be supported by the powerful interests in Madras who, being extremely hostile to the employment of military collectors, would welcome the opportunity to show that the officers were interfering, to their detriment, in commercial affairs. By the end of 1793 the situation was quite different. Read and his assistants had been confirmed in their posts for at least another five years. Munro's active participation in the formulation of revenue policy can be clearly dated as having begun at this time.

The decision to try to continue to employ Read to manage the Baramahal seems to have been Cornwallis's. Read maintained a semi-official correspondence with the Governor-General, sending him copies of his more important correspondence with the Board of Revenue and private letters in which he explained his settlements. Cornwallis was extremely pleased with Read's administration, not least because it appeared to completely vindicate the decision he had taken in the face of stiff opposition to appoint a military administration. In December 1792 he informed Dundas of the success of his experiment. 'The ceded country on the Madras side', he wrote, 'thanks I believe to my military collectors, turns

out much more productive than we expected'.<sup>77</sup> Early in 1793, at about the time that Munro persuaded Read to solicit Cornwallis to allow him to remain in office, news reached India that the home authorities had accepted all his proposals. Cornwallis chose to regard this as a personal vote of confidence and clearly felt he could now ignore the considerations which had originally prompted him to grant Read such a temporary commission. No longer feeling himself threatened by the influence the Madras civilians might command in the Court of Directors, Cornwallis was disposed to favour Read's continued employment.

Munro, unaware that Cornwallis already intended to extend Read's commission, tried to generate interest in Britain for the military collectors' case. His father had earlier written to him asking for a comparative statement of the civilian and military modes of administration in Madras. Munro, who doubted that Alexander Munro could have much influence with the home authorities, asked his father to tell him what he intended to do with such a statement.<sup>78</sup> He was obviously anxious that there should be no repeat of the unfortunate publication of his letter in the newspaper. At the same time however, knowing that his father had some contact through the Stuarts with Dundas and other influential men, he did send what amount to a plea for Read's continued employment and an indictment of the civil collectors. 'A Glasgow shopkeeper', he told his father, 'is just as well calculated for a collector as a Madras civilian, totally ignorant of the language of the country and led by a dubash as they all are'.<sup>79</sup> It seems clear that



Munro intended his letter for a wider audience than his immediate family.

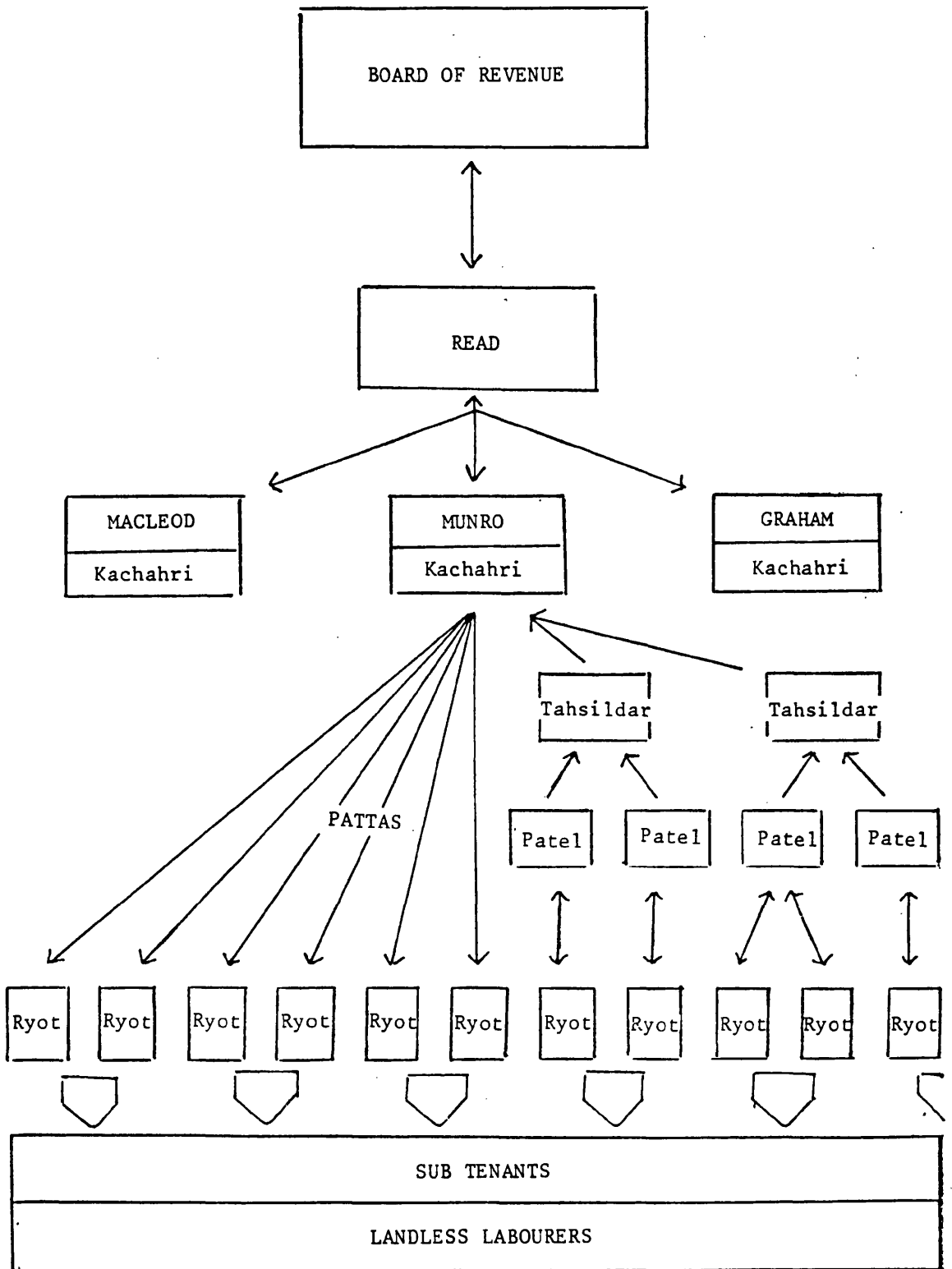
Alexander Munro sent extracts from this and other letters in which his son had praised Read and attacked the civil administration to William Pultenay MP.<sup>80</sup> Pultenay was an avowed friend of the private traders for whom Dundas also had some sympathy, especially after his discovery that the Court of Directors had deliberately misled him about the clandestine trade that foreign private traders were carrying on with India.<sup>81</sup> The Court's determined resistance to all attempts to break the Company's monopoly of the trade with India had left Pultenay ill-disposed towards it and he was therefore happy to approach Dundas with Munro's letters which suggested the Company's territories were, by and large, maladministered. Dundas was himself unhappy with the Company's civil servants. He had discovered that the clandestine foreign trade relied for its chief support on the remission to Europe of the private fortunes of the Company's servants.

Dundas's reply to Pultenay showed that Munro's attempts to influence the home authorities had been unnecessary since the Board had already decided to authorize Cornwallis to appoint Read to manage the Baramahal until 1799.<sup>82</sup> It did however reveal to Munro that his father had access to men of considerable influence. 'I can come at Mr Dundas', wrote Alexander Munro. 'I can likewise come at some of the Directors. Lord Elphinstone got a copy of the extracts to send to his brother...who is a Director. So, when anything

occurs to you that you would wish should be seen by people in power, forward it to me'.<sup>83</sup> The pattern of Munro's future efforts to influence policy and manipulate the decision-making processes was formed now. Much of his future correspondence with Britain would be written with an eye to a wider readership among influential figures concerned with Indian affairs.

Secure in the knowledge that the Baramahal would be left in his management for a further five years, Read began settling the revenues with the quinquennial leases he had been ordered to introduce by the Board of Revenue. However, perhaps because he was aware that the report he had sent the Board of Revenue in November 1792 had met with the home authorities' complete approval and that his reputation in Britain was nearly unassailable,<sup>84</sup> he chose to interpret his orders in such a way as to allow him to introduce a system of settlement that was significantly different to that which the Board had sanctified. The Board had ordered Read to make his settlements with the patels. Instead Read introduced a system based on that which he had recommended to the Board in June 1793.<sup>85</sup> Individual settlements were made with the ryots, each of whom was given a patta signed by Read or one of the assistants which specified the rent he was to pay.

The manner in which Read's new system modified his first settlements is illustrated in diagram 4 (page 133). The work of the collectors and their kachahris was greatly increased insofar as they now entered into direct relations with the superior landholders or ryots of the villages with whom they



The Structure of the Individual Lease System introduced by Read and his assistants into the Baramahal.

agreed individual rents for the lands which these men claimed rights in. The additional work that this involved the collectors in forced Read to enlarge the revenue establishment and extend the employment of Indian revenue officials. The Baramahal was further sub-divided beneath the assistant collectors into tahsils, each under the control of an Indian tahsildar. These men, whom Munro described as 'mere receivers of the revenue', were responsible for the collection of the rents from the villages, dealing directly with the patels. The patels, in return for reduced rents on their own lands, were still responsible for the overall management of their villages and for collecting the rents agreed between the collectors and the ryots.<sup>86</sup>

The introduction of this new system required that the collectors should possess detailed information of cultivation and average gross production. Without this it was clear that the collectors would be unable to ensure that all their settlements were consistent, that the level of assessment should not vary from village to village, from ryot to ryot. It was generally agreed throughout the Company that the principal criticism of the previous Indian revenue administrations had been their failure to establish clear, fixed criteria of assessment. It was believed that the Indian settlements had been arbitrary and that the consequent uncertainty had encouraged rackrenting and extortion, had depressed agricultural production and led to the emergence of a subsistence economy. Munro succinctly expressed the ideas prevalent among the British in a letter to his friend Captain Allan. 'The ceded districts', he

wrote, 'are capable of great improvements. The first step for the attainment of the object must be the settlement of the leases at a moderate rent, for all attempts to better their situation will be in vain as long as the land tax is not only too high but arbitrary; let it be low and fixed and it will be soon seen that the prosperity of the farmer will extend to every source of revenue. By the lease every man will become sole master of his own land.... The farmer, when convinced he...is in reality the proprietor of his land and that all the produce beyond the rent is his own, will begin to exert himself and, where he now cultivates grain for a bare subsistence, will raise cotton and sugar-cane'.<sup>87</sup>

Read decided that the only method open to the collectors to acquire the detailed information necessary for the introduction of standardized assessments was a field survey of the Baramahal. He expected to learn from the results of his survey the average yields of the different soils. This would then enable him to fix cash rents representing a predetermined proportion of the annual harvest to the different village lands. Once this was done, Read assumed that the actual settlements with the ryots would become a simple matter of agreeing with them which fields were to be cultivated, both parties knowing in advance the revenue commitments possession of these lands would involve.

In common with Cornwallis and the majority of the British in India, Read was extremely suspicious of the Indian officials he was forced to employ. However, unlike many of the Company's servants, he recognized that it was impossible to

exclude them from the administration. 'It may be observed', he wrote, 'that however desirous collectors and their assistants may be of inspecting and directing all the business of their departments, they are...under the necessity of depending on natives'<sup>88</sup>. He also believed that, however successful the survey might be, its purposes might be defeated by the intrigues of administration's own Indian employees. He imagine this danger to be accentuated by the fact that all the revenue accountants in the Baramahal were Brahmins who, linked together by religion and common interests, could easily form collusions to defraud the state.<sup>89</sup>

Read made two suggestions for controlling this problem. His first solution was to keep the kachahri accounts in three languages - Kanarese, Urdu and Mahratti - which he assumed would prevent his Indian officers from so easily concealing illegal activities.<sup>90</sup> His second solution was that the Company should create a 'middle rank' of revenue servants from among the European orphans in Madras, a proposal that the Board sanctioned in August 1794 when they sent him eight to be trained.<sup>91</sup> A consideration of the solution Read did not propose, that of the introduction of an independent judiciary, is as rewarding as that of those he did suggest. It seems clear that Read believed that the introduction of courts would not prevent the different classes of Indians from oppressing those below them because he did not think that the society was sufficiently advanced so to regulate itself. He informed the Board of Revenue that the Indians were too 'timid, inert and depraved from having always acted

under injustice' to take advantage of a properly constituted judicial system.<sup>92</sup> He insisted that the administration of justice should remain the responsibility of the collectors who, able to dispense with 'formalities, restrictions, obligations and fees', might keep everything 'perfectly simple'.

During the next three years Read and his assistants were left free to manage the revenues of the Baramahal as they thought fit. The Government of Madras and the Board of Revenue were too preoccupied with other problems to devote any serious attention to Read's activities and, as long as he raised the revenues of his district, the administration was content to delegate its role in the decision-making process its collector.

In August 1792, Dundas had decided to nominate John Shore as Cornwallis's successor to the office of Governor-General. He and Pitt had been impressed by Shore's grasp of revenue matters, believed that his lifetime habit of obedience would ensure his co-operation and hoped his appointment would convince the British political world that harmony existed between the Board and Court. The appointment had been welcomed by the Directors who, probably because of the sense of security it gave them to know that their employees rather than men over whom they felt they had little authority filled the highest posts in India, had been unhappy about the trend away from the custom of nominating their civil servants to these offices. In May 1793, Dundas had decided to offer Lord Robert Hobart, the Secretary for Ireland, the

vacant Governorship of Madras. On Cornwallis's advice, it had been suggested to Hobart that he would eventually succeed Shore as Governor-General.

John Shore had succeeded Cornwallis on 28 October 1793 and, a year later on 7 September 1794, Hobart had arrived at Madras to assume his office. Almost immediately Hobart began impatiently manoeuvring for Shore's post. There can be no question but that Hobart was extremely ambitious and saw India as a spring-board to a career in British politics. In addition, he appears to have believed that Shore's appointment had only been a temporary measure. In April 1795, he wrote to his friend John Bristow, President of the Bengal Board of Trade and Member of Council, asking him to send any information he might have about Shore's intentions.<sup>93</sup> Bristow unfortunately initially confirmed Hobart's belief that Shore would not remain in India beyond the next season. There is some evidence to suggest that this accurately reflected Shore's plans at the time. He had been ill for some time and he missed his wife. The Court of Directors was, however, determined to try to persuade him to remain in Bengal. They took a great deal of trouble to send his wife, accompanied by her two brothers, out to join him. After her arrival at Calcutta, Shore revised his plans. Under pressure from his wife, he decided to remain in India until he had gathered a fortune for himself and provided for his brothers-in-law.<sup>94</sup>

As soon as it became clear to Hobart that he would not be immediately moving to Calcutta, he became deeply embittered.



He felt that Dundas and the Court of Directors had deliberately misled him and that Shore had assisted in the deception. The relationship between Hobart and Shore, which had opened cordially when the Governor-General had welcomed Hobart's proposal that they initiate a private correspondence, rapidly deteriorated.<sup>95</sup> In August 1795, Hobart accused Shore of failing in his duties as the head of the Supreme Government, claiming that he nursed a regional bias in favour of Bengal when his position demanded the consideration the interests of British India as a whole.<sup>96</sup> He was bitter about a letter Shore had sent to the home authorities in which he had suggested that Hobart had been in breach of the 1786 Act of Parliament and resented the revocation of two of his appointments.<sup>97</sup> He wrote to Bristow of 'the known disposition of the Supreme Government to withhold their support from me wherever the case can possibly admit it'.<sup>98</sup>

Bristow tried to keep the peace between the two men. He begged Hobart not to resign if Shore remained in India longer than expected and produced a number of ingenious arguments to bear on the disgruntled Governor. He suggested that, whatever problems Hobart might be facing in India, they were nothing compared to those he would be facing were he in Britain.<sup>99</sup> Flattering him that, were he in England he must be in the Ministry, he observed that present discontent, the war with France and the rising national debt must threaten all the members of the government with loss of office and disgrace. He assured Hobart that, by remaining at Madras for the duration, he might hope to return to Britain

with his political reputation intact and to profit by this. Some of his arguments were more confused. On the one hand, he promised Hobart that the Governor-Generalship was worth waiting for, telling him that Cornwallis had not only gained his title through holding it but also a fortune of £300,000.<sup>100</sup> On the other hand, he assured Hobart that the patronage available to the Governor-General in Bengal was actually less than that available to the Governor of Madras. 'The patronage of the Governor-General', he wrote, 'is extremely limited...so much so that Sir John Shore, in place of attempting to provide for a natural son whom he has in this country, has set him up in an indigo manufacture'.<sup>101</sup>

From 1795, Hobart's attention, and therefore that of the Council, was a good deal devoted to his disputes with Shore. A major dispute with General Harris, the Commander-in-Chief, also directed Hobart's attention away from the detail of daily government in Madras. Cornwallis had proposed placing all military patronage in the hands of the Commander-in-Chief. Although the Councils would be remain responsible for appointments, they were to be bound to follow the recommendations of the Commander.<sup>102</sup> The Madras Government, under the influence of the deeply entrenched suspicion of the military that had so long held sway among the civilians, opposed this plan. Hobart, who was clearly interested in exercising as much patronage as he could obtain, supported the civilians. He told Dundas that he feared that so much patronage must necessarily raise the Commander-in-Chief 'so much above the civil administration as to make it impossible for him to be looked upon in any

other light than as the head of the British Empire in India'. Were 'a man of intrigue and address' to fill the post he might use this patronage to 'substantially assume the authority of government, civil and military'.<sup>103</sup> General Harris deeply resented what he considered Hobart's interference in military matters and a significant division appeared in the Council.

The internal squabbles of the Madras Government and the bitter arguments that raged between the chief executives of the two presidencies were not the only reasons why the Madras Government paid so little attention to and exercised so little supervision over Read's settlements and his administration of the Baramahal. The Board of Revenue was fully occupied with two other matters, the replacement of the Chiefs and Councils with collectors and the introduction of a new judicial administration in the Company's older territories.

By late 1794 the home authorities had enthusiastically embraced the principles of the new revenue and judicial systems that Cornwallis had introduced into Bengal. They had been particularly impressed by the manner in which the Governor-General had separated the two systems by transferring the collectors' judicial functions to a different set of officers, not least because, in so doing, they imagined he had discovered a successful solution to a problem which had been the subject of controversy within the Company for some time.

In 1785 Stuart, a member of the Bengal Council, had delivered a minute in which he argued that Hastings's remedy to the perceived problem of the collectors' despotic power, a centralized concentration of all authority in the Government, had failed.<sup>104</sup> He had made out a strong case for the reinstatement of European collectors and had submitted a detailed plan which proposed the union of the judicial and revenue functions of local government in their office. Three years earlier John Shore had made a similar proposal.<sup>105</sup> He had argued that the combination of functions in the same official was what the Indians expected, accustomed as they were to despotic authority and used to looking to a single master. He also stated that, in his opinion, it would be impossible to draw a line between the two jurisdictions without introducing collisions of authority which must be detrimental to both. Sir John Macpherson had agreed in principle with both men but had remained, like many in the Company, especially in Britain, doubtful whether the time had yet come when the Government might vest its employees with such unchecked authority.

The Court of Directors had examined the problem and, after considerable deliberation, concluded in favour of combining revenue and judicial authority in the office of collector. They gave two reasons for their decision. They argued on the one hand that it accorded with the 'subsisting manners and usages of the people', and on the other that it would be the most economic and efficient solution to the problems of administering both functions of government.<sup>106</sup> They believed that, once the collectors were relieved of the details of

revenue business by the introduction of permanent settlements, they would have ample time to devote attention to judicial matters. In consequence of this decision, the instructions Cornwallis had taken with him to India in 1786 had authorized him to reinstate the European collectors in the districts after vesting them with the special duty of supervising the administration of civil and criminal justice. In the course of 1787, Cornwallis promulgated regulations which gave the collectors magisterial jurisdiction and which, though they made a distinction between the revenue and civil courts, ordered the collectors to preside over both.<sup>107</sup>

From the start Cornwallis had been unhappy with this system. He was steeped in the traditions of English jurisprudence which had its emphasis on the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary. He was personally convinced of the importance to be placed on the impartial administration of justice which he believed was the only sure means of guaranteeing to the Company's subjects security of person and property. This was, for him, the chief aim of civilized government upon the success of which depended the happiness and prosperity of the people. In consequence he regarded the concentration of executive authority in the collectors as a menace to the liberty of the Company's subjects. 'The Collector', he wrote in 1793, 'unites in his own person the high power of judge in all matters of property, of magistrate and of receiver of the revenue; he is the channel of the information upon which Government forms its determination of the revenue to be

assessed...and through which it communicates with its subjects.... Such power vested in an individual and at a great distance from the seat of supreme control excites terror in the minds of the people instead of inspiring them with confidence in its protection'<sup>108</sup>. In addition, Cornwallis believed that there was serious danger that the collectors would, acting in their capacity as judges, find themselves hearing suits to which they were a party. He was also significantly influenced by the prevalent political theory that advocated the separation of powers, the theory so succinctly expressed by Montesquieu and which had had, only four years earlier, such an impact on the authors of the American Constitution.

In 1792, Ross had informed Read of Cornwallis's ideas for restructuring the system. 'The duties of the administration of justice', he wrote, 'are to be entirely separated from those of the collection of revenue, making the offices of judges by far the most important, both in emolument and station'<sup>109</sup>. A year later Cornwallis had reorganized the revenue and judicial arrangements for the administration of Bengal along these lines. He had introduced a hierarchy of courts, presided over by judges drawn from amongst the European covenanted servants of the Company, and invested these with the responsibility for administering civil and criminal justice. The revenue courts had been abolished and all revenue cases made cognizable by the newly appointed judges. It is illustrative of the relative status which Cornwallis assigned to the judges and collectors that he suggested the existing collectors might be appointed zillah

judges while their assistants succeeded to the vacated  
revenue posts.<sup>110</sup>

The widespread acceptance of Cornwallis's arguments in support of his ideas together with the general excitement which accompanied their introduction into Bengal, which was seen as marking a significant development in the administration of British India, encouraged civil servants throughout the sub-continent to examine whether they might not be introduced in the other presidencies. Had they been aware of it, Dundas's whole hearted support for Cornwallis's systems would have undoubtedly further encouraged them.

Dundas did more than approve Cornwallis's arrangements for Bengal and ensure the Court's authorization of them. He actively identified himself with them to the point that, in 1796, he wrote to Hobart; 'I do not scruple to say that I feel my own reputation involved in the introduction of these regulations'. The only concession that he made to the Directors, who were less convinced that Cornwallis's arrangements might be immediately introduced in territories less developed than those of the Bengal Presidency, was to agree that the revenues should be permanently settled before an independent British judiciary be established. He accepted that the examples of the Bengal collectors and of Read in the Baramahal clearly showed that the first step towards this goal must be the replacement of the Chiefs and Councils in the Madras territories with collectors. Unlike the Provincial Councils, who had proved themselves very inefficient and invariably operated through Indian officials

and dubashes, he believed that collectors could be expected to uncover the information required before some sort of permanent settlement of the revenues might be attempted.

Before Hobart had left Britain, Dundas showed him a draft despatch that the Board had sent the Court in which the abolition of the Chiefs and Councils of Madras was ordered.<sup>112</sup>

Just one month after his arrival, Hobart issued on 15 November a proclamation ordering the replacement of the Provincial Councils by collectors.<sup>113</sup> Shore fully approved of Hobart's action. 'I cannot but express my hearty approbation of the substitution of collectors for provincial Councils', he wrote, 'having had repeated and personal experience of the inadequacy of their corporate establishment'.<sup>114</sup> In the ensuing correspondence, the ideas which were influencing the two chief executives clearly emerged. Shore favoured a gradual introduction of Cornwallis's systems into Madras, believing that, until sufficient information about the territories had been gathered, no attempt should be made to form zamindari settlements. 'I should recommend', wrote Shore, 'the collections of the revenue to be made amany, that is by the collectors immediately from the landholders or occupants of the soil'.<sup>115</sup> He also opposed the introduction of Cornwallis's judicial arrangements before the permanent settlement of the revenues, recommending Hobart to follow the regulations introduced into Bengal in 1787 rather than those of 1793, which had removed the collectors' judicial powers. Hobart, while largely in agreement with Shore, favoured a system of village leases rather than settlements with individual ryots.<sup>116</sup>



Dundas was less cautious and more impatient to see Cornwallis's systems extended beyond the boundaries of Bengal. He wrote to Hobart, urging him to introduce these into Madras as soon as possible.<sup>117</sup> In the summer of 1795 the Revenue Despatch, which he had shown a draft of to Hobart, arrived at Madras.<sup>118</sup> In it the Court announced that the home authorities were convinced that the Bengal revenue and judicial arrangements were the best in India and that they wished to see similar arrangements introduced into the Company's other possessions. The Government of Madras replied that, though it too considered the Cornwallis's arrangements the best that could be devised, it believed it was necessary for these to be gradually introduced.<sup>119</sup> It observed that Cornwallis had not introduced his systems until others had been experimented with and that consequently there had been a relatively slow transfer of the judicial authority from Indian to European officials which had given the indigenous population time to become acclimatized. The Government argued that a similar period of adjustment would be required in Madras.

During the next three years, the Board of Revenue was preoccupied by the problems posed by the changes that the decision to introduce collectors and an independent judiciary had given rise to. There were the problems of finding suitably qualified civil servants to fill the office of collector since few of the Company's employees in Madras had any revenue experience and almost none of them had any command of the Indian languages, knowledge of which was considered essential. There were also other difficulties. It

was considered imperative that the existing zamindars and poligars should be divested of the judicial authority they had hitherto exercised and that they should be compelled to disband their private forces of armed retainers. Attempts to do this met with considerable opposition. There is also substantial evidence to suggest that the former Indian revenue agents, who were now being replaced by the collectors' kachahri officials, were deliberately fomenting opposition to new administrations.

In addition to the Board of Revenue's preoccupation with the other districts of Madras, the general approval and support Read was receiving from the Government and the Court persuaded the Board to allow him to administer the Baramahal largely unsupervised as long as he delivered sufficiently high revenues. The Court had informed the Government in their revenue despatch of May 1794 that it was delighted with Read's work and Hobart, to whom Read and his assistants had been especially recommended by Cornwallis, appears to have been particularly interested and impressed by them.<sup>120</sup>

Between the 1796 and 1798, Read and his assistants introduced into the Baramahal a new system of revenue management that was to become known as the ryotwari system. By the middle of 1795, Read had come to the conclusion that lease settlements were impractical in the district because the share of the produce taken by the state was too large. In his opinion, there would have to be a substantial reduction in the assessments if lease settlements were to be successful. As long as the state continued to demand a large

share of the gross produce, there was, Read believed, 'nothing left to the cultivators from which might be created the capital absolutely necessary for a strict adherence to such engagements'.<sup>121</sup> He was certain that neither the Madras Government nor the home authorities would authorize him to substantially reduce the rates of assessment and it was therefore necessary to abandon the leases. In a circular that he issued in December 1796, Read outlined the rules for making quite different revenue settlements.<sup>122</sup> In place of the idea of leases by which tenants agreed to pay the revenue of a particular area for a set number of years, these rules made provision for 'annual tenants' who were to be required to enter into obligations for a single year and only for the fields they themselves cultivated. At the same time, they were to be allowed to occupy the same fields in the following years for as long as they continued to pay the established rents for them. The essential feature of the new scheme was the manner in which it left the ryots free to 'extend or reduce their farms, according to their circumstances, by retaining or rejecting certain fields, as they (chose) from year to year'.

Read decided to link his new scheme with the work that he and his assistants had done in surveying the district. His idea was that the assessment of every individual field should now be fixed permanently. He believed that the decision to do this would have two immediate beneficial consequences. Firstly, he assumed that this would greatly simplify the business of making the settlements since it would only be necessary for the collectors to ascertain

which lands the ryots would be occupying for them to enter the year's revenue demand on the pattas. Secondly, he believed it would encourage the ryots to make improvements. By permanently fixing the state's demands on the land, irrespective of the actual increases in its productivity, he imagined that the ryots would perceive the advantages of investing capital in irrigation works and other long term projects.

Initially Munro opposed Read's annual leases. In his opinion, the ryots would not be encouraged to make improvements to the land until they were assured that their investments offered a significant opportunity to increase their capital. Munro believed that this would only occur after the emergence of land as a saleable commodity. He thought that Read's system would discourage such a development in the agricultural economy because it did not provide sufficient security of tenure. It is clear that Munro had already conceived the idea that it was the duty of the British to encourage the development of an extensive class of independent yeoman farmers. Such men, he believed, would not only provide a large market whose existence would encourage the development of the manufacturing and commercial sectors of the economy, but would also change the patterns of agriculture away from a subsistence based economy towards one increasingly cash crop orientated. Munro was convinced that such developments would not only increase the value and range of the Company's exports to Europe but would also greatly extend the market in India for British imports. Munro analysed the Company's failure to market

European goods in India as the consequence of both the poverty of the Indians and a fear on the part of the landholders of being thought rich and of consequently having their rents raised.<sup>123</sup> In his opinion both problems might only be solved by investing the ryots with long leases or the permanent ownership of their lands. Of the two, he personally thought it would be better to grant them full possession of their lands but recognized that other considerations might not permit this. 'If we look only to the security of our power in this country', he wrote, 'it would probably be wiser to keep the lands as they now are, in the possession of Government...than to make them over forever because there is reason to fear that such a property might beget a spirit of independence which may one day prove dangerous to our authority'.<sup>124</sup>

During the next two years, Munro substantially changed his opinions. In 1796, he had expressed fears that the provision for annual changes would discourage long tenures, writing that 'the farmers will prefer annual leases...because they give them the same security and advantages without hindering them from throwing up their lands whenever they can get a better bargain elsewhere'.<sup>125</sup> By 1797, he had observed that this was not occurring. He now believed that 'the ryots, having changed every field that they wish to get rid of and having chosen such as they like, will consider their farms as inalienable property and will begin in earnest to improve them with their whole means; revenue will be permanent.... All the effects of a lease will thus be naturally produced, though under a different name, and the system is so simple

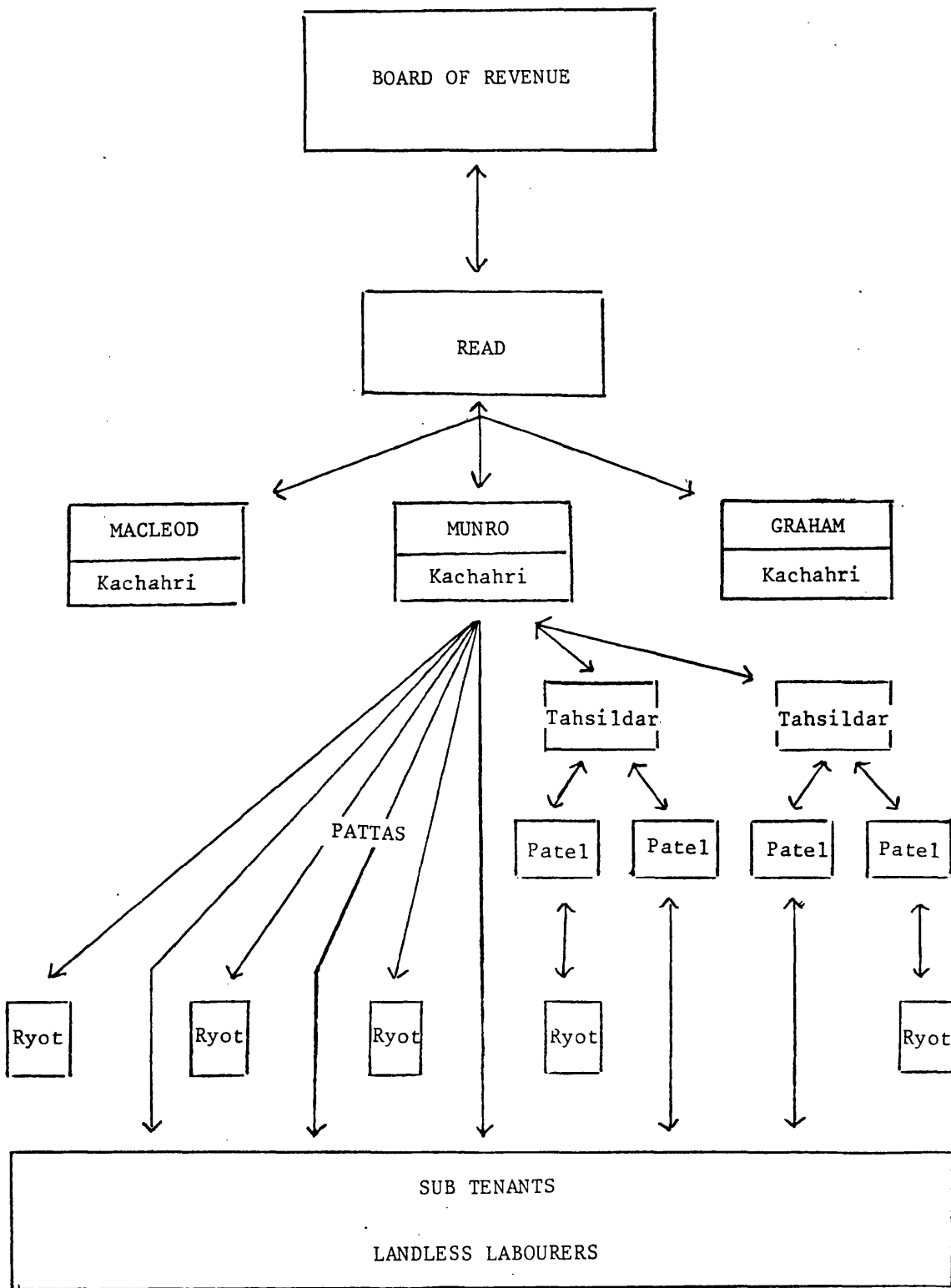
and the rules so few that it may be easily managed by any collector who bestows on it the most common degree of attention'.<sup>126</sup> More importantly, Munro believed that the ryotwari settlements were encouraging changes in the structure of the agricultural economy which he approved of. It appeared to be assisting men who had always worked as labourers to take up land on their own account and he imagined that a class of yeoman farmers was emerging.<sup>127</sup> He wrote approvingly of this development which he believed was creating 'a crowd of men of small but of independent property who, when they are certain that they will themselves enjoy the benefits of every extraordinary exertion of labour, work with a spirit of activity which would in vain be expected from the tenants or servants of great landholders. If the expenses of collection be somewhat increased by the smallness of farms, it is amply repaid by the augmentation of revenue'.<sup>128</sup>

It seems clear that Munro's eventual enthusiastic adoption of ryotwari was largely the consequence of his conviction that it would permit, even assist, the gradual emergence of a new socio-economic structure in India, composed of 'all the various gradations of rich and poor proprietors, large and small farms'.<sup>129</sup> He saw the day coming when 'every man who does not chose to serve another (may) set up for himself' and he applauded this, believing that such a development must give 'the fairest chance and the widest scope...to the progress of industry and population'.

Munro seems to have recognized and applauded the fact that

ryotwari settlements were radically disrupting the long established structure of agrarian society, were serving as a catalyst for social change. The manner in which they were doing this is illustrated in diagram 5 (page 154). The poorer ryots, no longer protected by the buffer of communal village settlements, were losing their lands and being forced to work as labourers. At the same time, men who had traditionally worked as labourers or farmed as the sub-tenants of the ryots were now able to rent lands on equal terms with those who had been the superior landholders. Agrarian society was becoming fluid. Another development was also taking place concurrent with this. The role that the patels were being asked to play in the administration and collection of the revenues as quasi-officials of the state was subtly changing the position of the villages in society. From having been autonomous, to some extent self-sufficient, units which negotiated with the central authority, the villages were becoming administrative units. The patels, once the representatives of their village communities, drawing their authority from the superior landholders, were now slowly emerging as representatives of the state, to whom they looked for their support.

While Read and his three military assistants were introducing ryotwari settlements into the Baramahal and laying the foundations of what was to become known as the Ryotwari or Munro System, opposition, both to them personally and to the new order many civil servants perceived to be emerging in the Company's bureaucracy, began



Structure of the Ryotwari Settlement System introduced by Read and his assistants into Baramahal.



threatening to undermine their position. As early as 1794, Cockburn at the Board of Revenue had written to Munro of a division appearing in the Company's ranks between those men he designated as belonging to 'the old school of commercial government' and the rising class of civil servants who regarded themselves as the servants of an imperial power, as administrators with duties and responsibilities to both the Company and the country.<sup>130</sup>

It is impossible to precisely describe the ideas and policies of these two parties in Madras since they did not emerge as organized factions with distinctive philosophies but as loose groupings of men subscribing to somewhat vague, general views. On the one hand, the 'old school' was largely composed of the older civil servants who tended to support the traditional policies of the Court, opposing what they saw as the interference of the Board of Control. Regarding the Company's role in India as primarily commercial and evaluating its performance in terms of public and private profit, they were not interested in further British expansion nor concerned with the internal state of India so long as the situation was sufficiently stable to allow the collection of the revenues and uninterrupted trading. By and large, these men took little interest in the country they were called to administer, rarely learning the languages and relying upon Indian agents and dubashes to conduct their public business. On the other hand, the men who loosely composed the 'new school' of thought tended to think in terms of empire, to support the concept of Parliament's ultimate responsibility and authority in India, and to see

themselves as representatives of Britain. They were, on the whole, critical of men who placed their private interests before those of the state, quick to make accusations of corruption and inefficiency, and more likely to insist that qualifications should be the principal criteria of appointments. This was not entirely the consequence of greater altruism on their part since these men tended to be found amongst the younger employees who, unlike their rivals, had still to make their careers.

The differences between these two loose factions within the Company were to some extent most clearly defined by their attitudes towards two questions of policy facing the British - how was the Company to treat the local Indian rulers whose political functions in society it was assuming and what was to be done about the debts these men had contracted with Europeans in the period before these engagements were forbidden. While members of the 'old school' tended to support the claims of the displaced petty Indian chiefs to be regarded as the established aristocracy with whom engagements should be made, their opponents were more likely to argue that the British had the right to restructure society to suit British requirements. With regard to the debts of the Indian princes, the 'old school' argued that these should be considered as public commitments to be honoured by whomsoever collected the revenues. The members of the 'new school' were far more likely to consider these to be largely fraudulent and to argue that, even should they be genuine, they must be treated as private debts which should not pass to the Company when it assumed control of

the revenues against which these debts had been contracted.

By the end of 1797, developments had brought this division in the British administration of Madras to the fore. Shortly after the Court had approved the actions Hobart's Government had taken to abolish the Chiefs and Councils, it had ordered the introduction of regulations which threatened the future careers of many of the men who had been employed under the old system. In October 1797, the Court ordered that no civil servant was to be considered eligible for the post of collector unless he could prove himself capable of transacting business without the aid of interpreters.<sup>131</sup>

Inspired by the example of Read and his assistants, the Court stated that, should the Government find there was an insufficient number of linguistically qualified civil servants to fill all the posts, the Company's military officers might be employed in the Revenue Department. The Company's older civil servants, the men who had been employed on the provincial councils and whose training and experiences had left them unable to cope with the new demands of the administration, now feared that they would be passed over in favour of younger men and military employees. It was natural that they should utilize the existing animosity amongst the civilians towards the army to attack Read and his assistants who seemed to represent the most obvious threat to the interests of the civil service.

It quickly became clear however that, because Read personally had the support of the Government, direct attacks on his administration were unlikely to be successful. This

did not prevent Munro from playing upon Read's knowledge of the civil servants' hostility when he wanted to alter his superior's decisions. When Munro objected to Read giving Hurdis, a civil assistant, judicial jurisdiction in all the districts of the Baramahal, he first stated his arguments against the policy and then used the fact that they were both officers under attack to try to influence his decision. 'Were I a civil assistant', he wrote, ' I should certainly make a public remonstrance on the subject but, as a military man, it would be extremely ill-judged because we should obtain no redress. It would be falsely construed as arising from the jealousy of civil influence; it would be turned against us by all who wished our removal'<sup>132</sup>. The sudden switch from the first person singular to the all-embracing 'we' was significant.

The disgruntled civilians turned their attention to the Government itself and began to employ the hostility Hobart's attempts to assume the control of the civil administration of the Nawab's and the Raja of Tanjore's territories had generated amongst their European creditors to try to undermine his authority. Before Hobart had left Britain, he had spoken with Cornwallis who had expressed the opinion that the Company should take possession of the Carnatic. Shortly after his arrival in Madras, Hobart had written to inform Cornwallis that he considered this object 'of the utmost importance to the interests of the Company'<sup>133</sup>. The death of Mohammed Ali gave Hobart an opportunity to attempt this. Unfortunately the new nawab, Obut ul Omrah, refused to comply and appealed to the agreement that his predecessor

had reached with Cornwallis in 1792. This treaty placed the management of the Carnatic under the the nawab in times of peace, under the Company in times of war. Faced with the nawab's refusal to cooperate, Hobart announced his intention to seize Tinnevely in order to use the district's revenues to liquidate the nawab's debts and he demanded the surrender of the Carnatic forts. The dispute was referred to Shore who rejected Hobart's arguments that the demands of humanity and expediency justified his actions and insisted that the treaty be upheld.<sup>134</sup> He used his position as Governor-General to prevent Hobart from proceeding until the matter had been settled by the home authorities, claiming that the Governor's actions had constituted an unjust invasion of the nawab's rights. While they waited for the Court's orders, another dispute developed between Shore and Hobart over the latter's treatment of the rajah of Tanjore. Hobart had managed to persuade the rajah to surrendered mortgaged territory to the Company. Shore, to some extent acting under the influence of Hobart's opponents in Madras, decided that the rajah had been dragooned into accepting the new situation and again insisted that the matter be referred back to Britain.

While the disputes between Hobart and Shore developed, a distinct alliance of interconnected interests strongly opposed to the Madras Government emerged. An analysis of this alliance shows it to have been composed of a number of groups. There were the disgruntled civil servants who believed that the recent reforms and the employment of military collectors were threatening their careers. This

group was joined by the men who, as creditors of the Nawab and the Raja of Tanjore, believed that Hobart's activities threatened their financial interests. Also supporting the civil servants were the Europeans who had previously been permitted to act as revenue farmers and to rent lands for large scale agricultural projects such as indigo and cotton cultivation. These men had been angered by the Government's decision in 1796 to refuse to allow these activities to continue.<sup>135</sup> In certain cases, such as those of Roebuck and Abbott, the interests of these men extended to every category of the opposition and there is evidence to suggest that their actions were solely inspired by considerations of personal profit. While not intriguing against the Governor, Abbott and Roebuck were engaged in trying to get the salary of the Principal Officer of the Madras Recorder's Court increased because Abbott's son was the present holder's assistant and expected to succeed him soon.<sup>136</sup>

Initially Hobart's opponents appeared unlikely to achieve their aim of bringing about his removal. Despite a remarkable similarity to the situation under Macartney when pressure from the Arcot creditors had forced Hastings to cancel the Nawab's assignment of the Carnatic revenues to the Company, there were also significant differences. Then Laurence Sullivan, Chairman of the Court, had been determined to support the Governor-General and Dundas had been committed to the creditors' cause. This combination of Court and Board, that had then forced Macartney's resignation, seemed, at first, unlikely to reoccur. While Hobart's opponents had considerable support in the Court, there was

no evidence they might expect a sympathetic hearing from the Board. In August 1796, John Sullivan informed Hobart that he had spent some time with Dundas and Pitt in Wimbledon where he had learnt that they favoured his policies, particularly those towards the Nawab and the Raja of Tanjore.<sup>137</sup> The situation, however, changed rapidly during the next six months as opposition to Dundas amongst the Directors grew and his ability to control the Court declined. His principal supporter, David Scott, was due to go out of the Direction by rotation in April. The Directors meanwhile were threatening to recommit for discussion the question of the payment of the Arcot creditors. Dundas could not have welcomed the possibility of a further investigation of this question since the evidence afforded by the Board's handling of the debts in 1784/5 supports the view that Pitt, through the agency of Dundas, Atkinson, Macpherson and Call, had received political support from the Arcot interest and that Dundas had in return promised to procure a settlement of the creditors' claims without investigation.<sup>138</sup>

Although Dundas gave Hobart's disputes with Shore and the unrest in the Bengal army, which Shore reported to be on the verge of mutiny, as the grounds for his decision to have Hobart recalled,<sup>139</sup> considerations of political expediency probably had a greater influence. Dundas could not have forgotten the attacks Burke and Fox had made on the Ministry in 1785. Paul Benfield was still a member of Parliament and 74 other members of the East India interest had been returned in the general election of 1796.<sup>140</sup> There appears to be no other logical explanation for Dundas's sudden about

turn on Hobart's handling of the Nawab and the Raja, which he now gave to David Scott as his principal grounds for recalling the Governor.<sup>141</sup> The importance he placed on the Court granting Hobart a good pension on his return suggests that Dundas felt the need to salve his conscience with regard to the entire affair.

The Court informed the Board on 15 March that it would recall Hobart and that it intended to vote him a good pension.<sup>142</sup> On the same day, Scott told Dundas that he was being misled since the Court, probably under the influence of the more vindictive of Hobart's opponents, had already decided not to be generous and would vote only £1500, £500 less than Dundas had suggested.<sup>143</sup> Initially the entire business was concealed from the public. On 1 July, the London Chronicle informed its readers that 'the Court of Directors of the East India Company have appointed the Rt Hon Lord Mornington to succeed Lord Hobart in the Government of Madras and eventually that of Bengal'. Hobart himself received no news of what was happening until copies of this paper reached India in November.<sup>144</sup> At first he could not believe that he would not succeed Shore, being convinced that Dundas intended Mornington to serve an apprenticeship in Madras while he, Hobart, served as Governor-General.<sup>145</sup> It was not until January 1798 that he was definitely informed that Mornington would succeed Shore.<sup>146</sup>

Read's assistants clearly feared that the political climate in Madras was becoming distinctly unfavourable to them and that their futures were threatened. In February 1797, Munro



had written to his father that 'the present members of the Board (of Revenue) are the only friends we have except Lord Hobart'<sup>147</sup>. He told him that, together with Macleod and Graham, he was planning to make an application for an increased salary. He explained why they intended to do this. 'The military assistants have another object in view besides salary. They wish, by introducing a discussion about it, to get the Revenue Board to mention their services in such terms as may show Government that it is their desire that they should succeed to their present stations as principals on Read's going home'. It appears that Read's assistants wanted to be confirmed in their offices before the Board discovered that, as a consequence of the ryotwari settlements which had been introduced without its permission, the jama or total demand for revenue had dropped by 54,000 pagodas on the previous year.<sup>148</sup>

Read, who had at last decided to retire, shared his assistants' anxiety about their futures. In a letter sent to Hobart before he left Madras, Read wrote that 'the military collectors, being justly viewed by the gentlemen of the Civil Line as detrimental to their prospects, there appears a chance of their removal when I resign'<sup>149</sup>. He begged Hobart to use what influence he possessed in Britain to try to prevent this on his return to England. In his reply, Hobart recognized that Read's fears were justified but regretted there was little he might do.<sup>150</sup> A minute of the Board of Revenue in September confirmed the military collectors' fears that, with Hobart's departure, their opponents' position had been considerably strengthened. The Board

recorded that they had 'understood that the jummah fixed for 1204 (1794-5) was to be considered in force until a survey of the lands was made'<sup>151</sup>. They observed that only now had they learnt that the lease system 'had been relinquished for another plan of annual settlement' which, having been introduced without permission, they disapproved of. They called for a prompt and minute explanation for the change which had apparently resulted in such a loss of revenue. The long period of freedom from supervision that Read and his assistants had enjoyed was to end.

In May 1799, before Read had given the explanation demanded of him, the Company was at war with Tipu again and he and his assistants recalled to military duties.

## Chapter Four

The Emergence of Munro;  
Munro in Kanara, 1799-1800.

Although Munro almost certainly had no idea that Hobart's recall and Wellesley's arrival in India would do anything other than adversely affect his prospects, these two events were in fact to mark the second major turning point in his career. The British were about to enter another period of expansion in the south of India and Munro, who had hitherto been only an assistant to a military officer with a temporary commission to administer the Baramahal until the time was considered ripe for the introduction of the Bengal System under a civil establishment, was shortly to find himself promoted to a position in which he could make significant contributions to policy through the official and unofficial channels of the Company's decision-making process. In this chapter the reasons for Munro's appointment as Collector of Kanara and the factors which subsequently influenced his ideas about the Company's revenue and judicial administrations are reviewed. In particular, the influence which Webbe and Munro had on each others' opinions and policies is examined. Also investigated is the extent of

Wellesley's involvement in the politics of Madras. The manner in which he attempted to create a party of supporters in the Presidency and the ways in which this influenced the careers of the Company's employees is studied with particular reference to the increasingly significant division within the administrative structure between the members of the 'Old' and 'New Schools'.

There is evidence that, before Wellesley had left Britain, he and Dundas had agreed that the time was ripe for the further British expansion in India. Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798 gave Dundas the excuse he needed to justify him encouraging Wellesley to pursue aggressive policies. As early as 1796, Stephen Lushington, the then Chairman of the Court, had warned Dundas that it might be possible for the French to attack India by land if they controlled Egypt.<sup>1</sup> John Sullivan had further convinced Dundas and Grenville that any French attack on British India would probably be supported by some local powers, in particular Zaman Shah, the ruler of Afghanistan, and Tipu Sultan of Mysore.<sup>2</sup> Since the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1792, many of the British had regarded Tipu's behaviour as evincing 'the most hostile sentiments' towards the Company's government' and they had believed 'that he only waited for an opportunity of attacking its power'.<sup>3</sup> In 1797 information had reached Britain that seemed to support this view. A Frenchman, Ripaud, had arrived in Mauritius with two Mysorean envoys carrying a message from Tipu in which the latter announced that he was only waiting for French help 'to declare war against the British'.<sup>4</sup> The Governor of Mauritius had, most

unwisely, made this message public

But, while Dundas was generally convinced that further British expansion should be encouraged and in particular wished to see Tipu crushed,<sup>5</sup> the Court was not in agreement with him. It opposed expansionist policies on principle and wished to avoid military conflict which it believed must lead to a rapid increase of the Indian debt. Cornwallis had expended 60 lacs of rupees just to field the army against Tipu in 1792.<sup>6</sup> Bosanquet, the Chairman, was not even convinced that there was a genuine threat from the French to British India and he suspected that Tipu's proclamation was merely a French trick to inveigle the Company into war with Mysore. 'Ought we', he said, 'to push Tipu to a premature declaration of his intentions and precipitate him into a war with us? - or would it be more prudent to temporize for the chance of avoiding hostilities altogether'.<sup>7</sup> Dundas however decided to ignore the Court's views. 'If Tipu has made preparations of a hostile nature', he instructed Wellesley in June 1798, 'or if the proclamation of Tipu inviting the French was his own, do not wait for actual hostilities on his part...attack him'.<sup>8</sup> The news that about a hundred Frenchmen had landed at Mangalore in April gave Wellesley the opportunity to follow Dundas's orders and he declared that 'an immediate attack upon Tippoo Sultaun, for the purpose of frustrating the execution of his unprovoked and unwarrantable projects of ambition and revenge, appeared to be demanded by the soundest maxims of justice and policy'.<sup>9</sup>

The Madras Government was not convinced that unwarrantable

projects of ambition were confined to Tipu Sultan and there was considerable opposition to Wellesley's plans to attack Mysore. The Government was aware that Dundas and Wellesley did not have the Court's approbation for their policy of expansion and further opposition was engendered by the rivalry that existed between the Supreme Government and the subordinate Presidency, whose civil servants resented what they considered to be interference in their administration. The situation was very similar to that which had preceded the last war. The Madras administration was unprepared for a campaign against Tipu's forces, the civilians generally opposed to any precipitate action and the Treasury was empty. In particular Lord Clive,<sup>10</sup> who had arrived at Madras in 1798, was far from convinced that Wellesley's policies were correct. Although partially inspired by a fear of antagonizing the Directors, most of Clive's opposition to Wellesley appears to have arisen from his dependence on Webbe who was personally hostile to the new Governor-General and initially allowed these feelings to influence his judgement with regard to the latter's policies.

Webbe had special reasons for his hostility towards Wellesley. He owed his position as Secretary to the Government to Hobart and he was the sort of man who, having once given his allegiance, did not easily transfer his loyalty to a new master. Like Lord Hobart, he appears to have been convinced that Wellesley was personally responsible for the late Governor's recall and seems to have suspected that he had abused his position on the Board to advance his own career at the expense of Hobart's. These

suspicions seem to have been not unjustified. Wellesley's finances were in a sorry state and it was open knowledge that he had come to India to restore his fortune.<sup>11</sup> When the Board of Control had decided to investigate the policies of the Madras, Wellesley, as one of the Assistant Commissioners, had advised Dundas to recall Hobart.<sup>12</sup> However, whether justified or not, Webbe's opposition to the new Governor-General's policies was perceived by the latter as being largely inspired by personal animosity. In a letter to Bathurst Wellesley wrote: 'The trouble which I encountered at Madras arose entirely from Mr Webbe, secretary and governor to the Government, in both of which offices he was placed by Lord Hobart....who went home in a passion, as I understand, particularly directed against me. Mr Webbe does not scruple openly to condemn the Government at home for removing Lord Hobart...and I have no doubt that the attempt by Mr Webbe to impede the execution of my orders on the occasion of the assembly of the army and of detaching a force for the purpose of subverting the French party in the court of the Nizam arose entirely from faction'.<sup>13</sup>

It was not unusual for members of the senior officials in the Company to ascribe resistance to their own policies to faction rather than to genuine disagreement. Not every official, once he had adopted a policy, found it easy to judge the merits of counter-arguments. In this particular case however, Wellesley had some justification for entertaining suspicions regarding Webbe's motives. In many respects the policies the new Governor-General wished to follow were not very different to those that Hobart and

Webbe had espoused. Their determined attempts to introduce reforms in the financial administration of the Carnatic and to annul the agreement made between Cornwallis and Mohammed Ali in 1792 had been the fruits of a general perception of the situation in Madras that was remarkably similar to that of the Board of Control. Hobart had employed the same arguments to justify his actions as Dundas was to use when he urged that Mysore should be annexed by the British rather than placed under a puppet ruler. 'That species of double government', Dundas argued, 'has hitherto proved as unpropitious to the happiness and prosperity of the governed as it has to the safety, interest and character of the governors'.<sup>14</sup> In addition, the same basic view of the role Britain should play in India appears to have influenced Webbe and Hobart as much as it did Wellesley and Dundas. Hobart's decision to force the Raja of Tanjore to surrender mortgaged territory to the Company was, like Dundas's determination to annex Mysore, inspired by the desire to see the British become the 'arbiters of India'.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand, it is clear that Webbe's opposition to Wellesley's policies was not quite as factious as the Governor-General would have had the home authorities believe. There is some evidence to suggest that Wellesley's enthusiasm for an immediate attack on Tipu was blinding him to the facts of the situation although it is possible that he just had not been sent all the information that was available to Webbe. The Madras Government had only been able to raise 12,000 fighting men, all of whom they had assembled on the Mysore border. Wellesley's orders that 5,000 of these<sup>16</sup>



should be sent to support the Nizam threatened to leave the way to the Carnatic open to Tipu, should he decide to launch a pre-emptive strike. Unprepared as they were, the members of the Madras Government had good reason to fear Tipu, to hesitate before engaging in hostilities with him.

Intelligence reports revealed that his forces easily outnumbered those of the British. He had 30,000 regular infantry, 7,000 regular and 6,000 irregular cavalry, 2,000 artillery and 5,300 revenue peons whom he might field against the Company's forces.<sup>17</sup>

Wellesley delegated the task of convincing Clive that his policies were the best to his brother Arthur. After an initial five hour conference, Arthur Wellesley managed to persuade Clive that his brother did not mean to 'precipitate the country into war',<sup>18</sup> a remarkable achievement in view of the fact that this appears to have been exactly the Governor-General's and Dundas's intention. In the following months Arthur Wellesley found himself engaged in endless diplomatic intrigues as he sought to keep peace with Clive while he prepared the Presidency for war. His policy was to keep the Governor isolated from the Madras officials, in particular from Webbe. He suggested to his brother that the Supreme Government should deliberately avoid disputes with Clive, even on petty subjects, as these might erect 'the little men such as Webbe, who have to handle them, into great ones'.<sup>19</sup> The extent of this initial division between the Bengal and Madras authorities is clearly revealed by Arthur Wellesley's perception of the role he was playing in the south for his brother. 'I cannot but consider myself', he

wrote, 'and I am afraid that if all were known others would (so) consider me, as very little better than a spy'.<sup>20</sup>

Within a comparatively short time however, Arthur Wellesley's efforts were rewarded when both Clive and Webbe responded to his blandishments, becoming active supporters of both the imminent war and Richard Wellesley's views in general. Lord Clive's conversion is not difficult to explain. By nature a mild and moderate man, he avoided responsibility when he could and was easily swayed by those around him. Richard Wellesley nicknamed him Puzzlestick and Arthur Wellesley described him as a man of 'heavy understanding'.<sup>21</sup> He had little interest in his responsibilities as head of the executive, preferring to delegate his authority to his trusted assistants. Webbe was later to observe that the Governor was very indisposed to work and spent most of his time travelling with his family, creating gardens or supervising the erection of public buildings.<sup>22</sup>

Webbe's decision to throw in his lot with the new Governor-General is less explicable. To some extent it may have been an act of self preservation. In 1798, Wellesley requested the home authorities to recall Webbe and by early 1799 letters carrying the information that Dundas intended to squash opposition in Madras were beginning to arrive in India.<sup>23</sup> These letters made it clear that, though there was still considerable opposition in the Court to the Board's aggressive policies, the Directors were not prepared to seriously resist them. Webbe must have been influenced by

this news and by the knowledge that Wellesley was on the point of suspending the Governor and the whole Council.<sup>24</sup> It is also probable that Arthur Wellesley managed to convince him that not only did his best interests lie in supporting the new order but that its policies differed little from those he himself supported. He may also have been influenced by the views of his friends. Among these was Munro who, as an ardent advocate of Wellesley's expansionist aims, had openly supported them. 'Our Government', he had written in a letter to his father which he fully expected would be forwarded via Pultenay to Dundas, 'are anxious to avoid a war: they are alarmed at the expense and dread the event. For my own part, I think the sooner we have it, the better...it is the only thing that can make amends for the extreme folly of the last peace. We never can be safe while such a power as Tippoo exists nor can the Carnatic be secure till we have Seringapatam'.<sup>25</sup> General Clarke, a mutual friend of Webbe and Wellesley, did much to reconcile the two men, persuading the former to shift his allegiance to the new Governor-General and convincing the latter that the Secretary to Government's apparent opposition had been largely the consequence of misunderstanding.<sup>26</sup> Most important of all, the two men met and made a great impression on each other. Wellesley wrote to Hobart in April 1799 that he had found Webbe to be full of 'zeal, talent and diligence, as well as fidelity and honour'. 'For Webbe', he remarked, 'I have really conceived an uncommon degree of interest; he is a man of remarkably useful talent and knowledge'.<sup>27</sup>

On 3 February 1799, Wellesley gave the order to invade

Mysore. News from Europe encouraged him to believe that the time was ripe for the implementation of his aggressive policies. He wrote to his brother; 'The Irish Rebellion and French invasion and Bonaparte expedition are gone to the dogs'.<sup>28</sup> Having just raised a loan to finance the campaign, he wished to hear no more of 'fears and fancies about money'. There can be little doubt that the prospect of war had over-excited the Governor-General who, riding on the crest of the wave, had even cherished a design to take the field in person. On 4 May, Seringapatam was assaulted and by evening the capital of Mysore had fallen, Tipu was dead and British victory complete.

The settlement that followed the fall of Seringapatam and Tipu's death confirmed that Dundas and Wellesley were determined to establish the British as the arbiters of India. Prior to the attack on Mysore, Dundas had advised Wellesley to take over the direct administration of the Carnatic and to substitute the Vizier's troops with the Company's in Oudh.<sup>29</sup> He had also approved of Wellesley's subsidiary treaty with the Nizam and had asked him to make a similar one with the Marathas. Now, before he received news of the final settlement of Mysore, he wrote urging that the country should be annexed by the British and directly administered by them without the employment any fictitious arrangements.<sup>30</sup> In particular, he warned that Tipu should not be replaced by a puppet ruler. 'That species of double government', he wrote, 'has hitherto proved as unpropitious to the happiness and prosperity of the governed as it has to the safety, interest and character of the governors'.<sup>31</sup>

Wellesley however found himself unable to annex all of Mysore for fear of antagonizing the Nizam and the Marathas and he decided to place a representative of the former dynasty on the throne of the central Kingdom. The bulk of Tipu's territory was divided between the Nizam and the Company despite Dundas's instructions that, should it be possible, the former should only receive financial recompense for his help.<sup>32</sup> Under this arrangement the British acquired the town and island of Seringapatam, Wynad in the south-west, the districts of Coimbatore and Dharapuram in the south, and Kanara in the west.

A commission to settle the Mysore government and to make the partition treaty with the Nizam was established at the end of May. On 4 June Munro and Captain John Malcolm, with whom Munro had been corresponding since 1797 after Malcolm had been introduced to him as one of Erskine Munro's Glasgow friends,<sup>33</sup> were appointed as joint secretaries to this commission.<sup>34</sup> Munro appears to have owed this appointment to Webbe and Barry Close, both of whom were friends of his, interested in furthering his career and in command of sufficient influence with Wellesley to advance his candidature. At the same letter in which he informed Munro of this posting, Webbe informed Munro that he might hope to be appointed collector of half of the Baramahal after Read's retirement, which was expected once peace had been restored.<sup>35</sup>

While Munro worked with the commission, he fully expected that he should shortly return to the Baramahal and his appointment in June as the collector of Kanara appears to

have come as a surprise to him.<sup>36</sup> The complexities of the Company's administration, in which promotion was largely governed by factors of personal influence and patronage, make it difficult to be certain just why Munro received this appointment which Wellesley had originally intended should be given to General Stuart.<sup>37</sup> Only tenuous suggestions can be advanced for the decision. There is a certain amount of evidence that Munro owed the appointment to the influence of several friends who, for personal and political reasons, were interested in advancing his career. Arthur Wellesley claimed partial responsibility for it, explaining in a letter to Munro, with whom he had formed a close friendship, that he had supported it.<sup>38</sup> 'I long ago took the field, in alliance with my brother Henry, in favour of military collectors', he wrote. Read believed that Webbe had also had a hand in the appointment, observing that no one in the Presidency had more influence over the Governor than the Chief Secretary to the Government.<sup>39</sup> Webbe indirectly confirmed Read's impression when he told Munro that he had come to Wellesley's attention through Clive.<sup>40</sup>

Malcolm's letter to Munro, in which the latter was officially appointed to Kanara, suggests another reason why he received the post.<sup>41</sup> It seems clear that Wellesley was determined to staff the Company's local administrations as far as possible with men loyal to himself and sympathetic to his policies. There can be little doubt that Wellesley hoped that Munro would regard himself as to some extent acting as the Governor-General's agent rather than purely as a servant of the Madras Government. This interpretation is supported

by the fact that, though Munro technically should have been directly under the authority of the Board of Revenue and charged with the duty of reporting to it, Malcolm informed him that he was to consider himself under the 'immediate orders of the Governor-General'.

Munro hesitated to accept the appointment and then did so with extreme reluctance. He believed that the revenues of Kanara had been over-estimated and that any attempt to bring them to their estimated value could only lead to failure and an 'unavoidable loss of reputation'.<sup>42</sup> He well knew that the Board of Revenue would evaluate his performance according to the revenue he raised and the example of Hughes, whom the Board had removed from Guntur after his failure to collect revenues equal to the estimated value of the district, could not have been far from his mind. He had also suffered a severe attack of fever early in 1799 and doubted if his health could sustain the privations he expected to experience in the new territory.<sup>43</sup> In addition, Munro was reluctant to relinquish the districts he had administered in the Baramahal. He had just finished the difficult task of settling the revenues and now 'anticipated the pleasure of sitting down...and enjoying a few years of rest after so many of drudgery'.<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, he had made the Baramahal his home when he had built himself a house and garden there. 'To quit it now', he wrote, 'goes as much to my heart as forsaking my friends'.<sup>45</sup>

Two considerations appear to have persuaded Munro to accept the appointment. He claimed that he had always placed the

demands of public duty before all others and that it was his understanding of these which had prompted him to go to Kanara. 'I considered it was my duty to go', he wrote to Wellesley, 'especially as I was conscious that, though I should never be able to realize any sanguine ideas that might be entertained on the subject of the revenue of Canara, I should yet, from possessing the advantages of long experience, be enabled to render it as productive as it could have been in any other hands'.<sup>46</sup> It would perhaps be an injustice to Munro to doubt his claim but it must be observed that, amongst his many obvious talents, that of self-promotion was one of the most developed. He rarely, as has been already demonstrated, lost an opportunity to advertise himself, to present himself before his superiors in the most advantageous light possible. It cannot have been coincidence that his perception of his public duty invariably coincided with his perception of his private interest.

Munro had originally come to India to make his fortune. During the early years of his career he had consistently worked towards the realization of this goal, seeking to introduce himself to men of influence and carefully cultivating relationships which promised to advance his interests. In this respect he was no different from the Company's other employees for, behind the more or less convincing facades of altruism these men presented to the world, it was always possible to uncover the operation of that powerful motive, personal ambition. What made Munro unusual was his peculiar ability to find altruistic



arguments to justify his proposal of policies that were clearly to a great extent inspired by his perception of his own interests. Two examples illustrate this point.

During the years that Munro worked under Read, he was constantly preoccupied by his finances. In 1794, he bitterly complained to his father that his commission, which he estimated would be about 3000 pagodas, was 'far from being adequate to the labours of the employment'.<sup>47</sup> As soon as it became clear that the Government had no intention of increasing his allowances simply on the grounds of the work that he was doing, Munro tackled the problem from two different angles. On the one hand, he argued that it was in the Company's interest to generously reward their employees.<sup>48</sup> Claiming that the collectors should receive at least 12000 pagodas a year, he stated that low salaries encouraged dishonesty which soon percolated down through the Indian establishments where it ultimately led to the Government losing large revenues. On the other hand, he applied with Macleod for permission to rent a private estate of 32 villages.<sup>49</sup> While it is quite clear from a letter he wrote his brother that Munro's motive for making this request was the desire to build a fortune,<sup>50</sup> the arguments he advanced to the Board of Revenue were couched entirely in terms of the public interest.<sup>51</sup> He wrote of the benefits the Company and the ryots would derive. He claimed that the Indians, if left alone without an example, would never change their customary patterns of subsistence agriculture. However, were the Indians to see Macleod and himself successfully cultivating indigo, cotton, sugar and beetle, they would also switch to

cash crops. These would be freely and cheaply available to the Company which might then remuneratively supply international demand for the products.

Taking into consideration this aspect of Munro's character, it seems probable that the expectation of an enhanced income carried more weight in his decision to accept the post in Kanara than did that of public duty. Munro privately admitted as much. 'I thought', he wrote to Arthur Wellesley, 'there was a chance that I should be placed in such an allowance in Canara as would enable me, in two or three years, to pay a visit to Europe'.<sup>52</sup> On another occasion he described how he had believed that the financial advantages of the post might permit him to return 'a year or two sooner to Europe'.<sup>53</sup>

Shortly after he had accepted the appointment, Munro began to bitterly regret his decision and he made vigorous attempts to secure a transfer. He showered his friends with letters in which he complained of his new situation and begged them to do whatsoever was within their power to have him moved to another district. He even persuaded Macleod to suggest to the Board of Revenue that Munro might take over the administration of half of his district, despite the fact that this would have reduced Macleod's commission on the revenues considerably.<sup>54</sup> When Arthur Wellesley observed that it had been Munro's decision alone to accept the post, he replied with a repetition of his claim that he had accepted against his better judgement, inspired solely by considerations of public interest.<sup>55</sup> To Read's and Webbe's

replies, he had no answer. Both of them bluntly informed him that he was extremely well off where he was and pointed out that, should he resign, he would only arm their opponents within the Company with further arguments against the employment of military collectors.<sup>56</sup>

There can be little doubt that Munro's extreme reaction against his new appointment was largely the consequence of disappointment with the allowances that he discovered he was to receive. The Board of Revenue informed him after his arrival in Kanara that the Government had decided to limit the commissions paid to military collectors who had previously enjoyed a considerable advantage over the civilians. In addition to the commissions on the revenues that all collectors enjoyed, the military officials had also received their full army pay and allowances. Munro complained about this reduction in his commission to Arthur Wellesley. Wellesley replied that this decision was in part the consequence of a general retrenchment. He also observed that Read's failure to supply the Board of Revenue with an explanation for the dramatic fall in the Baramahal revenues was partly to blame. 'The Board of Revenue are against you', he wrote, 'which is the reason why the Government are not so liberal towards you'.<sup>57</sup> It is probable that the Board was also angered by Wellesley's decision not to place Munro under the Board. Instead Wellesley had first made him responsible to the Commissioners of Mysore and then to himself, ordering him to report through Barry Close.

Arthur Wellesley's sympathies lay with Munro. In order to

help him reverse the Board's decision, Arthur Wellesley proposed to informally present his case to the Governor-General. He suggested that Munro should write to him, describing his situation in Kanara and mentioning that he had been promised some reward for his services in the Baramahal.<sup>58</sup> He promised to pass this letter to his brother who, as Governor-General, might over-rule the Madras Government. Munro followed this advise and a month later Webbe was able to inform Read that the Governor-General had agreed an especially high allowance for Munro which would give him a 'greater income than any member of the Board of Revenue independently of his military allowances' while he remained in Kanara.<sup>59</sup> From this date no further complaints were heard from Munro about his posting and he appears to have resigned himself to remaining in the territory until its revenues should be settled.

Munro's first task in Kanara was to establish order. Writing later to the Board of Revenue, Munro described the conditions that he had found on his arrival in the district. 'When I entered from the southward in July last, the districts of Coomlah and Vittel, lying between Bekul and Mangalore, were in the possession of two chiefs styling themselves rajas who had long been pensioners of the Bombay Government. Jummalabad had refused to surrender. A great part of the country, from Neliserum to Barkoor, had been ravaged by the Coorugs. In many places the cattle had been swept away, the villages burnt and the inhabitants - men, women and children - carried off into captivity. The followers of Dhondajee had made an irruption from Beddanore

into the district of Cuddapore; Bilghee was in possession of a poligar; Ankolah and Sadasewagur were garrisoned by the Sultan's troops and the Raja of Sondah had entered that district as his ancient inheritance'.<sup>60</sup>

The methods Munro employed to establish British authority and to restore order in Kanara have to be examined against the background of the general situation in South India as well as with reference to his own attitudes. The British had discovered that the prevalent system of social and political organization in the Peninsula was poligari.<sup>61</sup> The poligars had initially been holders of territories, usually strips of land comprising a few villages, which had been granted to them in consideration of the military services that these men agreed to render to the sovereign and the tributes that they consented to pay into the state treasury. However, because of their numerical strength, extensive resources, local influence and independent attitudes, these auxiliary powers had quickly come to represent a powerful order in the political system of South India. Their position had been further strengthened when their territories had become hereditary possessions, which development had in turn helped establish their role in the socio-political structure. They had slowly emerged as the heads of the local administrations, responsible for maintaining the military, police and revenue establishments. In certain respects the duties and functions of these chieftains corresponded with those of the feudal barons of medieval Europe. The possession of estates constituted the fundamental basis of their authority and the poligar, like the baron, held

possession of his land on a military tenure. But, unlike the latter, the poligar claimed no proprietary right in the land and never regarded the cultivators as his serfs. He was the administrator of his territory, renter to his sovereign, a commander of forces, guardian of the public welfare and a ryot among his people.

The trend of the times, created by the prevailing state of turmoil, favoured the expansion of the authority of the auxiliary powers. The poligars not only acquired greater rights and concessions at the expense of the jurisdiction of the central authority and the village communities in their palayams, they also extended their power into the circar lands. In particular, they used their position to assume the authority of the kavalkars which gave them definite rights to interfere in the internal affairs of the circar country. They slowly evolved from being a class of public servants until they more closely represented a domestic militia. As they received more of the area's resources, converted their detached villages into military posts and strengthened their armed establishments, they rendered themselves increasingly independent.

When the Nevayet and Wallajah dynasties replaced the Nayak rulers, the situation developed further. The new rulers were not only strangers in the land and adherents of a different faith, they also had no sympathy for an institution that belonged to the political arrangements of their predecessors. They made repeated but unsuccessful efforts to either curb or liquidate the poligari system. Conditions

however did not favour attempts to reassert the authority of the central power which found itself forced to seek the military aid of the poligars. In particular, during the period following the rebellion of Khan Sahib, the Nawab was forced to pursue a policy which augmented the authority and receipts of the poligars in order to persuade them to rescue his government from the Patans who, in alliance with the Kallans and other rebels, were destabilizing Madurai.

As the British extended their possessions in the south and gradually began to assume responsibility for the administration of the districts under their control, they often found themselves actively opposed by the poligars, particular those in the Nawab's Carnatic territories who were able to take advantage of the suspicion and rivalry that existed between the Company's and the Nawab's establishments. The British quickly came to regard the poligars as a threat to their security and as obstacles to the establishment of their authority. To some extent these views were justified by the attitudes of the poligars towards the British. The poligar of Panjalamkurichi expressed the sentiments of many poligars when he declared: 'It rains, the land yields, why should we pay tax to the English'.<sup>62</sup> Justified or otherwise, the British were generally hostile towards these men. They saw the poligars as representatives of a feudal order of society similar to that which was being demolished in Europe. The European experience was conditioning British perceptions of India. The majority of the British drew a clear distinction between the poligars of Madras and the zamindars of Bengal. However

they regarded the latter, either as state officials delegated to collect the revenues or as landholding intermediaries between the state and the ryots, they viewed the poligars as little more than feudal warlords, the relics of a primitive stage of socio-political development. Few questioned this image and what disagreement existed in the Company was restricted to two questions - to what extent did the individual poligars have justifiable claims to their lands and how should the Company deal with them? Largely depending upon their answer to the first of these questions, officials advocated policies which at one extreme involved the complete destruction of the poligars and at the other their wholesale conversion into landowning zamindars after the Cornwallis model.

The first major clash between the British and the poligars occurred during the Second Mysore War when the poligars used the opportunity to throw off their mask of loyalty and forment open rebellions in the Nawab's territories. The Nawab invited the British to intervene and the latter acquired for the first time control of the revenue administration and the right to deal directly with the auxiliary powers. Under the assignment that the Nawab agreed with Macartney in December 1781, the British sought to gain two objectives - the loyalty of the poligars and their submission to the Company's authority. They pursued the traditional policies of conciliation and coercion. These were only moderately successful and the problems had not been solved when the Company surrendered the assignment in 1785. During the next years British relations with the



poligars deteriorated as a consequence of the opportunities given these men by the conflicts of interest between the Nawab's and the Company's administrations which resulted from the form of dual government introduced when the Carnatic became a British protectorate under the guise of the joint system of defence. The Carnatic Treaty of 1792 and the annexation of Dindugal aggravated these problems by bringing more poligars under the direct authority of the Company. The Fifth Article of the Treaty stipulated that the Company should have the right to collect the customary tribute from the poligars and to enhance demands on them if they appeared too low. At the same time the Sixth Article preserved the Nawab's rights of sovereignty over the poligars who were thus required to serve two masters and were consequently able to retain their influence intact.

The dual system exacerbated the ill-feeling between the British and the poligars. The poligars, because they paid tribute to the Company, looked to it for protection but the British refused to defend the poligars' interests because this would compromise the Nawab's sovereign rights. In addition, the British frequently enhanced the tribute. The poligars came to regard them as responsible for their problems and resisted their authority.<sup>63</sup> In particular, they seized every opportunity to refuse to pay their peshcush. At the same time the British increasingly chose to regard them as a turbulent and destabilizing influence in the country. It was largely as a consequence of these problems that Hobart presented the Nawab in 1795 with proposals for modifying the existing system.<sup>64</sup> He suggested that the Company

should be entrusted with authority not only to collect the revenues but also to reorganize the poligari system. Under the influence of developments in Bengal, the Company's general policy aimed at transforming the poligars from military chieftains into zamindars.

By 1799, the local governments were faced with a major dilemma. On the one hand, the home authorities were determined not to destroy the rights of the local powers. On the other hand, they had authorized a policy designed to deprive the poligars of their traditional sources of strength and influence. In their despatches of 10 June 1795 and 5 June 1799, the Court of Directors had issued instruction that 'all subordinate military establishments should be annihilated'. This conflict was only partly resolved when, on the outbreak of the Fourth Mysore War, the poligars took the opportunity to organize themselves under the leadership of Kattabomma into an alliance to resist the authority of both the Nawab and the Company. Wellesley instructed Major Bannerman to command military operations against the alliance and his orders clearly revealed a definite intention to enforce an already formulated policy aimed at the liquidation of the poligari system. 'The rebellious conduct of Catabomanaig (Kattabomma Nayak)...having rendered it necessary to equip a military force for the purpose of suppressing the commotions excited by him, the Right Honourable Governor-General has resolved to avail himself of this opportunity to carry into effect the orders of the Honourable Court of Directors for disarming the whole of the Southern Poligars and for

reducing those irregular chieftains to the authority of the civil government'.<sup>65</sup> The Company intended to force the poligars to dispense with their armed establishments and to assume the military and kaval duties which the poligars had, so longed performed. Deprived of political status, the poligars were to be transformed into zamindars.

Wellesley's actions marked the emergence of a definite split in the Company. In Britain, the Court of Directors, under the influence of concepts of natural justice, the prosecution's arguments during Hasting's trial, fear of widespread revolts against the British and their tendency to regard the Indian elites as their Eastern counterparts in society's structure, wished to see the poligars persuaded into transferring their allegiance to the Company. The Court and its supporters believed that this might be achieved if these men were permanently granted their estates as private property in compensation for the loss of their military and judicial authority. The dominant school of thought in India, led by Wellesley and represented by men like Webbe in Madras, was more prepared to take drastic measures to achieve the same end, if necessary to eradicate the poligars should they prove unamenable to this alteration in their status. Webbe succinctly expressed the 'new school' of thought's ideas in a letter to Munro. 'My notion at present', he wrote, 'is that we should begin thumping the refractory rajahs; and, in order that they may be disposed of without let or molestation, that the courts of adowlut should be abolished and military processes substituted until the province shall be quiet and subdued'.<sup>66</sup> In common with

Wellesley, Webbe appears to have believed that the best solution to the poligar problem might be found in hanging them from the nearest trees.

Munro's personal sympathies lay with the 'new school'. He had brought with him to India a prejudice against classes of privileged ruling elites which his background and early experiences had engendered: In Britain this attitude had disposed him to regard the members of the nobility and gentry with a jaundiced eye. It was with a heavy irony that he had written that he was 'so far from wishing to abolish hereditary distinction that I think them useful'.<sup>67</sup> Enlarging on this statement, he had revealed that all he meant to imply was that pride of birth might prevent the members of the British ruling classes from committing acts likely to disgrace their names. More importantly, Munro's socio-economic concepts, largely derived from Adam Smith, encouraged him to regard the poligars as an impediment to development insofar as he believed that this class of men employed their wealth to maintain large numbers of non-productive retainers and to indulge in conspicuous consumption instead of re-investing it in capital improvements or manufacturing. As such, he regarded them as one of the principal obstacles to economic development. In addition, he believed that the British had sufficient power to remove the threat the poligars posed to their authority without anxiety as to the possible consequences. He went so far as to express the view that the complete eradication of the poligars should be one of the Company's principal objectives. 'The reduction of these vagabonds, who are more

a kind of privileged highwayman, will render us more able to resist our external enemies'.<sup>68</sup>

Munro employed the traditional policies of conciliation and coercion to restore order in Kanara, favouring the latter but, with an eye to opinion in Britain and averse to antagonizing some elements in Madras, adopting the former on occasions. The cases of the Kumla and Vithal poligars illustrate his techniques. The Kumla poligar, whose ancestors had been the hereditary managers of their districts, had been a pensioner of the British from 1784 while exiled in Tellicherry. At the commencement of Cornwallis's war with Tipu, the poligar had received assurances that he should be reinstated and in 1799 the Commissioners of Malabar had led him to believe that, in the event of a British victory against Mysore, he would be entitled to something more than the pension he had been receiving.<sup>69</sup> During the war he and other poligars had been encouraged to support the British and issued with arms from the Company's store. One of Munro's first acts on being appointed to manage Kanara was to issue a proclamation forbidding the poligars from collecting the revenues and ordering them to withdraw their followers from the Company's territory. Although he left his nephew with armed retainers behind him, the Kumla poligar had personally complied. In addition, after General Hartley had threatened to treat his nephew as a rebel and the Commissioners of Malabar had stopped his pension, the poligar ordered his nephew to cease further opposition to the authority of Munro's amildar. Aware that the poligar might be regarded as an ally and

conscious that the Court of Directors had invariably disapproved of actions which had threatened the perceived rights of such men, Munro announced himself averse to 'using force whenever a point could be accomplished by patience and fair means'.<sup>70</sup> Although he concluded that the poligar's behaviour had been 'extremely irregular', something he stated 'must always be expected when we avail ourselves of the assistance of such allies',<sup>71</sup> he eventually recommended that the man should be rewarded by having his pension doubled provided he agreed to the condition that neither he nor his family should reside in Kumla.<sup>72</sup>

But, while Munro pursued a policy of conciliation towards the Kumla poligar, he adopted one of coercion towards the Vithal poligar. While this man had also been a British pensioner, he caused considerably more trouble than his compatriot after the war. He ignored General Hartley's summons to surrender the arms that the Company had supplied him, took over the management of his district and collected the revenues. Early in 1800, he combined with other disaffected elements in South Kanara to resist the British. Munro assembled a substantial force in July 1800 and defeated the rebels.<sup>73</sup> Shortly after the poligar surrendered.<sup>74</sup> Munro, who as long as the man might have been regarded as a British ally had intended to treat him as he had the Kumla poligar, now felt himself justified in following the policy he personally favoured. 'We may now', he wrote to Colonel Close, his friend and the Resident in Mysore, 'by making an example of him and his associates, secure Canara from internal disturbances in the future... It is the mistaken

notion of observing on this coast towards every petty chief of a district all the ceremony and attention that is due to a sovereign which keeps alive idle and dangerous pretensions which it ought rather to be our aim to extinguish'.<sup>75</sup> He hanged the poligar.<sup>76</sup>

In general, it appears that Munro ruthlessly stamped out resistance to his administration. He was able to do this without attracting too much opposition to his measures, either in Madras or Britain, by employing court martials whose sentences, unlike those of the civil courts, did not always have to be referred to the Government. In doing this he had the tacit support of the Governor-General and the Madras Government who had shown the way in their orders to Major Bannerman. This officer had been told by Webbe that, 'to render his authority more efficient', he was vested 'with the power to use military execution against such rebellious poligars and their followers as should be found in open rebellion'.<sup>77</sup> Colonel Mignon, in a letter to Munro in which he inquired whether he was to continue to employ court martials, revealed the extent to which Munro had pursued a coercive policy. Suggesting that Munro might refer future cases to the Government for decision, he argued that 'so many have already been condemned to death, more examples of that kind may not be necessary'.<sup>78</sup>

Munro's attitude towards the poligars not only influenced the methods he employed to restore peace and order to Kanara while bringing the country under the control of his administration, it also partly determined his ideas

regarding the sort of revenue settlements to be introduced. It appears that much of Munro's opposition to the proposed introduction of zamindari settlements similar to those that Cornwallis had established in Bengal developed from his perception of the role that the Government intended to give the poligars within the new system.

There is strong evidence to suggest that one of the principal reasons why the Court of Directors wished to see the introduction of permanent zamindari settlements into the Madras territory was the conviction of the home authorities that such a move offered a sure means of transforming the poligars into a class of peaceful landholders. It is clear from the Court's revenue despatch of 1792 that the home authorities regarded the poligars as a potential threat to the Company's sovereignty in the Peninsula.<sup>79</sup> It is equally clear that the home authorities were unwilling to countenance any solution to the problems these men posed which involved the destruction of their perceived rights except as a final resort. The decision to grant the poligars their estates represented a compromise solution to this dilemma.

In the revenue despatch of 1792 in which the Court directed the Madras Government to introduce the Bengal revenue and judicial systems into its territories, the Directors specified that the existing poligars were to be constituted as zamindars of their present pollams and explained the reasons behind this order. Apart from making the collection of the revenues cheaper and easier, the Court observed that



the transformation of the poligars into zamindars would have three distinct consequences. Firstly, by changing the 'precarious and discouraging tenure under which they (the poligars) held their lands' into one that was 'absolute and invariable', the Court believed that these men would see it as being to their advantage to support the Company. Secondly, the Court imagined that the prospect of full ownership of their lands would be regarded by the poligars as a sufficient compensation for the loss of their judicial functions which the home authorities were determined to assume on the grounds that the introduction of a judicial administration under British control would substantially extend the Company's authority. Most importantly of all, the Court hoped the offer of their lands as private property would persuade the poligars to peacefully accept orders to disband their private armies.

This last consideration was the real crux of the matter. The existence of the poligars' private forces of armed retainers was seen as having disadvantageous economic and strategic consequences for the Company. The cost of their upkeep meant that revenues which the Court believed should be coming to the Company were being directed towards their maintenance while their existence enabled the poligars to become 'formidable enemies' whenever the British were in difficulties. The importance the Directors attached to the disbanding of these private armies was illustrated by their frequent references to this problem. In 1795, the Court even went so far as to observe that, should the Government fail to persuade the poligars to disband their forces, it might,

as a final resort, order them to comply on pain of losing their possessions.<sup>80</sup>

Once the decision had been taken to transform the poligars into zamindars in order to dismantle the poligari system, it was only natural that the Court, under the influence of the arguments employed in support of the introduction of Cornwallis's measures in Bengal, should have decided that the sircar lands ought also to be distributed as zamindari estates. Their orders that this should be done reversed the previous policy of the Madras Government which had, on the recommendation of its Board of Revenue, been attempting to phase out the zamindars in its territories. The collectors, who had been ordered to induce the villagers 'by every reasonable encouragement, to rent their own villages in preference to any other mode of management and, if possible, to divide the landed property in the villages into several farms to be let to the first and second classes of ryots',<sup>81</sup> were now ordered to create estates, auction them to the highest bidders and constitute these men as zamindari proprietors.<sup>82</sup>

While serving under Read in the Baramahal, Munro had shown a preference for moderate settlements with small landholders, whom he called ryots, and he had clearly wished to encourage the emergence of a class of yeoman farmers who would cultivate the soil themselves or with the help of hired labour. His advocacy of ryotwari settlements had predisposed him to oppose the introduction of settlements modelled on those of Bengal into the sircar lands of Madras. The element

of vehemence which now emerged in his opposition to the introduction of zamindari settlements arose directly from his conviction that the Court's policy of conciliating the poligars, of bribing them to recognize the Company's sovereignty with offers of the proprietorship of their districts, was ill-conceived. On the one hand he argued that the substantial poligars who still possessed influence comprised a threat to the Company and should be eradicated.<sup>83</sup> On the other hand he claimed that the remainder of the petty chieftains in Kanara had lost all authority, were barely distinguishable from the mass of the population and should therefore receive no preferential treatment.<sup>84</sup>

Munro's opposition to the introduction of permanent zamindari settlements only slowly emerged publicly. While acting under the Commissioners for Mysore, he appears to have considered his revenue duties limited to ascertaining the district's resources,<sup>85</sup> admitted to finding his civil functions irksome<sup>86</sup> and concentrated on establishing order. In so doing, he remained outside the revenue policy debate. In the beginning of February 1800 however, supervision of Munro's activities was officially transferred to the Board of Revenue. The latter immediately began to put pressure on him to begin the complex task of settling and collecting the revenues. They wrote that they were unable to give him any detailed instructions until he should have furnished them with a report on Kanara containing as much information about the district as he might have managed to discover.<sup>87</sup> They also requested an account of the arrangements he intended to introduce for the immediate collection of the revenues. At

the same time the Board, following orders from the Government which had received directions from the Governor-General to introduce settlements similar to those that had been made in Bengal,<sup>88</sup> instructed Munro to 'keep in view as much as possible' the principles of the permanent settlement that had been comprehensively explained in the circular letter the Board had sent to all collectors late in 1799.<sup>89</sup>

In this letter the Board made it clear that it understood the principal benefit looked for from the policy of conferring a permanent proprietary right to the land on a class of zamindars was to be increased investment in agriculture. They wrote that, after a permanent settlement, 'a considerable portion of the wealth of the inhabitants which now lies dead or is employed in other channels (will be) applied to the improvement of the land'.<sup>90</sup> To ensure that this should occur, the collectors were ordered to include 'waste' or uncultivated lands in each estate as a 'productive principle'.<sup>91</sup> It was hoped that, once the new landholders realized that their rents had been permanently fixed, they would be encouraged to extend cultivation to these waste lands by the knowledge that the returns from them would be theirs alone. The Company, it was believed, while surrendering its claim to rents from land brought consequently under cultivation, would benefit from the general increase in prosperity that should result. At the same time, the Board was convinced that the division of the Madras territories into private estates would help ensure the Company a regular and predictable revenue, especially as

the estates themselves would become security for 'the due realization of the public jumma' insofar as they might be sold by auction whenever it was necessary to pay arrears of rent.<sup>92</sup>

The second advantage the Board expected from the introduction of zamindari settlements was an overall improvement in the relations between landholder and tenants and between revenue officials and cultivators. While it recognized that the introduction of zamindari estates would reduce the bulk of the population to the status of cultivating tenants, it believed that the example of the Company's altruism would encourage the new zamindars to emulate it and practice moderation in their dealings with the ryots. Furthermore, while the tenants created by the settlements could have 'no positive property in the soil', they would have 'a right of occupancy as long as they cultivated' and this could be protected by making it compulsory for the new landlords to issue pattas stating, among other things, the individual tenants' rents and the basis on which they had been assessed.<sup>93</sup> The Board was convinced that zamindari settlements, supported by a judicial system modelled on that of Bengal, would in this way lead to less oppression of the peasantry than any other of the system so far experimented with.

The Board justified its decision to order the creation of zamindari estates by stating that, since all land belonged to the state, the Government could make grants of the sircar lands without destroying existing property rights. The Board

found it necessary to reiterate its opinion that the sovereign was sole proprietor of all land in South India because the Government had clearly stated that no existing property rights were to be violated as a consequence of the creation of zamindari estates.<sup>94</sup> Five years earlier the Board had established its position on the existence of private property in an answer given to the Collector of the Jagir, Lionel Place, after he had put forward the claims of the mirasidars. 'Graduation of rank', the Board stated, 'is inseparable from the growth of society.... From the operation of it, the mirasi inhabitants have derived their distinction which consists of a leading rank in the society of the village and an increased proportion in the division of the ryots' share of the crop. The mirasi inhabitants then bear the same relation as the other inhabitants to government and both of them establish by hereditary residence in a village not a right but a preference to the cultivation of the soil, the proprietary right to which is exclusively vested in the sircar'.<sup>95</sup>

The Board made it quite clear to Munro that the Government's ultimate intention was that Kanara should be settled after the Bengal System. Thomas Cockburn wrote to him in March, ordering him to discover 'the general capacity of the villages and their past average produce' and to begin the work of dividing the districts into estates annually worth between one and five thousands pagodas.<sup>96</sup> At the same time Cockburn wrote to Wellesley expressing complete agreement with the decision to introduce permanent settlements on the Bengal model into the territories under the Madras

Government.<sup>97</sup> The initial freedom of action granted Munro was only that which the Board had allowed all the collectors when they were informed that they were 'at full liberty to adopt any mode of inquiry or investigation...most likely to obtain information'.<sup>98</sup>

Munro was concerned not to be too precipitous in his judgements and, this being the first time that he had been permitted and required to communicate directly with the Board, to tread carefully. He wrote to Cockburn to ask for 'a few hints about the etiquette of writing (to the Board)' and at the same time he informed the Board that he would require some time before he could provide them with the details that they had asked for.<sup>99</sup> He explained that, apart from the delays occasioned by the poligars and the occupation of several districts by hostile forces, the monsoons and the geography of the country made rapid progress in his investigations impossible.<sup>100</sup> He also reported another cause for delay which he considered peculiar to his collectorate; the wide dispersion of the population. 'Both in Canara and Soondah it is only bazaarmen, fishermen, etc who live in villages. The cultivators of the soil almost universally dwell in detached habitations, every man upon his own land - so many days are frequently lost in drawing together from the jungles the scattered inhabitants of what is called a village'.<sup>101</sup>

By the end of April 1800, Munro had had his reply from Cockburn advising him on how to write to the Board.<sup>102</sup> He had also completed his work on his first report, which he sent

to the Board on 31 May.<sup>103</sup> In this report on the district's 'ancient and present state', Munro was at pains to hammer home three points - that prior to Haidar's conquest all lands had been held as private property, that the land tax had been 'lighter than that of any province in India', and that the country had consequently been very prosperous. It is clear that Munro wanted to discover these features in Kanara since they supported conclusions he had already reached in the Baramahal about economic and social development. There he had shown his preference for moderate settlements with small landholders but had only been able to justify his advocacy of these by arguing that such settlements encouraged greater investment in the land than did zamindari ones. The Company's decision to introduce the latter had shown Munro that such theoretical arguments alone were insufficient and that he must prove that private property had existed in the form in which he wished to see it re-introduced and that its presence in the economy had resulted in all the beneficial consequences he believed its reinstatement would have.

Munro claimed he had discovered after much research among the sanads and accounts that, when the Vijayanagar assessment had been made, the land had been parcelled out among a 'prodigious number' of small proprietors who annually paid taxes ranging from 5 to 5,000 pagodas. He stated that their estates were regarded as private property. The proprietors could sell, mortgage or rent them and the state, once it had received its fixed 'rents', had no right to make further claims on them. Munro explained that the



government's grants of inams and jagirs should only be regarded as grants of its right to the rents and not as evidence that claimed a proprietary right in the land. He argued that such grants conferred no rights to the land or its management since these were already the property of the landholders who were only effected by the government's grant insofar as they were required to pay their rents to the grantees in place of the government. In view of these circumstances, Munro argued that the Company could give the inhabitants no new rights in the land since private property was 'already as strong as purchase or prescription can make it and as well understood as it is in Great Britain'.<sup>104</sup>

Munro believed that the only way in which the Company might raise the value of property would be by reducing the level of its assessment, by lowering the rents. He stated that the revenue demands had always been pitched sufficiently low under the early Hindu governments 'to have enabled the country to attain a high degree of cultivation'. He added that the demands had been fixed so that, unlike those of Mysore, they had not fluctuated from year to year according to the supposed ability of the cultivators. This had given 'the inhabitants as much comfort and security as could be expected under an arbitrary government'. Haidar's conquest of Kanara and his and Tipu's subsequent management had ruined the economy. Not only had agriculture suffered as land was left uncultivated, the population had declined, flourishing towns had been deserted and commerce been destroyed. Although he agreed that this had partly been the consequence of war, general disorder and corrupt government,

Munro principally blamed the 'extraordinary augmentation of the land rent' which had occurred under these rulers for the economy's collapse. This had reduced the once prosperous farmers to subsistence cultivators who, without capital, were forced to eke out a precarious existence. It had, in addition, removed all incentive to make improvements.

When Munro sent this first report to the Board of Revenue, he was still feeling his way and was not yet prepared to take too pronounced a public stand against the introduction of the Bengal zamindari system into Madras, the policy he knew to be favoured by the Government. While he argued the merits of a settlement with the small proprietors in his private correspondence, including his letters to Wellesley,<sup>105</sup> in his report to the Board of Revenue he restricted himself to strongly urging a reduction in the general level of assessment. 'Whether the Board may think it expedient to adopt the assessment here proposed or any other as the foundation of a permanent settlement, it is very clear that...it must be greatly below the existing one'. He wrote to Cockburn that the 'sooner the inhabitants experience the benefits of an abatement of the rent, the better'.<sup>106</sup>

Munro had good reasons to be cautious. Neither the Government nor the Governor-General supported ryotwari settlements with small proprietors since both were determined to introduce settlements on the Bengal model. In a letter to Clive, Wellesley reaffirmed his support for zamindari settlements and expressed a suspicion that Munro did not agree with him on this point and therefore not to be

left unsupervised. 'The merits of Colonel Read are certainly considerable', he wrote, 'but his system is fundamentally erroneous.... Major Munro's able letter to me affords strong grounds for a confident hope that he is aware of the fundamental error of Colonel Read's system but I am still convinced that, to a person of Major Munro's temper and talents, the assistance of colleagues well acquainted with the internal administration of Bengal would be highly advantageous'<sup>107</sup>.

Events during the five months intervening between the presentations of his first and second reports encouraged Munro to be increasingly outspoken in his advocacy of ryotwari settlements with small proprietors. Firstly a number of men whom he knew to support ideas similar to his own or to be at least antithetical to those behind the plans to introduce the Bengal System into Madras had been promoted within the civil service. Some of these men now publicly voiced their opposition. In March, Hurdis, who had served with Munro under Read in the Baramahal and who had recently been appointed the Collector of Dindigul, sent a report to the Board of Revenue in which he was strongly critical of the recent moves to extend zamindari settlements into the Madras territories.<sup>108</sup> He objected to the creation of zamindari estates on two grounds; the establishment of intermediaries would deprive the Company of a considerable revenue because 'a great portion of the proceeds to Government under the present system should become the property of the constituted proprietors', and the sale or transfer of land to form these estates would destroy existing rights. He rejected claims

that a permanent settlement with much smaller units, with those whom he regarded as the present proprietors - the ryots - would increase the likelihood of bankruptcies. Provided the assessments were fixed at a moderate level, he argued that failures would be infrequent and, even should they occur, losses would be negligible since the smaller holdings might easily be transferred to new cultivators. At the same time he echoed Munro's opinions when he stated that the Government, by pitching the level of assessment significantly below that previously demanded by the Muslim rulers, could encourage agrarian development. 'By drawing less', he wrote, 'is greater room given for the employment of capital from the ryot's own profits in the improvement of his farm...which he would certainly lay out'.

Secondly, the general position of the military collectors vis a vis the civilians had been substantially strengthened and Munro had undoubtedly lost some of his anxiety that civilian hostility threatened his future employment, felt less need to avoid attracting attention to his position as a military officer through open criticism of the Government's policies. In May, Wellesley had recommended to Clive that he employ two more officers as collectors, suggesting that Sydenham and Marriott, the latter a close friend of Munro, receive such appointments.<sup>109</sup> Clive himself had given clear evidence that he favoured the civil employment of military men. In June, when Webbe temporarily resigned as Chief Secretary to the Government in order to take up the post of Resident at Pune that Wellesley had offered him, Clive appointed Wilks to the vacated office. Although Wellesley

overruled him, cancelling this appointment, it was only on the pragmatic grounds that it had caused such a clamour among the civilians that there was a danger the Directors might be unfavourably influenced against the Government by the 'combination of interest' which would assail them as a consequence of it.<sup>110</sup>

A third consideration which undoubtedly encouraged Munro to publicly express his views was the favour with which Wellesley had treated the reports on Kanara that Munro had sent him through semi-official channels. Since his arrival on the west coast, Munro had been writing to Wellesley in the hope of persuading him of the benefits to be derived from the adoption of a policy of making settlements with small proprietors. In these letters Munro had informed the Governor-General of his discovery that all land in Kanara had been held as private property and he had argued that, prior to the arrival of Haidar and Tipu, the state's claims had been limited to the rents traditionally fixed to the fields.<sup>111</sup> He had advanced his opinion that these two factors had led to land becoming a saleable commodity which had in turn encouraged investment in agrarian improvement. This, he claimed, was the principal cause of the overall prosperity the area had so clearly enjoyed. He expressed the view that the present depressed state of the economy was the consequence of the excessive revenue demands of Haidar's and Tipu's administrations. He believed that these had destabilised the system, destroyed the saleability of land and thereby directly caused a sharp decline in agricultural production. In view of this, Munro argued to Wellesley that,

rather than impose zamindari settlements on the ryot landlords of Kanara, the Company should seek to introduce a system based on a partial return to what he considered to have been the traditional Hindu model. Although he was not absolutely convinced, Wellesley was impressed by Munro's letters. 'I have received from Captain Munro in Canara', he wrote to Clive, 'the most able paper which has come under my observation since my arrival in India'<sup>112</sup>. Munro, who could not have been unaware of the approval with which the Governor-General viewed his administration, was encouraged by it to risk differing with the Madras Board of Revenue.

Undoubtedly though the most important factor to influence Munro's decision to enter the revenue policy debate as an opponent of the introduction of zamindari settlements was the change in the local governments' attitudes towards the poligars. Whereas before the Company had hoped to dismantle the poligari system peacefully by slowly transforming these men into zamindars, the successful suppression of the eastern poligars of Tirunelveli encouraged the British administration to take a series of coercive measures calculated to curb the influence of these auxiliary powers. The relatives of Kattabomman, the chieftains of Nagalapuram, Yezhayirampannai, Kolarpatti and Kulattoor were all imprisoned.<sup>113</sup> These districts, together with those of Panjalankurichi and Kadalgudi, were taken under the direct administration of the Company even though, by virtue of his sovereignty, they should have been handed over to the Nawab.<sup>114</sup> In addition, the Company assumed throughout most of its territories the military and kaval duties which had been so

long performed by the poligars and at the same time directly collected the deshakaval and other established fees which had been their prerogative.<sup>115</sup> Orders were issued which required the poligars to dismantle their forts and disband their armed establishments.<sup>116</sup> Others prohibited the inhabitants from carrying fire arms and made the patels responsible for ensuring that weapons were not manufactured in their villages.

Initially the new policy had appeared to be successfully introducing the sort of changes in the political system of South India that the predominant party in the Company's local administrations had been seeking and, despite the anxieties expressed by the Court of Directors, this encouraged attitudes towards the poligars to harden. The outbreak of anti-British activity early in 1800, which certain elements in the home administration had feared, only persuaded the opponents of the poligari system that sterner measures were required and strengthened the general support given to men like Munro who argued that the auxiliary powers should be totally destroyed, not compromised with.

Developments in Munro's attitudes at this time have to be analysed within this framework. The revolt, led by several prominent poligars among whom were Marudu Pandyan of Sivaganga, Gopal Nayak of Dindugal, Kerula Varma of Malabar and Krishnappa Nayak and Dhoondaji Waug of Mysore, that broke out after an abortive assault on Coimbatore on 3 June undoubtedly influenced Munro's decision speak out against settlements which would allow the poligars, albeit transformed into zamindars, to continue to exercise

considerable local influence.

The fifth factor which influenced Munro while he prepared his second report to the Board of Revenue on Kanara was his appointment on 27 September as Principal Collector of the Ceded Districts.<sup>117</sup> It is some measure of his standing with the Governor-General and the Government of Madras that Munro was kept fairly closely informed of the developments occurring in the course of Wellesley's negotiations with the Nizam and that, as soon as it was known that the Ceded Districts were to be surrendered to the Company, he should have been encouraged to apply for the position of Principal Collector. The orders he received from Webbe on 4 October to leave for his new district must have encouraged him to offer his suggestions for the settlement of his old district before he should no longer be in a position to influence events there.<sup>118</sup>

Together these factors led Munro to feel more secure in his civil career than he had ever done before and it was probably as a consequence of this that he felt sufficiently confident to risk airing his own views. Now, for the first time, he publicly clearly stated his opposition to the extension of the Bengal System into the territories under the Madras Government and admitted that the settlements he had made in Kanara were essentially ryotwari. In a letter to Cockburn, whom he knew to be a proponent of zamindari settlements, Munro revealed that he had made his settlements with over twenty thousand small proprietors, assessing the revenues they were to pay according to the existing fixed rents that he claimed were both generally known and already



attached to the fields.<sup>119</sup> Recognizing that Cockburn, as a member of the Board, would be principally concerned with ensuring a regular and predictable revenue, Munro explained the advantages of his settlements in just such terms. In the report he sent in November to the Board itself, Munro repeated the argument, stating that he did not believe that, 'by any arrangement for placing a number of small estates under the collection of one head landlord, any facility in collection, any security for revenue, would be obtained that may not be obtained from letting the estates as they now stand'.<sup>120</sup> He insisted that no more difficulties were experienced collecting the revenues from the large number of small proprietors than from a few zamindars. However, being aware that the Board was primarily interested in maximizing agricultural production, he added a second strand to his argument. 'The aggregate produce of the land', he wrote, 'may be, and probably always is, greater with small proprietors than when the whole belongs to a few principal landholders'.<sup>121</sup> Aware that his report would probably be forwarded to the home authorities, whom he knew to be particularly concerned that existing rights should not be violated, Munro included a third argument in support of his settlement policy. He stressed that private property did exist in Kanara and stated that 'great proprietors cannot be established without annihilating all the rights of the present landlords'.<sup>122</sup>

But, while Munro was 'decidedly in favour of small proprietors',<sup>123</sup> he had no wish to unnecessarily antagonize those who supported the extension of the Bengal System into

the Madras territories. He had at the least to pay lip service to his instructions and he therefore put forward a few suggestions as to how a form of zamindari settlement might be introduced into Kanara. An analysis of these suggestions reveals how little his ideas had in common with those of the proponents of the Bengal System. The zamindari settlements he recommended would not create a class of large landowners but rather one of Indian middlemen who, in return for accepting the responsibility of collecting the land rents on behalf of the British, would be rewarded with commissions calculated as a percentage of the net receipts. This scheme only differed from that which Warren Hastings had attempted to establish insofar as Munro was prepared to confer the proprietorship of the ownerless waste lands onto these zamindars whom he hoped might be encouraged to invest the incomes they derived from the collections into the development of these lands.

At the same time that he argued the merits of settlements with small proprietors and publicly declared his opposition to the extension of the Bengal System, Munro also expounded his personal theory of Indian agrarian development which, not surprisingly, strongly supported his views. Munro claimed that the history of revenue settlements in India could be viewed as a process by which large estates were broken down into smaller ones, settlements with great landholders gradually replaced by ones with the actual cultivators of the soil. He stated that the laws and customs of India, where primogeniture and entails were unknown, always led to large estates becoming fragmented. His

analysis of conditions in Kanara, which had first suggested these ideas to him, he now employed to support his conclusions. Having formulated this theory of general development, Munro combined it with an assertion that Kanara was the most prosperous of the South Indian territories, claiming that the one was the consequence of the other since Kanara had progressed further along this path than any other area under the authority of the Madras Government. Any attempt to re-introduce large estates must, he argued, represent a retrogression to an earlier stage of social and economic development which, unless Indian customs were significantly altered by the British, must ultimately be eroded.

During the sixteen months that he was Collector of Kanara, Munro appears to have paid little attention to the judicial administration of the district. He was, like Read had been in the Baramahal, fully occupied with the settlement of the revenues. However, in the monsoon months during which travel was restricted, he did preside over a large number of disputes involving landed property and, on the strength of his experiences, he suggested that a register of the rents and produce of all land which became subject to litigation would, in a few years, enable the British to 'form a more accurate judgement of the average produce than could be done from a survey'<sup>125</sup>. With this exception, Munro appears to have had little time in which to become actively involved in the general administration of civil and criminal justice. It would, however, be a mistake to extrapolate from this the idea that Munro was uninterested in this aspect of the

district's administration.

Munro believed that, as a collector, he had been invested with full judicial authority and he felt that this was only as it should be. Psychologically he found it difficult to share authority and it suited him to argue, with a variety of justifications, that the collector should be 'the only head man' in his district.<sup>126</sup> His suggestion to Cockburn that, were it possible, he should be given overall command of the military forces in his district revealed the extent of his ambition and his ability to conceal this behind a facade of public concern. 'If I had had the command in Canara', he wrote, 'it would have greatly facilitated the settlement and possibly have prevented some of the disturbances'.<sup>127</sup> As was so often the case, Munro had some genuine justification for seeking a modification of the situation which would clearly be to his advantage. The existence of fourteen military stations in Kanara and the constant changes in command must have made his task harder yet it is unlikely that this consideration alone prompted him to suggest that he be promoted over the heads of senior officers.

Yet, while he recognized he had to share his command with the military, he was determined that he should be the sole civil authority. When Colonel Mignon informed him that some Europeans in Kanara refused to accept the jurisdiction of the Indian magistrates he had installed and wanted European judges appointed, Munro refused to consider any dilution of his authority and insisted that all such cases should be referred to him.<sup>128</sup> He justified his decision the grounds of

practicality but it seems clear that he was anxious to preserve his independence of action. The Europeans who had resided at the Presidency, he stated, might have become accustomed to British courts but must accept that, in the districts, the collector's authority was paramount. 'In all distant provinces', he insisted, 'the revenue, the judicial authority and every power but the military is in the hands of the collector. There is no magistrate but him'.

Determined to preserve his position, Munro wrote and informed Padre Joseph Mendez that, though the Church might exercise its usual powers of coercion, censure and excommunication, he could not allow it to otherwise punish its members. This must remain his prerogative as the representative of civil authority.<sup>129</sup>

When Munro left Kanara to take over control of the Ceded Districts, he took with him well developed ideas of how the judicial and revenue administrations of the Presidency should be structured. In the case of the former, he believed that judicial authority should be vested in the executive, that the collector should be the unchallenged head of his district. All the seeds of his future opposition to the Company's judicial line were already sown. In the case of the latter, he had begun to formulate the basic ideas of a system which would combine his economic theories with his observations of Indian actualities. He wanted to see 'a wide diffusion of property and a permanent certain revenue (demand)<sup>130</sup>'. He believed that the only means by which this might be achieved was the adoption of a policy under which settlements would be made with small, independent yeomen

proprietors after unalterably fixed rents had been assigned to all fields individually. The theory of India's general development that he had evolved now gave him a framework of reference within which he might argue his policies. In many respect Munro's experiences in Kanara were formative, crystalizing ideas he had brought with him and directing their future development.

## Chapter Five

The Eclipse of the 'New School':

Munro in the Ceded Districts, 1800-1808.

The period during which Munro administered Kanara represented the first high water mark for the 'new school' party within the East India Company. Wellesley's authority, strongly supported by Dundas at the Board of Control, was unchallenged. His policies, while not always meeting with the full approval of the Court of Directors, were not seriously questioned. In Madras, his supporters had acquired a predominant position in the government of the Presidency and their ideas were determining British policy. Over the next seven years however, the situation was to be reversed. In this chapter, the importance of the possession of influence as a major factor determining promotion in the Company's service emerges. The role that Munro's friends among the Governor-General's circle of supporters in India played in advancing his career is examined together with the other considerations which prompted Wellesley to employ him. At the same time, the struggle for power between the 'old' and 'new schools', their respective allies in Britain, and the Court of Directors and the Board of Control is reviewed.

Its impact on the decision-making process is analysed together with its consequences for Munro personally. In addition, the factors which influenced the development of Munro's ideas concerning the Company's revenue and judicial administrations are examined, especially the reasons and motives behind his emergence as an outspoken opponent of the Bengal System. The various methods, formal and informal, that Munro employed to advance his policies are also described.

The defeat and death of Tipu and the subsequent British annexation of Mysore removed from South India the power which had been regarded as the principal threat to the Company's authority in the area. A vacuum now appeared which had serious implications for the Board of Control's expansionist, imperial policies insofar as they could no longer rely upon the perceived threat from Mysore to justify aggressive measures designed to extend British control over areas which the Company had no other claim to. New enemies were required and Dundas found them in the Marathas whom he now chose to regard as a threat to the stability of Central India, particularly to the Company's ally the Nizam of Hyderabad. That the decision to regard the Marathas as a major threat to peace was as much a matter of policy as a reaction to the realities of the situation is perhaps impossible to definitively prove but circumstantial evidence does strongly suggest that this was so. Dundas had informed Francis in 1791 that the Marathas could never be dangerous to British power, an opinion he had shared with Cornwallis and Wellesley. Now, faced by opposition amongst the



Directors to his policy of continuing British expansion, he reversed his earlier views and employed the Maratha threat to override the Court's objections. 'As it must be through the Marathas that any European rivals must henceforward look...to disturb our power in India', he argued, it was not only expedient but genuinely necessary to encircle them.<sup>2</sup> To this end, he ordered that the Bombay military establishment be increased and suggested that the ports of Diu and Goa be purchased from Portugal.<sup>3</sup>

Wellesley enthusiastically endorsed Dundas's views and took them much further than the latter who, faced by the rapid increase in the Indian debt that had been the inevitable result of his aggressive policy and weary of war, only appears to have wished to use the Maratha threat as a political tool to gain specific objectives in his intermittent struggles with the other branches of the home administration. Why else should he have brought the subject of European rivals into what, under the circumstances, might have been regarded as a purely Indian question were he not playing with British fears to gain a political advantage? Wellesley and his supporters in India had a quite different conception, viewing further British expansion as an end in itself. Charles Metcalfe, who was serving in Wellesley's secretariat, captured the essence of the Governor-General's ideas when he wrote that the aim of British policy should be 'to apply the net revenues of conquered countries to the maintenance of additional force and the acquisition of additional force to the achievement of new conquests'.<sup>4</sup> The difference of opinion that was emerging between Dundas and

Wellesley was brought sharply into focus when the latter suggested to the home authorities that the Indian army establishment should be increased from 80,000 to 150,000 men and that, should it be necessary, more territory be acquired to support the larger army. Dundas refused to support Wellesley and informed him that he was only prepared to see the army establishment increased to 95,000 men.<sup>5</sup>

In view of the Board of Control's attitude, Wellesley was forced to proceed carefully. During 1800, Wellesley made his first use of the perceived Maratha threat to justify the acquisition of territory by treaty. He argued that a binding alliance with the Hyderabad was necessary if the Marathas were to be contained and insisted that, under the circumstances, it was vital that the British should strengthen the Nizam's government. He took the treaty of 1798, which had been directed against Mysore, and modified it to take account of the changed conditions by enlarging its scope until it became a general defensive treaty against all powers. In effect, the British were to take the Nizam under their protection in return for which he surrendered to them all the territories he had acquired from Mysore in 1792 and 1799.

The country which now passed to the Company was known as the Ceded Districts (Map 2, page ), an area of some 20,000 square miles containing an estimated population of nearly two million. Although it was clear that the Ceded Districts, taken together, formed an administrative unit far larger than any that had yet been formed by the British in the

Madras territories, Clive, who was totally under the influence of Webbe, suggested to Wellesley that the area should be placed under the authority of one man. It would be best, he wrote, to 'vest the whole civil government in one collector with general powers of superintendence and control, and to appoint a sufficient number of inferior collectors for the execution of the detailed duties of revenue and investigation'.<sup>6</sup> Wellesley accepted Clive's recommendation and Munro was appointed principal collector with James Cochrane, John Ravenshaw, Alexander Stodart and William Thackeray as his subordinate assistant collectors.<sup>7</sup>

Munro owed his appointment as Principal Collector of the Ceded Districts to his friendship with Webbe and to Wellesley's perception of him as a staunch supporter of further British expansion. Webbe undoubtedly encouraged Clive to recommend Munro's appointment to the Governor-General even though he was aware that Munro opposed the introduction of the permanent zamindari settlements favoured by the Bengal Government. Webbe appears to have correctly judged that Wellesley was more concerned to appoint men who supported his general political policies than he was to see the introduction of Cornwallis's reforms into Madras, a policy that was somewhat lower in his list of priorities. There can be no doubt that Wellesley was determined to fill the important offices in Madras, especially those in newly acquired and potentially sensitive areas, with his own men. His appointment of his brother Arthur to the command of the troops ordered to establish British authority in the Ceded Districts supports this view.

It is equally clear that he had come to regard Munro as a man on whom he might rely for support. 'Tom is in high favour with Lord Mornington', Munro's brother had written to their father from Bengal.<sup>8</sup>

Wellesley did not, however, make the appointment without some reservations regarding Munro's revenue policies. Six weeks after Munro had been ordered to proceed to his new district, Wellesley suggested to Webbe that it might be a better idea to remove him from the post, appointing him instead the Resident at Mysore. In this post Munro might be expected to advance Wellesley's aims without their relationship being complicated by disagreement over revenue policy.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Wellesley believed the move would free Barry Close, another staunch supporter of his policies, and allow his appointment as Resident of Pune. In this way Wellesley could keep Webbe in his office as Chief Secretary to the Madras Government and ensure that three of the most important posts in South India should be filled by men whose ideas concurred with his own. Webbe, who appreciated Munro's support for his policy of suppressing the poligars, did not wish to lose so valuable an ally from a post in which he might actively advance this aim. He suggested to the Governor-General that Munro's presence in the Ceded Districts was indispensable and recommended Wilks, Macleod or Hurdis for the Mysore appointment.<sup>10</sup> In the face of Webbe's arguments, Wellesley acquiesced to Munro's continued employment in the recently created office of Principal Collector.

When Munro entered his new district, he must have felt that his future was at last secure. He knew he stood high in the Governor-General's favour and he had no reason to suspect that gathering opposition in the Court to Wellesley's policies was about to put his career in jeopardy. Neither could he have foreseen that his influential friends in the Madras Government were shortly to be removed from power by an alliance of dissatisfied civil servants, the Nawab of Arcot's creditors and Wellesley's enemies among the Directors. Yet, within a year, Dundas would retire, Wellesley's administration would be the subject of severe criticism, Clive forced to resign, Webbe removed, the Board of Revenue staffed by men personally antagonistic to Munro and the employment of military collectors under serious attack.

In 1797, Scott had maintained that it was necessary to increase the Company's Investments and home sales. As a means of augmenting the Investment, Scott had persuaded Dundas to induce the Directors to admit India-built ships into the Company's trade,<sup>11</sup> even though this directly threatened the interests of those men who belonged to the powerful pressure group known as the 'Shipping Interest'. This party, composed of a small group of London capitalists who had gained the monopoly of building ships for the Company, their agents, the ships' captains and the large body of men whose capital was employed in docking, fitting and equipping these ships, was centred in London, easily mobilized and exercised considerable influence over the Court through the large number of votes it could command in

the Court of Proprietors. Control of these votes enabled it to ensure the election of supporters and representatives. The principal concern of the 'Shipping Interest' was the protection of its members' monopoly of the Company's shipping which allowed the owners to negotiate high freight rates with the Company through their representative organization, the Committee of Managing Owners.<sup>12</sup>

Despite the opposition of the 'Shipping Interest', Dundas had persuaded the Court in May 1798 to sanction a scheme whereby Wellesley was permitted to appropriate India-built ships and re-let them to merchants in that country at the Company's normal freight rates.<sup>13</sup> The intention was to increase the volume of trade passing through the Company without damaging the interests of the shipowners by making provision for the transport of freight which had not been provided for in the Company's ships. Wellesley however had taken advantage of his orders to attempt the removal of the Indian trade from foreign hands by making the employment of ships under the Company's control more attractive to independent merchants. He believed that the Company was losing cargoes to foreign ships because its freight rates were not competitive and the system of scheduled sailings too inflexible. He had therefore appropriated the India-built ships and then allowed the owners to settle their own freight rates and arrange their sailing dates. Dundas secretly approved his plans but was unable, in the face of the strong opposition of the 'Shipping Interest' which was convinced that Wellesley's actions would enable the merchants in India to trade more cheaply than the

Company and ultimately undermine their shipping monopoly, to prevent the despatch of orders commanding the Governor-General to strictly adhere to the terms of the Directors' original plan.<sup>14</sup>

In April 1800, two of Dundas's firmest supporters, Inglis and Scott, were elected to the chairs and this encouraged Dundas to intervene on behalf of Wellesley's shipping policy. He invited the Directors to reconsider the possibility of admitting India-built shipping.<sup>15</sup> He was immediately confronted by strong opposition from the 'Shipping Interest' whose position was strengthened at this time by news that Wellesley had permitted part of the Investment to be carried by India-built ships, even though some of the Company's ships had been despatched half-loaded.<sup>16</sup> In January 1801, the Court published a reply to Dundas's letter that was strongly critical of Wellesley's policy.<sup>17</sup> This encouraged the private traders, led by Thomas Henchman and Sir George Dallas, to open a pamphlet campaign directed against the 'Shipping Interest'. They failed however to undermine the support for Wellesley's and Dundas's opponents who secured the votes of four-fifths of the Proprietors when the matter was debated in the General Court.<sup>18</sup> Suffering from ill-health and discouraged by the opposition he faced in the Court, Dundas resigned shortly before Pitt's Ministry left office in March 1801. His departure took Wellesley's principal source of support from him at the very time that his actions had aroused considerable antagonism towards him in the Court.

Meanwhile, the activities of the Madras Government operating under the influence of Clive and Webbe were disturbing another powerful interest group, the Arcot creditors, which had members in both India and Britain. For some time the Madras Government had been determined to extend its authority over the Indian states of South India but had been consistently and successfully opposed by the Nawab and his advisers in the Carnatic, by Amir Singh in Tanjore and by the Nawab's European creditors who feared that such moves represented a threat to their interests. Hobart's attempt in 1795 to persuade the Nawab to entrust the Madras Government with authority to collect the revenues and reorganize the poligari system had failed when the Nawab declared he would never deviate from the Treaty of 1792. In 1799, encouraged by the successful annexation of Tanjore, further attempts had been made by the Government to assume control over the Carnatic which only Umdut-ul-Umara's strict observation of the stipulations imposed by Treaty and his determined resistance to attempts to find excuses to proceed with the annexation of his country had avoided. On 15 July 1801, Umdut-ul-Umara died after naming his son Ali Hussain as his successor.<sup>19</sup> Clive immediately advised the new Nawab to surrender the Carnatic to the British, making this the condition of British recognition of his title even though, strictly speaking, no such recognition was required. Upon Ali Hussain's categorical refusal to comply, Clive proclaimed Azim-ul-Doula the new Nawab. Ali Hussain's fortuitous death, under suspicious circumstances, a few days later prevented the emergence of any direct opposition to Clive's action.<sup>20</sup> The new Nawab, who had little to lose and



much to gain, accepted an allowance in return for the transfer of the administration of the Carnatic to the British. The Carnatic Treaty was signed on 31 July 1801, effectively ending the Nawab's rule.<sup>21</sup>

This action by the Madras Government provoked an immediate reaction among the Nawab's creditors. In a letter to Hobart in which he informed his one-time patron of his active participation in the annexation of the Carnatic, Webbe described how this development had angered these men and made him an object of their hostility.<sup>22</sup> It is probable that the creditors had good cause to fear that the policies Webbe was pursuing threatened their interests. He was known to support the views of Hobart and Wellesley, both of whom had expressed doubts as to the validity of the Nawab's debts. Hobart had opposed the home authorities' decision to order the Madras Government to pay all claims and was to say later that he considered most of the Carnatic and Tanjore debts to be fraudulent.<sup>23</sup> Wellesley informed Hobart that he was of the same opinion and used the emotive word 'usurers' to describe the creditors.<sup>24</sup> Most important of all, Webbe made no secret of his opposition to the Court's orders, contained in their political despatch of June 1801, which instructed the Government to employ a part of the Carnatic revenues to pay the Nawab's debts.<sup>25</sup> He clearly stated that, in his opinion, these debts should be regarded as the Nawab's private concern, outside the cognizance and responsibility of the Company. The adoption of such a policy would have had far reaching financial consequences for the creditors.

Opposition to Clive's Government was not restricted to the speculators in the Carnatic and Tanjore debts. As has been observed in previous chapters, there had long existed deep divisions between the military and civil branches of the Company's service in Madras that were the direct consequence of a rivalry which had developed from a perceived clash of interests. The decision to employ Read and his three military assistants in the Baramahal had exacerbated the situation which had not been improved by the appointments of Munro, Macleod and Graham as collectors after the Treaty of Seringapatam. Closely linked to this division in the Madras Administration had been the emergence of two distinct and mutually antagonistic schools of thought, known to contemporaries as the 'Old' and 'New Schools'. The former, largely composed of the older civil servants who felt that their careers were threatened by the recent developments, had seen their rivals gradually acquiring a predominant influence over the Madras Government and with this a monopoly of the most important and lucrative appointments. Now they feared that Wellesley's activities, which they knew had the support of Clive's Government, actually placed their future employment in jeopardy.

From the time of his arrival in India, Wellesley had met resistance to his policies from the Company's civil servants, especially those in senior positions. This had encouraged him to conclude that the Company's civil administration needed to be drastically reformed in ways which would increase his control over its members. Hitherto seniority had been the guiding criterion of appointment and

this had given the Governor-General no means of selecting only his supporters for influential offices. Wellesley appreciated that, should such subjective criteria as ability and qualification which he all too often defined in terms of support for his ideas replace that of seniority, he could select his own men to fill important positions in the administration without breaching regulations. In 1798, he announced that 'no civil servant should be nominated to offices of trust and responsibility until it shall have been ascertained that he is sufficiently acquainted with the laws and regulations...and the several languages the knowledge of which is requisite for the due discharge of the respective functions of such offices'.<sup>26</sup> He informed the civil servants that, after 1 January 1801, only those who had passed examinations in these subjects would be regarded as eligible for employment.<sup>27</sup>

After the defeat of Tipu, Wellesley declared his imperial aims and stated that the Company would now require 'a succession of able magistrates, wise and honest judges, and skilful statesmen properly qualified to conduct the ordinary movements of the great machine of Government'.<sup>28</sup> Behind this smokescreen, he actively began replacing the older, commercially orientated civil servants who had resisted his ideas with younger men who supported his policies and shared his ideal of empire. He justified his actions with the statement that 'the civil servant of the English East India Company can no longer be considered as the agent of a commercial concern; they are in fact the ministers and officers of a powerful sovereign'.<sup>29</sup> Although the powerful

sovereign he referred to was the British Crown, it was in fact his own authority he was consolidating.

His initial attempts to reform the civil service had the support of Dundas and Scott. 'Your idea that worn out civil servants should have pensions instead of the revenue and other offices that they are in (and which are) suffering so severely by this management', Scott wrote to Wellesley, 'is perfectly correct'.<sup>30</sup> His announcement in 1799 that he intended to open a college at Fort William where all the Company's newly appointed writers should spend three years completing their education and acquiring a knowledge of Indian languages, law and history received less support. Dundas feared that 'such an assemblage of literary and philosophical men would...degenerate into a school of Jacobinism in India' and the Court considered the scheme to be unnecessarily extravagant.<sup>31</sup> Only the Governor-General's recent success in the war against Mysore prevented the home authorities from immediately repudiating his actions. In Madras the situation was quite different. The Government enthusiastically embraced Wellesley's policy. Clive expressed considerable interest in the College and called it an excellent idea.<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, those civil servants who were already opposed to Wellesley chose to regard it as further evidence that the Governor-General intended to extend his control over appointments and believed that he would employ this authority to promote only his supporters, many of whom were military men. Unable to attack the Governor-General, those civil servants who opposed him directed their hostility towards Clive's Government which

they regarded as being little more Wellesley's obedient instrument.

Five men emerged as the leaders of the opposition to Clive and Webbe - William Petrie, John Chamier, Murray Dick, Lionel Place and Thomas Oakes. These men had both political and personal reasons for wishing to see Clive's Government removed. Politically, all of them were opposed to further British expansion, particularly to the annexation of Tanjore and the Carnatic. Petrie, Dick and Chamier had financial interests in the Nawab's debts while all five of them largely owed their influential positions in the hierarchy of the Madras Administration to the patronage of friends and supporters amongst the 'Arcot Interest' at the Court of Directors.<sup>33</sup> It was not surprising then that, in common with their supporters at the Court, they should have resented what they saw as the undue influence of the Board of Control in the Company's management of its Indian possessions. In addition however, each of these men was strongly opposed to the extension of the permanent zamindari settlements into the Madras territories. Place in particular had strong feelings about this aspect of Wellesley's administration. While serving as the Collector of the Jagir from 1792 to 1799, he had forcibly argued publicly against Wellesley's orders to make zamindari settlements when he had vigorously upheld the claims of the mirasdars to ownership of the land.<sup>34</sup> In the course of pressing for the recognition of their rights, he had not only argued the impolicy of introducing permanent settlements after the Bengal model into the south but he had also attacked the whole theoretical basis of

Cornwallis's revenue system.

The personal motives of these men for their opposition to Clive's administration were no less important than their political ones. Webbe and Petrie had long been rivals. When it was mooted that Petrie might be appointed Clive's successor, Webbe had openly opposed the move. 'If Mr Petrie should be permitted to succeed to the Government of Fort St George', he had written to Hobart, 'you may prepare your Lordship's mind to expect all the worst consequences of corruption and inability'.<sup>35</sup> While Hobart had been Governor, he and Webbe had been determined to have Chamier and Place removed from their posts because of their opposition to Hobart's Carnatic policy and were only prevented from achieving this aim by the powerful support these men commanded in the Court of Directors.<sup>36</sup> In addition, both Place and Oakes were disappointed men. After Tipu's defeat, Oakes had hoped to be appointed to the post of President of the Mysore Commission and Place had expected to be moved from the Jagir to one of the larger and more valuable districts the Company had annexed. Wellesley's appointments of military men had embittered both.<sup>37</sup>

These opponents of Wellesley and his supporters in the Madras Government selected two aspects of Clive's administration for specific criticism. They claimed that he was undermining the structure of the local government in ways deliberately calculated to destroy the Court's control of it. By permitting Webbe to treat the Political, Military and Commercial Secretaries as no more than his deputies,

Clive was accused of allowing his Chief Secretary to single-handedly manage the Government's business. They stated that this was being done in order to prevent the Governor's Council from being able to supervise and check the executive's activities. The idea implicit in their criticisms was that the executive had become an instrument of the Board of Control as a consequence of the latter's control over the appointment of the Governor. They suggested that the Council, whose members were still appointed by the Court alone and had to be selected from among their covenanted civil servants, represented the Director's only means of exercising any authority in the local decision-making process and that it was for this reason that Clive, under pressure from Wellesley, was deliberately trying to destroy its ability to act independently by refusing it access to information. Playing on the Directors' sensitivity on the subject of their right to be consulted about and included in the formulation of policy, the opposition party in Madras insinuated to the Court that Clive was not only ignoring his Council but the Court as well. They claimed that the Court was not being fully or immediately informed of the Government's activities and that public matters were being secretly settled by Clive and Wellesley in private correspondence.<sup>38</sup>

The opposition's own reasons for selecting this particular aspect of Clive's administration for criticism could not be concealed and no attempts were made to do so since they served to support the general argument. The opposition believed that Clive and Webbe were deliberately promoting

younger men, ignoring the claims of seniority in order to establish their own supporters within the bureaucracy. While this threatened the careers of men who opposed official policy, it also contravened the direct orders of the Court which had always placed considerable importance on seniority as a guiding feature in its structure, as well as the provisions of Pitt's India Act. By using this argument, the opposition undoubtedly hoped to alienate Clive's Government from both the Court and Parliament. The Directors could only view the adoption of appointment by merit as being potentially harmful to the careers of their proteges in circumstances where merit was too often equated with support for the Governor's and Governor-General's policies. Furthermore, the Directors' control over their local executives was already somewhat restricted by the consideration that these bodies might retaliate by attacking the careers of their sons and near relations in the Company's service. They did not wish to further strengthen the local executives' ability to do this. Parliament might also be expected to oppose the policy on the grounds that it could increase the Ministry's access, albeit indirectly through the Board of Control, to the East India patronage.

Closely linked to these criticisms of this aspect of Clive's administration were attacks on the Government's policy with regard to the poligars. The opponents of the Government argued that the local executive was deliberately pursuing a policy towards the poligars which not only contravened the Court's orders but represented a threat to the stability of the districts under the Madras Government. They chose to



interpret the home authorities' orders, that had not been particularly clear, as instructions to recognize the poligars's claims to their lands and rejected the Government's view that considerations of expediency must determine action in individual cases. While the Government argued that, despite the fact that some of the poligars might indeed be representatives of the old Indian aristocracy, the majority were men who had taken advantage of the times to establish claims to rights that had no historical foundation, its opponents pressed for the general recognition of all claims which could not be proved to be definitely fraudulent. The two sides represented fundamentally different perceptions of how the Company should see its role in India. Wellesley's supporters in the administration clearly believed that the Company should reshape the socio-political structure of society after the British model while his opponents conceived its role to be limited to the maintenance of order. The former thought in terms of empire and development, the latter in terms of revenue and commerce.

When Clive and Webbe's opponents selected the administration's poligar policy as the target for attack, they were undoubtedly influenced in their decision by the relatively recent debates in Bengal over the position of the zamindars there and by the controversies Hastings's trial had brought about in Britain. They hoped to prove that Clive's Government, being unduly under military influence, was acting in a despotic manner towards the Company's subjects. For this reason they stressed the essentially

peaceful character of the poligars and argued that they were in fact the Company's natural allies.<sup>39</sup> They rejected claims that the poligars were invariably hostile to the British, stating that when this was the case, it was always because they had been forced into it by the actions of the Government.

The vacillating attitudes of the executive and Webbe's attempts to implement an unofficial policy under cover of the official, opened opportunities to the opposition for attack. The official policy of the Madras Government, as it had been explained to Munro in his instructions for dealing with the poligars, was both unclear and contradictory.<sup>40</sup> On one hand, it was clearly the Government's intention to reject the claims of the poligars wherever this could possibly be justified provided this might be done without arousing unnecessary opposition to its authority. Hence Munro was informed that, with regard to the Government's policy of rejecting 'such of the pretensions of the numerous zemindars and polygars as may appear to have been revived since the subversion of the Government of Tippoo Sultan', though its justice could not be disputed, considerations of local expediency would permit him to ignore it until the Company should be in a position 'to apply a more adequate force to the government of the provinces'. In other words, as Beaglehole observes,<sup>41</sup> local circumstances might alter the way in which the aggressive policy was to be put into effect without in any way altering its end. On the other hand, the Government stated that it might also be expedient not to dispossess the poligars. Munro was to 'appreciate the

advantage to be expected from the continuance of hereditary possessions to the descendants of the ancient families'.

The unofficial policy of the Madras Government, which might with justification be described as Webbe's policy, was much more straight forward. Provided it might be done without blatant, open aggression on the part of the British and so long as there was no danger that its adoption was likely to encourage a general revolt against the Company, the civil and military authorities were to follow a policy designed to liquidate the influence of the auxiliary powers in the districts under their control.<sup>42</sup>

Initially, the opposition parties in Madras were able to make little obvious impact. While Dundas remained in office, Wellesley was assured of his protection and could in turn protect his supporters in Madras. Prior to the controversy between Wellesley and the Court over the question of shipping, the Directors were also inclined to support their Governor-General. When the Court at first approved Wellesley's plans to open his college, the Director Sweny Toone informed Hastings that 'there appeared to be a disposition in the Court not to blame anything which was sanctioned by his Lordship'.<sup>43</sup> However, despite appearances, the opposition was laying the foundations of their eventual success. Employing private correspondence and rumours, they were building up an image of Wellesley's and Clive's administration in the minds of the home authorities which was fundamentally detrimental to it. In particular, they emphasized the despotic nature of the 'New School's'

policies. Reports circulated that, after the fall of Seringapatam, Wellesley had employed mock trials to enable him to order the execution of Tipu's killadars.<sup>44</sup> They also argued that the Company's financial difficulties were the direct consequences of Wellesley's expansionist foreign policy and his appointments of military men to civil posts. In particular, Munro's administration of Kanara was stated to have led to a decline in that district's revenues.<sup>45</sup> Most important of all, some of Clive's and Webbe's opponents, in particular John Chamier, left Madras and travelled to Britain where they were able to bring direct pressure on the Court. Not only were they able to argue the case for the adoption of their policies, but they also seized the opportunity to blacken their rivals' names. Webbe later accused his opponents of having 'endeavoured to enlighten the Directors during their residence in England' by persuading the Court that he and his supporters were 'extravagant, injudicious, arbitrary, partial, interested, democratical, fraud(ulent) and presumptuous'.<sup>46</sup>

The situation began to change rapidly early in 1801 as news of the increasing opposition to Wellesley in the Court of Directors reached Madras. Wellesley's letter of September 1799 urging that India-built shipping should be admitted to the trade between Britain and India had reached London. At the same time, the Directors had become worried by the Company's increasing deficit which they saw as being largely the consequence of the Governor-General's aggressive foreign policy. Their attitude towards Wellesley changed and they were increasingly hostile, critical of his administration.

At the same time, the Arcot Interest, which was well represented in the Commons, started to bring pressure on Pitt's Ministry to have Clive's Government removed. It appears that Pitt, whose position was becoming increasingly insecure, responded by urging Dundas to take measures to appease the Arcot Interest.<sup>47</sup> Hobart described what occurred in a letter to Webbe. 'Lord Clive had set his face against the plunderers in the Carnatic. Lord Clive was supposed to be governed by your advice. Lord Clive's conduct had precluded the possibility of a direct proposition for his removal...and it was conceived that wounding his feelings through you and the various other means that were resorted to for the same purpose would have the effect of producing an immediate resignation'.<sup>48</sup> The Directors, recognizing that the removal of Clive's Government would also remove Wellesley's staunchest allies in India, enthusiastically endorsed the Board's decision to remove Webbe and took advantage of the opportunity to order his replacement by John Chamier who was not only one of the leading members of the opposition party in Madras but also happened to be in Britain.

To a certain extent, Webbe encouraged the Directors to seek his removal. He had allowed his enthusiasm for Wellesley's policies and his anger at the news of the Court's criticism of the Governor-General to lead him into incautious attacks on that body. In a letter to Hobart, he had accused the Directors of having persuaded Dundas that the value of Indian possessions could only be judged by the revenue surpluses they produced.<sup>49</sup> Arguing the case for the creation

of an Indian empire, he had publicly stated his view that the Court, which he disparagingly described as a collection of merchants, should be abolished or at least deprived of any role in the political business of India's administration. On the other hand, Webbe was partly the victim of the consequences of the power struggle in Britain between the new President of the Board of Control, Lord Dartmouth, and the Court.

Shortly after Lord Addington succeeded Pitt as First Lord of the Treasury, Dartmouth, who hoped to restore his private fortune, had approached him through Lord Pelham for a ministerial post and had been appointed President of the Board of Control but not given a seat in the cabinet. He came to the Board determined to give Wellesley his unqualified support and announced his intention of adopting Dundas's policy in respect of the Company's shipping.<sup>50</sup> The Shipping Interest retaliated and forced Scott, who despite his advocacy of Dundas's policy had been elected Chairman, to sanction a draft despatch criticizing Wellesley's commercial policy.<sup>51</sup> During the following months a power struggle between the Court and the Board developed, culminating in Scott's resignation in August. In this climate, the Court could not countenance the sort of criticisms that Webbe had been directing toward them and, having linked Wellesley's supporters in Madras with their opponents at the Board, were prepared to remove them in order to weaken the private traders' lobby.

When news of the Court's decision to remove Webbe first

arrived in India, Wellesley recognized it for what it represented, an attack by the Shipping Interest on himself. He also regarded it as having been partly inspired by the Arcot Interest. He told Scott that he saw behind the move the Court's intention to annihilate Clive's Government which had so angered the Nawab's creditors. 'When you have disgraced Lord Clive and driven him home', he wrote, 'I advise you to recall me, send Paul Benfield to Madras and Sir John Macpherson to be Governor-General'.<sup>52</sup> Scott had already conceived that such an attack on Wellesley's supporters might prompt him to resign. Even before he received Wellesley's letter, he wrote to warn him that his advocacy of the private trade interest had united the Court against him.<sup>53</sup> To counteract the effect this news might have on the Governor-General, he reassured him that he would continue to be 'shielded completely by the Board of Commissioners' to such an extent that he would not 'feel the effects of their (the Court's) resentment'.

In Madras, both Webbe and Clive immediately reacted to the news. Webbe, who had heard of his imminent removal from Scott, wrote to Wellesley to ask him to do whatever he could to prevent it.<sup>54</sup> Clive despatched a long letter to the Court in which he replied to the numerous criticisms his opponents had levelled at his Government.<sup>55</sup> In this letter, which reveals the extent to which his measures had stirred up opposition by threatening the careers of the senior civil servants, Clive showed that their fears were not unjustified. He denied that he had allowed Webbe to exercise an undue influence, rejected the claim that his Government

had not kept the Court fully informed of its activities and assured the Directors that he had not refused to allow the other members of Council to participate in decisions. He explained that the requirements of secrecy had necessitated that he and Wellesley should correspond directly and insisted that the Council had been kept informed of the contents of their letters. One accusation only did he not refute, that of partiality in his selection of men for appointments, especially to the Board of Revenue. Asserting that he had followed one rule only, that 'merit should be preferred to rank', he explained that in doing so he had not introduced an innovation. On his arrival, he had found White, Harrington and Cockburn at the Board of Revenue, men with high reputations but not particularly senior in the service. When he had found it necessary to make new appointments to the Board, he had only looked for qualification. Answering the complaints that this had resulted in the senior civil servants working as collectors being forced to obey orders from their juniors on the Board, he stated that 'the Board is a constituted public authority which supersedes the claims of individual rank'. He countered other claims that he had generally favoured junior servants with the statement that their lack of qualifications had made it impossible for him to employ the older men. 'During a residence of 25 or 30 years', he wrote, 'they have preserved an obstinate ignorance of the manners, laws and languages of India in contempt of repeated orders of this Government'.

The orders for Webbe's dismissal arrived in late October



1801. Webbe immediately wrote to Wellesley, informing him that the Court had filled the Council and intended to fill the Board of Revenue with its partisans.<sup>56</sup> He correctly predicted Clive's resignation, which came on the 2 November, telling Wellesley that the Governor had no alternative since the Court's appointments made it impossible for him to control the Government. At first, because he was so deeply embroiled in the local Madras politics, he assumed that it had been resentment for his championship of military collectors amongst the civil servants and their influence with the Court that had led to his dismissal. The inclusion in the despatch of orders from the Court forbidding the future employment of military men in diplomatic posts appeared to support his view. A few days later he told Munro that his removal actually represented the beginning of a general attack on the 'New School' party in Madras. 'I have been found out to be an organizing Jacobin who has revolutionized the service of Fort George', he wrote. 'It is therefore become indispensable that those educated in my school in the detestable maxim of speaking the language...should make room in order that the more approved doctrine, founded in the experience of the old savants and the knowledge of native manners (gained) through the only authentic channel of a dubash, may be introduced'.<sup>57</sup> Webbe warned Munro to 'anticipate a world of woe' now that he could no longer rely on Webbe's support for himself and the other military collectors.

Webbe only gradually realized that his dismissal had been the consequence of a greater power struggle, that more

interests were involved than the purely local ones of the civil servants. He heard from Hobart, who had received the information from Agnew, that the creditors of the various Indian princes had brought about his fall because they feared they would never be paid while he and Clive were in office.<sup>58</sup> Later Webbe himself recognized the part the Shipping Interest had played when they attacked him in order to discomfort Wellesley.<sup>59</sup> Others realized much sooner what was actually happening. Duncan informed Scott that Wellesley was aware that the Court had deliberately sought to remove his 'locum tenens' from Madras.<sup>60</sup> Wellesley himself took immediate action to try to restore his influence and protect his supporters. He realized that the orders that military men should not be employed in diplomatic posts were not merely the consequence of civilian hostility but a deliberate attempt to annul a number of his appointments, especially those of Close and Wilks. To restore his influence, he appointed Webbe Resident of Mysore and brought the administration of the Ceded Districts under his personal control in order to ensure that the new Madras Council should be unable to remove Munro.<sup>61</sup>

Wellesley's and Webbe's fears that, with the collapse of Clive's Government, the military collectors, Munro in particular, would be the next people to come under attack, were well founded. Munro was not only recognized as a loyal supporter of the Governor-General's policies but also as an outspoken advocate of the aggressive policy towards the poligars which had become so associated with Webbe. In one of his first letters to Webbe after his arrival in the Ceded

Districts, Munro had reported that he had found 73 poligars in the area and that they were resisting his efforts to establish his authority.<sup>62</sup> To what extent this was actually true is difficult to determine but it seems clear that Munro wished to make a strong case against them that would justify the aggressive measures he intended to adopt towards them with the ultimate aim of crushing their power. His instructions to his assistants to immediately report any trouble they might have with the poligars in their districts were couched in such terms as to suggest that he expected them to find cause to complain.<sup>63</sup> He had then informed Webbe that it was his intention to dispossess the poligars or, at the least, confine them to the possession of single villages.<sup>64</sup>

Munro had however been aware that there existed opposition to this policy from men who, he claimed, insisted on regarding the poligars as 'fallen royalty'. In his letters to Webbe he had explained that he intended to defuse potential criticism of his actions by forcing the poligars into a situation where they would have no alternative but to act in such a way as to give him 'a pretext for attacking them, not as poligars but as rebels, without exciting alarm'.<sup>65</sup> Knowing that they were unlikely to obey, he had announced that he intended to order them to appear before him and to use their refusal as an excuse to dispossess them of their lands. Should this policy fail, Munro had informed Webbe that he planned to raise their rents. 'My intention', he had written, 'is to carry them as high as to render it impossible for them to maintain any troops unless by

withholding their kists, which of course is a good Law of Nations argument for expelling them'.<sup>66</sup>

Munro had been encouraged to pursue this course, despite growing opposition, by the support he knew his policy was receiving in the army. Colonel Mackay had written to him suggesting that coercive measures be adopted against the poligars. 'If we are lucky enough to be able to bayonet a hundred of them', he wrote, 'it would ensure future good behaviour'.<sup>67</sup> General Campbell had also clearly indicated to him that he favoured the adoption of an aggressive policy. 'I have long been of the opinion', he informed Munro, 'that it would be of actual advantage to our honourable employers...if the poligars were expelled and their strongholds levelled to the ground'.<sup>68</sup> In addition, Munro had received both official and unofficial encouragement from the Government. His request that Campbell be 'empowered to try by military process all persons who oppose the Company's Government' had been granted.<sup>69</sup> When he had privately written to Webbe suggesting that he might make some of the poligars 'bite the dust' since this 'would have a good effect on some of our subjects',<sup>70</sup> Webbe had unofficially authorized him to follow this policy provided he did not precipitate a general revolt.<sup>71</sup>

Early in 1801, Munro had decided that the Ceded Districts were sufficiently under his control to permit him to take active measures against the poligars and he called out the troops.<sup>72</sup> He selected those poligars whom he considered to have doubtful title to their possessions for attack, in

particular the Vimla poligar. Haidar had expelled the hereditary holder of this pollam in 1766 and the district had been managed by sarkar officers between then and 1791. During the first Mysore war a distant cousin of the deposed poligar had seized the district, been dispossessed by the Nizam and then managed to re-establish himself in 1794. He had held the area from that time until his death in 1799 when, determined to retain their authority in the district, his servants had set up an old blind man as his successor. The new poligar's title was at least dubious, based as it was on an unsubstantiated claim that he was related to the last holder. Munro had decided to regard him as a pretender and used the excuse that the poligar had refused to obey his summons to appear before his kachahri as an excuse to attack him. On Munro's requisition, Colonel Campbell attacked and took the poligar's fort, 'the people found in arms were made examples of', the poligar was seized, dispossessed of his lands and given a pension.<sup>73</sup>

As Beaglehole observes, the success of this and similar operations had far reaching consequences.<sup>74</sup> The impression they made persuaded many poligars to submit to the civil authority. Some of these men accepted pensions in return for surrendering their traditional prerogatives and their territories while others acquiesced in a reduction in their status which left them in the position of common headmen of their villages. By 1802, Munro was able to inform the Madras Government that the more powerful poligars had been dispossessed and that he expected only occasional disturbances rather than any future insurrections that might

possibly pose a serious threat to the Company.<sup>75</sup>

Initially, while Clive and Webbe retained control of the Madras Government, Munro's policies towards the poligars received general approval. In May 1801, the Board of Revenue, which was under the influence of Thomas Cockburn, a man who had supported Munro since the time he had served under Read in the Baramahal, sanctioned his measures against the Vimla poligar.<sup>76</sup> The Board recorded that the poligar had been 'acting in open rebellion against the Company's authority' and concluded that Munro's punitive measures had been conducted 'in the most public and exemplary manner'.<sup>77</sup>

The Governor in Council also officially approved his actions.<sup>78</sup> At the same time however, Munro had unwittingly given his opponents the grounds for an attack upon himself. He had too publicly espoused Machiavellian techniques. He had, for example, in a characteristic letter to Webbe, written that 'the object (of completely reducing the poligars) would perhaps be easier accomplished by raising the rents so high as to disable them from keeping armed followers, by seizing territory on every failure as a compensation, by binding them not to levy any extra assessments on the inhabitants and by making a violation of this engagement a motive for the total resumption of their districts. By following this plan, I imagine that there is no doubt but the whole of them would furnish us with good arguments for expelling them'.<sup>79</sup> Some of his friends recognized the danger he was placing himself in. Wilks warned him against taking too decided a stand against the poligars. Although Wilks agreed with Munro that the poligars

should be eradicated, he recognized that such an aggressive policy was unlikely to meet with the approval of the Court. In view of this, he recommended that Munro, whatever his personal opinions might be, should be seen to follow official policy which he ironically described. 'The object', he wrote to Munro, 'ought to be not to eradicate these demons but to convert them. I do not mean to Methodists but to zamindars, that is to say to convert their swords into ploughshares'.<sup>80</sup>

In the months following Webbe's removal and Clive's resignation the situation changed significantly. In the Council, Chamier and Murray Dick, determined to discredit Webbe's administration, seized upon the poligar question as offering the best opportunity for justifying the Court's decision to dismantle it. Dick recorded a long minute in which, while criticising Webbe's and Munro's activities, he argued the case for the recognition of the poligars as the landed aristocracy of South India. Insisting that these men were the natural allies of the British, he blamed the aggressive policies towards them that Webbe had supported for their apparent hostility to the Company. Webbe tried to dismiss these arguments by satirizing them. He claimed that they were no more than accounts of 'what excellent sort of people the said poligars are when allowed to do as they please'.<sup>81</sup> He suggested that his opponents had either completely misunderstood the situation or were deliberately seeking political advantage by misleading the home authorities.

Chamier and Dick were supported in their efforts to discredit the previous government by Oakes and Place who had succeeded Cockburn and Falconar at the Board of Revenue. Both of these men were not only staunch opponents of Webbe but also extremely hostile to the military collectors, partly because they regarded these men as Webbe's proteges and allies, partly because their employment threatened that of the civil servants. Place in particular had reasons for regarding Munro with a jaundiced eye. The latter had not only been appointed to the office that the former had hoped to acquire for himself but he also held views regarding the sort of revenue arrangements which should be introduced that conflicted with Place's. Although both men opposed the introduction of permanent zamindari settlements, Munro championed annual ryotwari leases while Place favoured permanent settlements with the mirasidars. Although there appears to have been some correlation between Place's mirasidars and the men Munro chose to define as ryots, Place recognized the tendency inherent in Munro's system to extend the right to hold land direct from the state to inferior tenants. He believed this would not only destroy the existing social structure but also threaten the stability of the revenue collections.

Place and Oakes commenced their attack on the military collectors with criticisms of Munro's work. Firstly they accused him of having failed to realize sufficiently high revenues while administering Kanara and of doing no better in the Ceded Districts.<sup>82</sup> They then reversed the Board of Revenue's previous approval of Munro's measures against the



poligars. When they forwarded Munro's report of March 1802 to the Governor in Council, they enclosed a critical assessment of it. 'We cannot but wish', they wrote, 'that the alternative of a moderate assessment on becoming subject to a government, whose principles are so opposite to the vigorous despotism of preceding rulers, had offered to the poligars a motive to subordination and dutiful demeanour rather than by the highest demand ever made on them have rendered punctuality in their payments difficult, thus inducing a failure to be followed by punishment'.<sup>83</sup> As Beaglehole observes, in making this criticism the Board was exceeding its powers.<sup>84</sup> When the administration of the revenue and civil government of the Ceded Districts was placed under the Board's control, Wellesley and Webbe had deliberately reserved political matters 'arising from...the description and power of different chieftains situated within the limits of those provinces' to the control of the Governor in Council.<sup>85</sup> Place and Oakes were taking advantage of the temporary confusion in the administration, the consequence of the fact that while Clive had resigned he still remained in office until his successor arrived, to extend the authority of the Board of Revenue.

In order to keep up the pressure on Munro, Place and Oakes next accused him of failing to give the Board the respect and deference due it from all collectors.<sup>86</sup> They also employed a variety of other ploys to make Munro's situation increasingly untenable, probably with the intention of forcing him to give them grounds for seeking his removal. In particular, the Board of Revenue now insisted that Munro

keep a diary, to be delivered monthly to Madras, detailing how all his time was occupied.<sup>87</sup> Place and Oakes recognized that this would not only considerably increase Munro's work but that it would also, to a man of his temperament, be an intolerable burden. Munro did not find it easy to work under other men and bitterly resented anything which threatened to infringe his freedom of action. One of his first requests to Webbe after entering the Ceded Districts had been that he should be given the military as well as the civil command of the area.<sup>88</sup> This had not only been the product of his ambition and his contempt for some of his senior officers, whom he referred to as 'useless dogs'.<sup>89</sup> It had also been inspired by his desire for independence. In addition, Munro was ordered by the Board to reduce the number of peons he employed, ostensibly as a measure of retrenchment. Munro chose to view this as, at the best, an attempt to curtail his ability to take coercive action against the poligars and possibly even a scheme to undermine his authority in the area.<sup>90</sup>

Warned of Place's and Oakes's activities by Cockburn, Munro attempted to take counter measures.<sup>91</sup> He explained to the Board of Revenue that the fall in revenue in the Ceded District was the direct consequence of the decision to allow the poligars to return to their districts.<sup>92</sup> In answer to the criticisms of his measures against the poligars, he sent the Board a long report in which he attempted to prove that these chieftains were only public servants and renters who had taken advantage of recent unrest to exert their independence and advance fictitious proprietary claims to the land.<sup>93</sup> At the same time, he sought to prove that the

poligars alone were largely responsible for the civil unrest, being by nature turbulent and antagonistic towards central authority. He also rejected the allegations made by Place and Oakes that he had not observed a proper deference towards the Board of Revenue. He denied that he had ignored either orders or requests for information, that his reports and diaries were sent in late, and that his letters were disrespectful. He claimed that he had in fact always been punctilious in his dealings with the civil authorities, ever aware that military collectors held 'their situations contrary to the ordinary rules of the service'.<sup>94</sup>

However, conscious of the enmity with which he and the other military collectors were regarded by the new Board of Revenue, Munro sought to protect himself from its members' hostility and to reverse some of their orders by bypassing their authority. He asked Webbe to use his influence with Clive to persuade the Governor to countermand the Board's instructions that he was to keep a diary.<sup>95</sup> Since the strength of his peon forces might be considered to be a military matter, he wrote privately to General Stuart, the Commander-in-Chief, requesting him to reverse the Board's orders that these should be reduced.<sup>96</sup> As Commander-in-Chief, Stuart had been appointed the Second Member of the Council. As such, he and the Governor acting in concert could overrule the decisions of the two civilian members and issue orders to the Board of Revenue. After consulting with Webbe, who was technically no longer officially involved in the decision-making process but was still influential, Stuart informed Munro that he would support him in his dealings

with Place and Oakes.<sup>97</sup>

Finding themselves unable, in the face of Wellesley's and Clive's continued support for Munro, to do little more than inconvenience him, Place and Oakes turned their attention to Graham. Graham had been appointed the collector of South Arcot shortly after Munro had received his appointment to Kanara. In the letter to Munro in which he reported that his administration of his district had come under attack from the Board of Revenue, Graham explained that he had been making settlements with the ryots similar to those that Read had made in the Baramahal.<sup>98</sup> Employing 50 Indian amirs, he had tried to make his settlements directly with the ryots themselves but had met with considerable resistance. The ryots, despite the considerable reduction in the rates of assessment offered by Graham, were not prepared to enter into cash settlements. They wanted amani settlements under which the State received a predetermined share of the crop. Unable therefore to make ryotwari settlements, Graham had made settlements with some of the patels and employed renters to collect the revenues from the other villages.

The Board of Revenue accused Graham of mismanagement, citing his use of renters and the drop in the district's revenues as evidence of his unsuitability for further employment as a collector. The Government called upon Graham to furnish them with an explanation which, when it was received, was considered inadequate.<sup>99</sup> He was subsequently asked to answer a number of queries designed to elucidate the situation, in particular to clear up the question of whether he had

illegally been employing rent farmers.<sup>100</sup> In his answers Graham claimed that his settlements had been village settlements similar to those made by Read in the Baramahal. One person in each village, usually the patel, had been appointed principal cultivator and made responsible for the collection of the village rents. He was expected to collect a share of the crops, dispose of this and pay the aggregate village rent to the collector in cash. To prevent abuses, the individual ryots had then been given pattas which showed what proportion of their crops were to be delivered to the principal cultivator. Only when the patels refused to cooperate did Graham employ revenue farmers. He claimed that, out of the 2,697 settlements he had concluded, revenue farmers were only involved in twelve. In addition, Graham claimed that, as soon as his survey of the fields was complete, he planned to introduce a true ryotwari system under which money rents would be attached to the individual fields. The ryots would then directly pay to the State money rents for the fields they had occupied in that fusli year.<sup>101</sup>

The Government, now under the influence of men opposed to the employment of military collectors and on the recommendation of the Board of Revenue, rejected Graham's explanation. It ordered that, though Graham's character was not to be criticized, his administration had been inadequate and he was to be replaced by Garrow.<sup>102</sup> From the documents available, it is impossible to conclude how justified the Government's action was but there are good reasons for suspecting that Graham's removal had far more to do with the fact that he was a military collector than with any

mismanagement. The appointment of Garrow, who had been Secretary to the Board of Revenue since 1801 and might therefore be considered as a supporter of Place, Oakes and the 'Old School', suggests that these men were determined to replace the supporters of their opponents in the 'New School' with their own men. Certainly Graham believed this. He told Munro that, since the change in personnel at the Board in February 1802, its proceedings had been marked by hostility towards military collectors.<sup>103</sup> As evidence of this, he described how even his accidental transmission of a letter without an envelope had been construed as a deliberate act of disrespect. In Graham's opinion there had been an organized conspiracy among the civil servants, including those on the Board of Revenue, to destroy his reputation and career.

In order to attempt to reverse the Government's decision, Graham sent Munro all the relevant papers dealing with his dismissal and asked him to prepare a memorial to the Court of Directors.<sup>104</sup> At the same time, he sought the intervention of Wellesley whose sister had married a first cousin of Mrs Graham.<sup>105</sup> He also hoped that Webbe, though no longer Secretary to the Government, might use his influence to find him a military post.<sup>106</sup> It was however Munro who eventually found Graham another appointment. He used his friendship with Arthur Wellesley to persuade the latter to obtain for Graham the post of Collector of Ahmednagar, a district that was not yet under the control of the Board of Revenue. This district, to which Wellesley had hoped Munro might be appointed,<sup>107</sup> had only recently been annexed by the British,

was occupied by the army and its administration had therefore not yet been transferred to the civil authorities. Both the civil and military personnel were under the direct supervision of the Governor-General in Council.

Late in 1802, the situation appeared to be improving for Munro. Despite their successful attack on Graham, Place and Oakes found that their attempts to dislodge the other members of the 'New School' were being frustrated by Clive and Wellesley. Fighting back against their opponents, the Governor-General and the Governor continued to appoint their own supporters to influential positions within the civil administration. Unable to make further military appointments to civil positions, they exercised their next option and appointed men who had been trained under Read in the Baramahal, Alexander Read and Ravenshaw. In addition, to limit the authority of the Board of Revenue, which was recognized to be hostile, Clive, on Wellesley's recommendation, appointed a Commission to introduce a Permanent Settlement.<sup>108</sup> This body, staffed by supporters of Wellesley's policies, to a large extent superseded the Board. In order to protect his existing supporters among the collectors, Munro in particular, Wellesley approved Clive's decision to permit the military collectors to correspond directly with the Madras Government, bypassing the Board of Revenue and further reducing its influence.

Place bitterly resented these actions. In a long minute he attacked each of the moves.<sup>109</sup> He not only claimed that the establishment of the Commission had infringed the Board's

authority but also that it had done its job badly. By ignoring the claims of the mirasdars and concentrating on the creation of zamindars, Place argued that the commissioners had lost the Company a considerable revenue. Attacking the recent appointments of men trained by Read, Place stated that these collectors had ignored the Board's instructions and, by following a 'hypothetical statement of Major Munro', reduced the public revenues of their districts to little more than a tenth of the gross produce. He continued with a general criticism of the employment of military collectors, using the example of Graham to support his contentions but being careful how he phrased his accusations. 'Of all the situations subordinate to this Board, military collectors stand eminently in need of reform.... A recent inquiry into the conduct of Captain Graham has led to the discovery of an old fact - that he was entirely incompetent.... I am not prepared to say that the conduct of the other military collectors has been equally culpable, for indeed the records of this Board afford but little insight of it yet that little shows it to be no less exceptional'.

Desperate to besmirch Munro's reputation, in particular because of the support his reputation afforded the 'New School', Place accused him of ignoring the Board, of delegating too much authority to Indian servants and of paying them so little as to force them into corrupt practices. At least one of these accusations, the last, was totally unjustified. Four months before Place recorded his minute, Munro had requested the Board's permission to



increase the salaries of his Indian officials.<sup>110</sup> In addition, while he had informed the Board that the business of revenue management was conducted by Indians, he had explained the importance he attached to the close supervision of their work and the techniques he employed to control their activities. These included the establishment of double kachahris by which men speaking different languages duplicated each others' work. In recommending double kachahris to his successors in Kanara, he had further explained that in these 'so many different interests are created that a combination becomes impossible and instead of it a rivalry is excited'.<sup>111</sup>

Most importantly of all, Place complained that the Clive had deliberately undermined the Board of Revenue's authority in order to protect the military collectors. 'For political reasons', he wrote, 'a privilege is allowed them of corresponding with Government.... We (at the Board) have more than once found our communications to Government anticipated and the subjects disposed of before they have been imparted to us'.<sup>112</sup> There can be little doubt that Place hoped his minute, by stressing the ways in which the Governor appeared to be meddling with the structure of the Company's administration in Madras, might persuade the Court to take further measures to limit Clive's authority. Certainly all the evidence points to Place having principally written his minute for the eyes of the Directors, to whom he knew it must be despatched, rather than for the consideration of the Government.

The struggle between the two parties in Madras had, by the middle of 1802, produced a climate of such hostility that even the most petty matters began to assume an exaggerated importance. Place gave as his final proof of Clive's enmity the fact that, though the Government had condemned Graham's administration, it had recorded personally flattering remarks about the man himself and made no mention of either Place's investigations or his other work. Webbe was well aware of how far the situation had deteriorated and warned Munro that he must expect further attacks on his administration, particularly on his poligar policy.<sup>113</sup> He suggested that Munro should write to the Board and attempt to justify his treatment of the poligars but cautioned him against using any examples drawn from the Baramahal, Salem, Coimbatore or Kanara since all of these districts were under the management of military collectors.

Believing themselves again increasingly excluded from the decision-making process in Madras, Place and a number of other members of the 'Old School' employed a traditional method of the dissatisfied to alter policy. They left India and returned to Britain where they hoped to exert a direct influence on the Court of Directors. They began arriving at a critical period when the power struggle between the Board of Control and the Court had just passed through a particularly bitter phase. The Shipping Interest, which was now almost totally hostile to the Governor-General, had gained complete control of the Direction with the election of their nominees John Roberts and Jacob Bosanquet to the Chairs in April 1802. They had used their influence to

launch a determined attack on Wellesley's administration.<sup>114</sup> Addington's refusal to support Dartmouth, probably the consequence of his fear of antagonizing the 27 East India members in Parliament he had inherited from Pitt and whose support he required to retain his majority, had directly resulted in a complete acceptance of the Court's proposals regarding private trade. Sir William Pulteney's proposition in the Commons that an inquiry be held into the Company's trade had been defeated.<sup>115</sup> Dartmouth's refusal to accept the situation and his attempt to substitute a number of paragraphs in one of the Court's draft despatches for new ones that incorporated the free trade ideas of Wellesley and Dundas had only led to a direct confrontation between the two bodies in the Company's home administration. This had in turn been directly responsible for the President of the Board of Control's resignation. Castlereagh, who had been appointed the new President of the Board of Control in June 1802, was principally concerned to use his office as a stepping stone in his political career. He was therefore determined to conciliate the Court.

The disgruntled members of the 'Old School' found that, in the fertile climate of controversy, they were welcomed by the Directors. In a letter to Munro, Webbe explained one reason why this should be. 'They (the Directors)', he wrote, 'have opened their arms wide to receive all the discontented, ignorant and unprincipled people who have lately been compelled to return home.... The Directors seek to obtain through these instruments the most plausible reasons to be subsequently assigned for a conduct previously

determined'<sup>116</sup>. The Directors were influenced by other motives as well. Many of the civil servants in India were related or otherwise closely connected to members of the Court. Some had other patrons in Britain whose good will the Directors, for a variety of social, political and economic reasons, wished to retain.

Initially Munro had good grounds for wondering whether Webbe might not be exaggerating, embittered as he was by the treatment he had received. In Britain, Castlereagh's careful handling of the Court had persuaded the Directors to pass the vote of confidence in Wellesley that the latter had demanded.<sup>117</sup> In Madras, the Government continued to support the military collectors, Munro in particular. The Government informed the Board of Revenue in February 1803 that 'it was not without the deepest regret that the Governor in Council remarked the sentiments stated...relative to the supposed mode adopted by that officer (Munro) in the administration of the revenue'.<sup>118</sup> The letter continued by observing that Munro had the Government's complete confidence and his poligar policy met with its full approval. Lord William Bentinck's arrival in August and his assumption of the Governorship did not have the consequences on his career that Munro had feared for, far from ordering his removal, the Governor took an encouraging interest in his ryotwari settlements. When looking for a suitable candidate for the office of collector in South Arcot, Bentinck sought Munro's advice.<sup>119</sup> He informed Munro that he was considering either Graeme or Cochrane whom he observed had 'the additional recommendation of being educated under your immediate

inspection in that system of management which has the reputation of being the most perfect in India'. Furthermore, Bentinck quickly allied himself with the 'New School'. He offered Webbe a seat on the Council at the next vacancy and approved Graham's re-appointment as a collector.<sup>120</sup>

If Munro was lulled into a sense of security, it was premature. The opponents of the military collectors were preparing a major offensive against them. Stuart Hill had presented Castlereagh with a paper which was deeply critical of the Madras military and of the policies pursued, with the approval of Clive's Government, against the poligars by them.<sup>121</sup> Their cause was helped by an unfortunate rebellion in Macleod's collectorate, from which he fled instead of remaining and attempting to suppress it. There can be no doubt that Macleod's action seriously damaged the position of the military collectors at a time when their case had been seriously weakened by the recent proceedings against Graham.<sup>122</sup> It gave the military collectors' opponents another opportunity to accuse them of threatening the stability of the Company's territories with their supposedly despotic administrations. By April 1804, Place and the other members of the 'Old School' who had returned to Britain were exercising a considerable influence over the Court where, as Munro was informed, they were labouring 'to root out military collectors, the source of all evils'.<sup>123</sup>

Under their influence, the Court sent a despatch in April to Madras in which, after approving Munro's settlements and praising his industry, his treatment of the Vimla poligar

was questioned.<sup>124</sup> In this despatch, the Directors first explained the poligar policy they wanted to see followed. 'Our wish', they wrote, 'is to uphold and preserve the poligars in their rights and enjoyments in the soil whilst we gradually aim at the reduction of their military power'. They then stated that they understood the reason for Munro's action was merely his principle that 'no opportunity should be lost of expelling the poligars' and observed that this could not be considered a sufficient justification. The Directors ordered that, unless Munro could provide considerably better reasons for his action, he was to be removed from office and never employed in such a position again. In another despatch the following month, the Directors enlarged on this issue. 'It is our most positive injunction that force be never resorted to against any of the poligars...unless in case of actual rebellion until every lenient and conciliatory measure has been tried without proper effect'.<sup>125</sup>

The first despatch arrived at Madras in September where it was generally accepted as being a product of Place's vendetta with Munro.<sup>126</sup> Initially Bentinck panicked. Fearing the Court might hold him responsible for the the continued implementation of the late administration's poligar policies, he sought to transfer the blame to Cockburne.<sup>127</sup> He suggested to Webbe that a commission be set up under his supervision to investigate the whole business. Munro turned to General Stuart and asked him to defend his actions in the Council. Stuart replied that, though he had no authority to interfere in the Board of Revenue's business, he would

endeavour to take an opportunity of stating privately to the Governor' Munro's explanations of his position.<sup>128</sup> By November, Bentinck had recovered his confidence, recognized that the Court's despatch was directed against the military collectors and not himself, and decided to support Munro. 'The Court of Directors', he informed Munro, 'instead of placing reliance in the councils of their Government, appear more willing to have embraced the sentiments of every dissatisfied and discontented servant, whether here or in England'.<sup>129</sup> Claiming to be shocked by the treatment Munro had received, he told him that he might expect the Government's full support. He blamed the effects of Hastings's trial for the change in the Court's attitude, stating that it had led people in Europe to be unduly suspicious of the motives of men serving in India. Most importantly of all, Bentinck indirectly authorized Munro to continue to pursue an aggressive policy against the poligars. In doing so, he turned the Court's orders upside-down. The Court had stated that no force was to be employed against the poligars until every other avenue had been explored. Bentinck told Munro he wanted to see the poligars suppressed but warned him not to take any action until 'fair means should appear to have miscarried'. His intention seems to have been to pursue much the same policies as Webbe had advocated but without an open declaration of his intention to the home authorities. They were to be led to believe that conciliatory measures had been tried, found to have failed and only then abandoned. Munro felt deeply aggrieved by the the Court's criticisms. 'I cannot but feel', he wrote to Bentinck, 'that I have been

unworthily treated in being called upon like a criminal to vindicate my conduct in having taken, in the midst of difficulties, the only way of restoring order to the country'.<sup>130</sup> He claimed that all his actions had been taken with the full approval of Clive's Government, carefully refraining from mentioning that this approval had, in fact, come largely from Webbe.<sup>131</sup> He no doubt considered it politically wiser to place the responsibility for his actions with a Governor who had resigned rather than a Chief Secretary who had been disgraced. Equally carefully, Munro made no mention of his belief that the Court's criticisms had factious origins. He publicly ascribed them to the Directors' distance from events which made it impossible for them to evaluate the exigencies facing the local administrations.<sup>132</sup>

Pursuant on the Court's orders that he justify his measures against the Vimla poligar, Munro sent a letter to the Board of Revenue, for transmission to the Court of Directors, explaining his actions.<sup>133</sup> He argued that, in view of the state in which he found the Ceded Districts in 1801, the reduction of the Vimla poligar had been essential if he was to establish the Company's authority in the area. He also argued that, had he not made examples of some of the leading poligars and dispossessed the others, they would have used the resources of their districts to build up their military might and then seized the first opportunity to attack the British or at least prevent their armies collecting vital supplies. Rejecting any personal responsibility, he claimed that the Government's orders of 25 December 1800 had been a



direct instruction to reject the claims of the poligars and dispossess them. However, despite his attempts to conceal it, Munro's hostility to the poligars, whom he regarded as the last vestiges of a feudal socio-political system and therefore most undesirable, could not be concealed.

Munro's explanation of his measures against the poligars did not persuade the Directors to alter their unfavourable opinion of the measures he had taken against the poligars.<sup>134</sup> Their refusal to do so convinced Munro that they had little understanding of the problems facing the Madras Government. In a letter to Bentinck, he argued that there would always be differences of opinion between the two bodies when one had to face the immediate realities of local conditions while the other was swayed only by theoretical principles. 'Of the men who argue in favour of polligars', he wrote, 'it may be doubted whether any one individual rightly understands what polligars are or has ever seriously considered what would be the probable consequences of their reinstatement. They do not know that the polligars of the Ceded Districts were never regarded as landlords but as petty princes, ...that they can never be converted into private landlords who would devote their whole attention to the improvement of their estates but will always maintain bodies of armed men and endeavour as far as they can to act as petty sovereigns.... It is not to be believed that such men, if reinstated, would ever...become in anything like country gentlemen which the term zemindar has often erroneously been said to imply'.<sup>135</sup>

Despite the Court's rejection of Munro's views, it no longer insisted that he should be removed.<sup>136</sup> A variety of factors probably contributed to the Court's decision not to press for his dismissal. By 1806, the Court had temporarily won the power struggle in Britain. While Castlereagh had been inclined to support Wellesley, Addington, aware that a number of his supporters among the East India members of Parliament were wavering in consequence of the dissensions between the Government and the Directors, had preferred not to provoke the Court.<sup>137</sup> In May 1804, Pitt had returned to office and, under pressure from the Directors, had finally agreed to recall Wellesley.<sup>138</sup> Under these circumstances, the Directors, who had apparently achieved all that they might have wished, had no reason for continuing to attack Wellesley's allies and supporters in India. It was now clearly in the Court's interest to restore relations between the home and local governments and the retention of Munro, whom both Bentinck and the new Board of Revenue strongly supported, could only have been seen as a small price to pay, particularly as the Court itself had been impressed by his management of the revenues. As early as August 1804, the Court informed the Madras Government it had 'derived great satisfaction from the perusal of Major Munro's report of 30 May 1800' and had expressed surprise that Place should have attacked it.<sup>139</sup> In addition, Munro had modified his views of how the poligars should be dealt with. Although still determined to destroy their power, he no longer advocated direct action against them but suggested that the British might persuade their followers to transfer their loyalty to the Company. He recommended to Bentinck that the Government

turn the poligars' armed retainers into peaceful cultivators with an interest in upholding the Company's authority by granting them inam lands.<sup>140</sup>

Throughout the years that Munro found himself intimately embroiled in the struggle between the 'Old' and 'New School' for supremacy within the administration of Madras, he was also regularly collecting the revenues of the Ceded Districts. In the course of this, his official employment, he not only increased the land revenue realized from 1,006,693 pagodas to 1,517,272 pagodas but also developed his ideas of how the British should administer their extensive territories in the south of India.<sup>141</sup>

Munro claimed to have discovered that all land in the Ceded Districts belonged to the state and he argued that, unlike in Kanara, there existed no concept of private property in the soil.<sup>142</sup> He believed that the land revenues had always been traditionally collected through the agency of the village headmen who, in return for accepting the responsibility of gathering the state's shares of the crops from the cultivators, had been granted small inams. Munro decided to employ this existing system to make his settlements during his first season in the area.<sup>143</sup> He was concerned, at a time when he felt his first priorities must be the re-establishment of order and the assertion of the Company's authority, to disrupt existing patterns of settlement as little as possible. He instructed his assistants to make what he described as village settlements with the headmen. It is clear from his letter to Thackeray that the

settlements were in fact made with the superior patels who were responsible for a number of villages, not with the heads of individual communities.<sup>144</sup> He was, in effect, trying to employ a system which would offer the advantages of zamindari settlements without what he saw as its disadvantages. By limiting the number of people with whom the British had to make settlements, the task was made manageable. At the same time, by refusing to give these men the ownership of the land in their villages, Munro believed that the rights of the ryots could be protected.

From the start Munro was dissatisfied with the village settlements he originally introduced. He believed that, because the patels had no conception of permanent private property, they merely took advantage of their position to extort as much from the ryots as they were able. Even if the patels could be persuaded to think and act like English landlords, Munro still felt that such a system would be open to criticism. He was argued that the patels would encourage ryot migration in order to increase the size and importance of their estates by luring the cultivators to their villages with promises of cheaper land.<sup>145</sup> He believed that this would lead to a general decline in agricultural production and a consequent fall in the revenues. A more important though not explicitly stated reason for his dissatisfaction with the village settlements was his assumption that cultivation would only be increased and the economy as a whole expanded by arrangements which would give the greatest number of men a personal interest, through the retention of profits, in raising production.

For these reasons, Munro ordered his assistants in August 1801 to make their settlements directly with every cultivator who paid rent to the government.<sup>146</sup> Recognizing that this could impose an intolerable work load on the collectors, he suggested a method by which these settlements could be arrived at. All the patels and karnams of a district should be assembled and the total value of their villages assessed. Once this was done, the collectors were to send amildars into the villages to settle the shares of the village rents to be paid by the individual ryots. These were to be recorded in writing and signed by the collectors who were then to be responsible for seeing that the patels did not abuse their position to collect more than the rents agreed with the ryots.

From the start Munro made it clear to his assistants that this system was to be only a temporary measure, to be employed until a complete survey of the Ceded Districts could be carried out. Munro had three reasons for wanting the survey completed as soon as possible. Firstly he believed it would enable him to bring ryot migration to an end, something he considered important because he thought that it was responsible for a decline in cultivation and a consequent loss of revenue to the Company. He argued that, once standardized rents were fixed on all fields, the ryots would have no reason to throw up their lands in one village since there would be no cheaper in any other. They would therefore concentrate on improving the land already under cultivation and employ the profits derived from it to bring waste into productivity. Secondly he imagined that the

survey would enable him to fix sufficiently precise rents to ensure that the ryots should receive the highest profits from the lands with the highest yields. He argued that, in the past, this had not been the case and economic development had consequently been retarded. It was, he stated, the role of government to encourage the cultivation of high yield land 'both because it is most beneficial to the revenue and because, by giving the greatest quantity of food and raw material, it so much more augments the general wealth of the country'.<sup>147</sup> Thirdly Munro believed that, with the survey completed, he could introduce a true ryotwari settlement system which would not only be that most likely to encourage economic and social development but also be the easiest, cheapest and most efficient for the British to manage. With the country surveyed, 'the individual', Munro wrote', supersedes both the village and the district settlement because it is then no longer necessary to waste time in endeavouring to persuade the cultivators to accede to the assessment. The rent of every field being fixed, each cultivator takes or rejects what he pleases and the rents of all the fields occupied in the course of the year in any one village form what is called the settlement of that village'.<sup>148</sup>

The principal objections that opponents of the ryotwari settlements had raised to their introduction had been that they involved too much detail, that too many individual agreements had to be reached and that consequently it would be impossible for the collectors to settle the revenues of their districts in a season. In their opinion, the ryotwari system could only be adopted if the number of European and

Indian officials employed by the Company was greatly increased to handle all the extra work that they claimed would be generated. They argued that the expense alone would be prohibitive. Supporters of both the zamindari and village systems were partly inspired by the belief that such settlements, by limiting the number of people with whom agreement must be reached, offered the only practical means of collecting the revenues. Munro disagreed. He believed that all arable land could be divided into clearly defined fields of known productive value. Once this was done and every field officially recorded, Munro considered it perfectly feasible to assign a permanently fixed cash rent to every field. These individual field rents would be known to all the ryots of the villages. Each year these men would decide which fields they intended to farm and could be deemed to have entered into a contract to pay specific rents to the government as soon as they commenced cultivation. The collectors' task would be limited to recording who had taken which fields, issuing pattas to these ryots showing the aggregate revenue to be paid on their holdings for that year, informing the patels of the sums these amounted to for their villages, and then taking whatever measures might prove necessary to collect these revenues.

While Munro was surveying the Ceded Districts and gradually introducing his ryotwari settlements, the Madras Government was occupied with the introduction of the Bengal zamindari system into other parts of the Presidency. To overcome the problem posed by the general absence of zamindars in the south of India, the Board of Revenue had proposed that

estates be artificially formed out of groups of villages and that these be auctioned to the highest bidders. Thus, from the start, there was a significant difference between the Bengal and Madras zamindari settlements for, while the zamindars in the former Presidency did 'perhaps bear enough resemblance to English landlords to support those advocates of the settlement who believed that they would make it their object to improve their estates', the men who purchased estates in the Madras territories were essentially revenue farmers not landlords.<sup>149</sup> Beaglehole's observation that support for the settlement in Madras 'was based not on the aim of improving and extending cultivation so much as of relieving government of the duty of assessing and collecting the land revenue' seems correct.<sup>150</sup> The Madras Government accepted the Board's recommendations and appointed a commission in 1802 to supervise the settlements.<sup>151</sup> During the next two years the Northern Circars, the Jagir, the Baramahal and Dindigul were settled along these lines.

At the same time that zamindari settlements were introduced into Madras, a new judicial system was established which was modelled on that of Bengal. A code of regulations was promulgated, district judges who were also empowered to act as magistrates were appointed to assume responsibility for the civil and criminal jurisdiction formerly exercised by the collectors, and a new police force of thanadars and daroghas was instituted. Wellesley was particularly determined to see the Bengal judicial system extended to Madras. He believed it would lead to the 'distribution of legislative, executive and judicial powers of the state



analogous to that which forms the basis of the British constitution'. His ideas were influenced by a particular analysis of Indian society.<sup>152</sup> This argued that the evils of corruption, extortion and oppression which the British perceived as characterizing Indian society had their roots in the long history of despotic government. Under this analysis, the only solution to these problems appeared to be the introduction of an independent, impartial judiciary which, while applying the concept of equality before the law, should distribute justice according to clearly defined rules known to all. There can be little doubt that the Governor-General belonged to the school of thought which imagined that, should the British introduce into India the judicial and political structures of England, the country would then quickly develop along similar social and economic lines. Bentinck appears to have agreed fully with Wellesley's views and both were such enthusiastic advocates of the new judicial system that they were prepared to see it introduced into areas that had not yet been permanently settled.<sup>153</sup>

Munro was opposed to the introduction of both the zamindari settlements and the Bengal judicial system. However, since his reasons for opposing each of these policies were somewhat different, it is perhaps necessary to examine his efforts to reverse them separately.

Munro began his campaign against zamindari settlements by trying to influence the Board of Revenue. Falconar had returned to the Board on Place's resignation and had

promised Munro his support.<sup>154</sup> Petrie, who on Webbe's death, Clive's return to Britain and the Court's decision to acknowledge the Carnatic debts, no longer had reason to seek the removal of men like Munro in order to attack the administration, was also prepared to assist opposition to Wellesley's attempts to impose the Bengal revenue system on Madras. Munro wrote to Petrie warning him that zamindari settlements would have detrimental effects on the revenues.<sup>155</sup> He argued that they would lead to the Company losing revenue since the zamindars would receive the benefits of increased cultivation together with part of the sircar's share of the gross produce. He threw doubt on Wellesley's statement that the costs of zamindari collections were less than ryotwari.<sup>156</sup> While admitting that ryotwari settlements were expensive to administer, he claimed that the returns were greater and the costs, as a percentage of the total, therefore smaller. He also argued that the Government would be deprived of much information about the values of its territories. The Board was impressed by Munro's arguments. Petrie forwarded Munro's views to the Government with the comment that he too could see no benefit from the introduction of zamindari settlements. 'On the contrary', he wrote, 'the condition of the ryots will be worse. The advantages are hypothetical and questionable, but the loss of revenue certain and inevitable'.<sup>157</sup>

Bentinck was quickly converted, both by the favourable letters he was receiving from the Board of Revenue and by his own perusal of Munro's reports on Kanara. He informed Munro in May that he intended to suggest to Wellesley that

all future settlements should be ryotwari.<sup>158</sup> His letter to Munro gave the latter the opportunity he sought to enter into a direct correspondence with the Governor in the course of which he became increasingly confident of the Government's support for his views. This encouraged him, in August 1805, to present a report to the Board of Revenue that represented a major attack on zamindari settlements and Munro's first clear exposition of his reasons for his support for ryotwari arrangements.<sup>159</sup>

Munro began this report by arguing that ryotwari settlements had always been traditionally employed in India for the collection of the land revenues. 'The sovereign has at all times been regarded as the sole landlord, the country has been divided into an immense number of small farms held immediately of him by their respective cultivators'.<sup>160</sup> He continued by claiming that attempts to alter this traditional structure of society and remodel the agricultural economy along English lines were mistaken. 'There is not the same necessity in this country as in Europe for a body of great or rich landholders and, even if such a body could be raised up, it would probably in the end be productive of more harm than good because great landlords would, in time, become impatient of the dominion of a foreign nation'.<sup>161</sup> Next he proceeded from general to specific criticisms which he himself perfectly summarized. 'I have endeavoured to show that the system of great estates will raise less produce from the soil than that of small farms, that it is more liable to failures and affords less security to the revenue, that it will be less agreeable to the

inhabitants because they would rather hold their lands under government than under private individuals, and that it cannot be permanent because their laws and custom continually urge on the rapid division of landed property. I am therefore induced to recommend the rayetwar system or settlement with the cultivators.... The ultimate objects of this arrangement should be the rendering the cultivators stationary, the land saleable and the farms small estates'.<sup>162</sup>

Behind all the arguments, Munro's firm conviction that the British should encourage an extensive class of small, independent yeoman farmers to emerge clearly shone through. He believed that such a development was necessary if the manufacturing side of the economy was to expand. Such a class would provide both the raw materials a nascent manufacturing sector would require and a large market for its produces. It was a fear that ryotwari settlements might result in subsistence farming and a consequent failure on the part of the agrarian sector of the economy to supply the raw materials needed by the manufacturing sector rather than an anxiety that the revenues might decline that prompted Munro to urge that the ryots should be forced to cultivate as much land as possible. Typically though, he concealed his motives behind a concern for the cultivators. 'As the relinquishment (of land) is attended with loss to the ryot himself, it is obvious that there can be no injustice in insisting that every district shall keep up cultivation'.<sup>163</sup> It was also obvious to Munro that further economic development would be dependent on the availability of cheap food. He believed that food prices would only drop if cultivation

expanded and competition was encouraged. He was satisfied that ryotwari settlements would achieve the former and argued that a strict insistence on the ryots paying cash rents rather than a proportion of their produce would ensure the latter. Apart from the fact that the ryots would be forced to think in terms of cash crops, the danger that the Government would acquire too great a control over grain reserves and a consequent ability to control the market, which might tempt it to inflate prices, would be avoided.<sup>164</sup>

Bentinck was quickly convinced that Munro's ryotwari proposals should be adopted. In January 1806, he recorded two minutes. In the first, he praised Munro, describing him as 'one of the best revenue officers and one of the ablest men in India'.<sup>165</sup> In the second, he revealed the extent of Munro's influence over his opinions.<sup>166</sup> Stating, using identical arguments to those Munro had employed on him, that he believed ryotwari settlements should be generally introduced, he explained that he had intended to tour the Presidency to gain first hand information on the subject. This having proved impractical, he announced that he had delegated Thackeray to make the tour in his stead. It is obvious that Bentinck intended Thackeray's report to furnish support for the adoption of ryotwari, a policy he was already determined on. There is no other explanation for his orders that Thackeray should concentrate his researches on Kanara, Malabar and the Ceded Districts, areas Munro had persuaded Bentinck would verify his ideas. Bentinck did not even try to conceal this intention, publicly admitting the sole purpose of Thackeray's visit to the Ceded Districts was

to be an interview with Munro, whose opinions Bentinck claimed should be sought on all questions relating to the revenues.

Thackeray was already a firm disciple of Munro's ideas. As soon as Bentinck commissioned him to report on the revenues, he wrote to Munro for assistance. 'It is a good thing', he wrote, 'to know the best system. I therefore beg of you to write me your ideas'<sup>167</sup>. By the end of April 1806, Bentinck had received Thackeray's report which, after examining the arguments for and against zamindari settlements, concluded that they had no advantages over ryotwari ones.<sup>168</sup> The report owed not a little to Munro. Thackeray informed Munro that he knew it would meet his approval for it included not only his statements but even his words.<sup>169</sup> Bentinck laid this report before the Council with a minute of his own in which he remarked that while he was convinced that the zamindari system was ideally suited to conditions in Bengal, its extension to Madras was ill-conceived.<sup>170</sup> Seeking more evidence to support his contention, the Governor decided to issue a questionnaire to the collectors. That this was little more than a ploy to secure evidence that would legitimize the position he had already adopted is suggested by the fact that Munro was asked to draw up the questions. Thackeray particularly informed Munro that the questions should be phrased to produce pro-ryotwari answers.<sup>171</sup> He warned him that Bentinck had decided to issue the questionnaire because the Board of Revenue, under the influence of Hodgson, was opposing ryotwari settlements and seeking to introduce village leases.

A sample of the leading questions Munro suggested clearly reveal the arguments Bentinck and Thackeray intended to employ against zamindari settlements as well as his own views.<sup>172</sup> 'Are not the zamindars and poligars in general men of low caste?.... Is it not true that the zamindars and poligars maintain themselves in authority by means of terror?.... Do they (the zamindars and poligars) not in general consider themselves rather as petty sovereigns than as landowners of a country under a superior government?' Other questions were designed to reveal that the zamindars were invariably hostile to the British and that the cultivators actually preferred to hold their lands from the State. Munro included with his sample queries an attack on village leases. His main objection appears to have arisen from his belief that the patels would be constituted as the landlords of their villages. This, he argued, would result in the ryots losing their rights in the land as a consequence of becoming the private tenants of the patels. The village, he asserted, would become the property of one man instead of that of forty or fifty farmers.

However, while on one side Bentinck, Thackeray and Munro were preparing the case for the introduction of ryotwari settlements, the Board of Revenue was preparing its case for village leases. A committee, composed of Colonel Blackbourne, Hodgson and Wallace, was appointed to investigate the revenue affairs of Tanjore.<sup>173</sup> Hodgson used this opportunity to make an additional investigation into the affairs of Coimbatore and Tinnevely. Both the committee's and Hodgson's reports recommended quinquennial

village leases rather than ryotwari settlements. Aware that ryotwari settlements were closely identified with military collectors and anxious that the Board might be able to employ civilian hostility towards these men to undermine support for his plans, Bentinck tried to force through his policies by filling the Board of Revenue with allies. After examining the possibility that Munro might be appointed President of the Board and finding that the regulations would not permit it, Bentinck appointed Thackeray a member instead.<sup>174</sup>

Early in 1807, the committee's and Hodgson's reports, together with a paper from Munro which recommended the permanent adoption of the ryotwari revenue system, were examined by the Board of Revenue. On the 25 April 1807, the Board announced its findings. It stated that it felt a permanent adoption of ryotwari would be inexpedient since it would involve 'continual interference with the cultivators...while the practicality of effecting a settlement of that nature in perpetuity appeared more than questionable'.<sup>175</sup> The Board also stated that ryotwari was incompatible with the judicial system which was being introduced. The Board concluded by recommending quinquennial village leases, arguing that they were in themselves a good means of administering the revenues and that such leases could easily be converted at a later date into permanent small zamindari settlements.

While Munro fought what appeared, by 1807, to be a losing battle in his efforts to see a ryotwari revenue system



adopted as official policy in the Madras territory, he also campaigned vigorously against the introduction of a judicial system and a code of regulations based on the Bengal model. He opposed the introduction of the new judicial system because he sincerely believed it to be ill-designed to cope with the peculiar demands which the conditions in the territories under the Madras Government imposed on the British. In addition, he had very private reasons for his opposition to the innovations whose adoption, he conceived, would be certain to threaten his status and future career.

Under the new judicial system, the men serving as judge-magistrates were to be established in zillah courts with the responsibility for deciding civil and criminal cases and supervising the police in their districts. Unfortunately the structure of the new system closely copied the British model. British rules of procedure and evidence governed the operations of the courts and from the start these fettered the system. Litigation proved to be such a lengthy business and arrears so quickly built up that the courts were soon unable to distribute justice. Very large arrears of undecided cases accumulated. The costs of litigation became prohibitive. For many, the combination of expense and delay deprived them of all hope of employing the British courts to settle their civil disputes. Munro went to the heart of the matter when he criticized the judicial system in a letter to Thackeray. 'The fault of our judicial code is that there is a great deal too much of it for a first essay. Our own laws expanded gradually during several centuries, along with the increasing knowledge and

civilization of the people, so that they were always fitted in some measure to their faculties. But here, without any preparation, we throw them down in a lump among a parcel of ignorant ryots and equally ignorant pundits'<sup>176</sup>. Munro believed that the British were unwisely trying to force the pace of change. Although he did not disagree with the ultimate goal, the introduction of an independent judiciary, he believed this must be an adaptive process. 'When a country falls under the domination of a foreign power', he argued, 'it is usually found to be the wisest plan to leave it in possession of its own laws and customs.... Endeavour rather to ameliorate than to abolish them and substitute others in their room'<sup>177</sup>. Apart from anything else, Munro believed that, because the new civil regulations pivoted on the definition and enforcement of private property rights as understood in the Europe rather than India, they could only further complicate an already confused situation.

As a collector responsible for uncovering the value of his district and for conducting the lengthy negotiations revenue assessments and settlements always required, Munro had other reasons to oppose the new system. He believed that the full establishment of the judicial system was likely to hold up the conclusion of the overall settlement of the revenues. He argued that the lengthy and involved procedures of the courts and the new regulations might so 'embarrass the collector with the observance of forms that he would never be able to effect a permanent settlement'<sup>178</sup>. In his opinion, the situation required that extraordinary powers should be vested in a single person, the collector, at least until the

country should be brought fully under British control, the fields surveyed and the revenues settled. Should this not be done but the civil and judicial powers be separated, he was convinced that the Indians would employ the situation to play one branch off against the other in the hope of avoiding the payment of their rents. Munro could see no Indian objections to his ideas since he was convinced that the separation of judicial and civil power was not an indigenous concept.

Quite distinct from these, Munro's public objections, were his private reasons for opposing the new judicial arrangements. Some of these he expressed officially in terms of public interest, others in private letters, and a few have to be extrapolated from his papers. Munro was convinced that collectors were more valuable to the Company than judges and he argued that it was a mistake to grant the latter a higher status and salary.<sup>179</sup> He believed that a permanent settlement of the revenue would do far more to develop the country than the introduction of courts, stating that 'a permanent rent would go further in one year in promoting the improvement of the country and the comfort of the inhabitants than the courts of justice in twenty'.<sup>180</sup> He therefore stressed the importance of encouraging the Company's ablest men to enter the Revenue Line rather than the judicial. The fact that, as a military officer, he could never be employed as a judge but might continue serving as a collector, obviously influenced his decision to promote the cause of the revenue officials. His position was distinctly partisan however he might try to conceal this fact behind

arguments that the collectors, being always on the move and in daily contact with the people, were in a better position to understand the problems of India and to supervise the Company's territories than the judges who were tied to their stations and had little contact with the inhabitants.

Munro found it extremely difficult to share authority and was motivated by an intense desire to make his fortune. Both of these factors influenced his attitudes towards the judges. He could not tolerate the idea that his decisions might be overruled by judges operating within his district. Although he expressed this in terms of an anxiety that the separation of powers would result in conflicts of interest and clashes between the two branches where jurisdictions overlapped,<sup>181</sup> his real concern appears to have been to defend his authority. More importantly, the Company decided that it would be necessary to make significant retrenchments in order to pay the costs of the judicial system. The Court believed that savings might be made by limiting the salaries of the collectors and by reducing their establishments. Huddleston, who was openly hostile to the employment of military collectors, persuaded the Court to limit the collectors' commissions to 7,500 pagodas a year.<sup>182</sup> Munro perceived this as a threat to his hopes of saving sufficient capital to enable him to retire to Britain.

Initially Munro's hostility towards the judges was restrained. The Government had to order him to treat the judges with special consideration and public displays of respect but otherwise he was too involved with the survey of

the Ceded Districts to devote much attention to the judicial developments.<sup>183</sup> In 1803 however, Macleod informed Munro that the new courts had been responsible for the revolt in Malabar.<sup>184</sup> He stated that the judges, who he claimed supported the 'Old School' faction, had made it their duty to interfere with his work as a collector and had refused to support him. Webbe supported Macleod's contention, though he argued that it was the judges as individuals who had destroyed the collector's influence by supporting his opponents and reversing his decisions.<sup>185</sup> He did not accept that the system itself was at fault. Munro could not agree with Webbe since he was increasingly convinced that the new judicial arrangements threatened his authority and his financial prospects. The month before he received Webbe's letter, he had received a demand from the Civil Auditor that he refund to the Company the substantial sum which he had taken in commission over and above that permitted by the regulations. Munro began to look for opportunities to attack the new judicial arrangements.

In 1804, Bentinck gave Munro an opportunity to do this. He wrote asking for Munro's comments on the Supreme Government's plans for the Judicial Department.<sup>186</sup> At first Munro only replied with arguments that the collectors should be placed financially on an equal footing with the judges.<sup>187</sup> It appears that the appointment of his old enemy Oakes as President of the Committee of Reform and Retrenchment so worried Munro that his commission would be further curtailed that he concentrated on this aspect of the question. The Court's recent attack on his poligar policies had turned his

thoughts to retirement and he was consequently more concerned to save sufficient capital to permit this than he was to defend the authority of the collectors against that of the judges.<sup>188</sup>

By 1806 however, the situation appeared to have changed and Munro was confident that he might expect to be employed as a collector for some years more and was therefore once more interested in protecting the status of that office against encroachments on it by the judiciary. He had also, in the meantime, developed a comprehensive idea of how the British should administer the judicial and revenue affairs of their territories. The establishment of a Committee of Police gave him an opportunity to express these. The Committee was established to investigate the operations of the new police arrangements and was ordered to examine the views of the judges and collectors on whether the present system was satisfactory and how it might be improved. Munro gathered his ideas together in a series of notes which he then used to prepare a report to the Committee.<sup>189</sup> He began with a general attack on the Bengal Judicial System, stating that it was the most expensive in the world. He added that none of the inhabitants of India had wanted it and none were pleased with it. He then continued with detailed criticisms. It was, he said, based on the theory that the Indians were too corrupt to be entrusted with any responsibility for the distribution of justice. Not only was this, in his opinion, an absurd proposition but it also had terrible consequences. It forced the British to establish a vast and expensive judiciary which actually had only one advantage over the

indigenous systems in so far as it did control the Company's own executive. On the other hand, it was cumbersome, inefficient and so slow that, in effect, the inhabitants were deprived of all hope of having their disputes settled. Furthermore, Munro believed that the system, by destroying the influence of the patels, made these men discontented with the British whereas they had previously always supported their rule. The new judicial system he wrote, 'is gradually undermining the whole fabric of the village constitution (which is) so admirably adapted for the preservation of internal peace and security'<sup>190</sup>.

On the basis of these charges, Munro suggested the adoption of a completely different system which would enable the Indians to play some role in the administration of their country. He recommended that the offices of collector and magistrate be reunited, that the patels be returned to their ancient judicial responsibilities, and that panchayats be employed to settle the majority of minor cases, the police disbanded and the Company revert to relying on the village watchmen to maintain order and investigate crimes. Munro gave his desire to see Indians involved in the administration as his principal reason for making these recommendations and argued that his system would be more acceptable to the inhabitants since it would more closely resemble that to which they were accustomed. Despite this however, it is clear that Munro's principal interest was to find the means of making substantial savings for the Company in order that the decision to make retrenchments in the Revenue Department might be reversed. Since he was already

hostile to the judiciary, it was natural that he should claim that the Judicial Department was the most obvious area where savings might be achieved. He did this, stating that the only reason why other employees did not support his views was their fear they might be thought 'enemies of justice'. If the police were disbanded and the village watchmen, who required only small inam grants for their support, were employed, Munro argued that a substantial saving might be effected. More importantly, he claimed that even greater savings, in terms of both cost and European manpower, could be achieved if the collectors were employed as magistrates since this would result in a much smaller number of judges being required. Such a scheme had definite attractions for Munro. Since the collector would once more emerge as the principal figure in the British administration, he could, and in Munro's opinion should, be suitably rewarded with an enhanced rate of commission and salary, something which might easily be done out of the overall savings the Company would be achieving.

Although the Police Committee treated Munro's opinions with respect, it was clear to him that support for the Cornwallis System was too strong for his arguments to make much impact on the decision to establish a version of it in all the territories under the Madras Government. By and large, the new judicial system was supported by all the authorities; the Court and the Board of Control in Britain, the Governor-General and his Council in Bengal, the Governor, the Council, the Board of Revenue and the civil servants in Madras. In a letter he wrote to Bruce in July 1806, Munro



revealed that he was resigned to seeing his judicial ideas at least temporarily shelved.<sup>191</sup>

By the middle of 1806 Munro was seriously considering leaving India. Although the Government had supported his claim to be allowed to keep his full commission on his collections, the Court had turned down his request. The decision to appoint judges in the Ceded Districts had upset Munro and he was still bitter about the treatment he had received from the Court over his measures against the Vimla poligar. He felt he had been in India too long and appears to have been suffering from depression. 'No moral or religious book, not even the Gospel itself', he wrote to his sister, 'ever calls my attention so powerfully to the shortness of life as does, in some solitary hour, the recollection of my friends and of the long course of days and years that have passed away since I saw these'.<sup>192</sup> In addition, he felt himself disappointed in his career. 'I am not satisfied', he added, 'with the subordinate line to which I have moved and with my having been kept from holding any distinguished military command for want of rank'. Furthermore, many of Munro's patrons and friends had gone. In particular, Wellesley had been forced back to Britain and Webbe had died in November 1804.

On 10 July 1806 a mutiny broke out at Vellore. Sir John Cradock, the Commander-in-Chief had drawn up orders which required the sepoys to remove their caste marks and which also affected their dress, their turbans and the quantity of hair they were permitted to wear on their faces. Bentinck

sanctioned these orders which were designed to create a uniformity of appearance in the ranks. Unfortunately the sepoys interpreted the innovations as an attack on their religion and, after several months of unrest, they revolted, killing 200 of the British garrison of 370 at Vellore. The revolt was quickly crushed but not before it had panicked the British, both in India and at home. In both countries opinion was divided between three explanations of why the mutiny had occurred. It was blamed on the innovations of Cradock, the activities of missionaries who were said to have aroused fears among the sepoys that they were to be forcibly converted to Christianity, and to the plots of Tipu Sultan's family and adherents who had been moved by the British to Vellore.

When the news of the mutiny reached Britain, it found the Court already divided by an acrimonious dispute over the activities of British missionaries in India. On the one hand, Grant and Parry who, along with Wilberforce and Henry Thornton, were members of the Clapham Sect, an evangelical body which agitated for the 'universal dissemination of Christianity in India', had used their positions in the Court to send ardent evangelical clergymen to fill the chaplaincies in India. On the other hand, men like Thomas Twining, Baring and Toone in the Court had actively voiced their opposition to the activities of Christian missionaries and to Grant's policies. They now seized on the Vellore Mutiny as an opportunity to attack their opponents, claiming its outbreak was directly attributable to the sepoys' fears for their religions which Grant's misguided policies had

raised. Grant and Parry felt they had no alternative but to completely deny that missionary activity was in any way responsible. They accused Cradock and Bentinck of having acted imprudently by forcing the new regulations governing appearance on the sepoys and of having failed to heed repeated warnings that these might lead to a mutiny. They guided the Court into recalling both Cradock and Bentinck, hoping that this would prevent further attacks on the missionaries. Dundas then proposed that George Barlow should replace Bentinck.<sup>194</sup> Grant and Parry, who had just been elected to the Chairs, agreed even though it meant that William Petrie, who had thirteen years' seniority over Barlow, would be superseded. Grant had known Barlow in Bengal and believed him to be a supporter of his views, especially on the introduction of zamindari settlements. Grant, who had been responsible for drawing up the despatch in 1792 which sanctioned Cornwallis's plans,<sup>195</sup> was undoubtedly trying to build a power base in India which could be employed to counteract opposition in the Court.

For Munro, Bentinck's recall was the final straw. Not only was he to lose his last influential patron in India, the one man who might yet enable him to overcome opposition to his attempts to see ryotwari settlements adopted as official revenue policy, but he was now to serve under a Governor who was known to be strongly opposed to such settlements. Munro had already been warned by Thackeray that Barlow would not favour his ideas. 'If Sir George Barlow comes', Thackeray had written, 'he will order the heads of ryotwari men to be cut off'.<sup>196</sup> Munro also had personal reasons for not wishing to

serve under Barlow. Barlow was related to the girl Munro's brother Daniel had married.<sup>197</sup> In 1798, Daniel's wife had run off with another man, Pattle, who had then killed Daniel in a duel. In the aftermath of this affair, the Munro family considered that Barlow had behaved extremely badly towards them. The whole business left a degree of ill-feeling on both sides which Munro believed had prejudiced Barlow against him.

By July 1807, shortly after the news of Bentinck's recall arrived at Madras, Munro finally decided to return to Britain.<sup>198</sup> It is far from clear whether this decision represented a step towards resignation from the Company's service or a determination to attempt to persuade the home authorities to adopt the policies that Munro had so signally failed to have implemented by the Madras administration. It is doubtful whether Munro himself had any clear plans beyond a hope that his presence in London would enable him to persuade the Court to permit him to retain the commission that he had been ordered to refund to the Treasury in Madras. Much of the evidence suggests that he was thinking of retiring if he could find employment in Britain and that this was why he was so very concerned about the money which, were he allowed to keep it, would have substantially secured his future. On the other hand, he had the example of Place and Chamier to follow and may have hoped to exercise a similar influence over the Court to that they had obtained. For the first time in his life, Munro had influential relatives in the Ministry. His brother-in-law, Henry Erskine, had been, on Pitt's death, appointed Lord Advocate

for Scotland. Francis Erskine, Henry's brother, had secured the office of Lord Chancellor.<sup>199</sup> The strongest evidence however that Munro hoped to follow Place's example is the report he delivered to the Board of Revenue just before he left. He may have written this report with motives not dissimilar to those that inspired Place to produce the minute he delivered immediately before leaving India in 1802.

In his report of 15 August 1807, Munro comprehensively expressed all his ideas regarding the judicial and revenue administrations of Madras.<sup>200</sup> He listed the advantages and disadvantages of zamindari and ryotwari settlements, concluding that, in the long term, a ryotwari system was to be preferred to a zamindari one. First he argued that no comparison could be made between the British and Indian societies, stressing that an intermediate class between the state and the cultivators similar to the landed gentry of England might only exist if the British artificially created and maintained it. He continued by stating that, while under a zamindari system the Company's revenues would never increase, under a ryotwari one they would because the Government would retain possession of the waste lands. As the population expanded, the waste lands would be brought under cultivation and begin paying rents. The Government would be the principal beneficiary. Munro also believed that ryotwari settlements conformed more closely to the traditional pattern of Indian land management where holdings were customarily small. He believed that it was wrong to try to change this and argued that it was a mistake to attempt

to create a body of landlords living of their rents from tenants. His ideal was a society built upon a large class of small, independent yeoman farmers, a class which combined all the virtues of the labourer, the farmer and the proprietor. Munro stated that, should the ryot be made the proprietor of his land, he would prove to be 'industrious, frugal and comfortable, preserving the simplicity of...manners and respect to public authority'. In addition, Munro believed that, were his ryotwari system to be introduced all over the Presidency, assessments and remissions would be standardized and this would end ryot migrations during which the cultivators moved from area to area seeking better opportunities. As a consequence, a more settled and tranquil society would emerge.

Having argued the case for ryotwari settlements of the revenues, Munro proceeded to present a case for changes in the judicial system. One of the points the opponents of ryotwari settlements had frequently made was that they were incompatible with the judicial system. Munro agreed but, instead of concluding that a ryotwari system could not therefore be adopted, he pressed for changes in the judicial administration. He stated that under the present system the inhabitants suffered 'great inconvenience and even distress' from 'delay, vexation, bribery (and) wrong decisions'. He suggested various reforms that included more summary justice administered by collector-magistrates, the greater employment of Indian commissioners and panchayats to decide civil cases, and a general simplification of the legal processes. He argued that reappointment of collectors as

magistrates would enable the Company to make substantial savings as would the greater employment of Indian commissioners. In the latter case he specifically stated that, in a country as large and populous as India, the British could never hope to employ sufficient Europeans to staff the judicial administration and that justice could be 'properly distributed only by the means of the natives'. As far as the panchayats were concerned, he believed that these were not only less open to corruption, more likely to be possessed of local knowledge and therefore more certain to reach just decisions but also the only mode of settling civil disputes that was general and popular among the inhabitants. He equated the role of the panchayat in Indian civil legal system with that of the jury in the British criminal system. It permitted the inhabitants to participate in the judicial process, encouraged confidence in it and helped guarantee its independence from the executive. In addition, Munro had another reason for urging the use of panchayats. Whatever the judicial arrangements employed, corrupt decisions were certain to be reached occasionally. It would be better, in his opinion, that these should be seen to be made by the panchayats rather than the zillah courts for when the disgrace of such a decision fell on a panchayat, the Indians could only lament their own depravity. Should a zillah court reach an unjust verdict, the reputation of the Company was tarnished in the eyes of the Indians and the Government's principal source of authority was thereby undermined.

Munro also advanced another idea for the improvement of the

judicial system. He suggested that the judges should not be confined to their zillah stations but encouraged to go out on circuit. He believed that this would not only give the judges a deeper and more extensive knowledge of the country and its inhabitants but would also remove a major source of Indian discontent with the system. By permitting the judges to go to the people, such a reform would remove much of the inconvenience suffered by the patels and ryots who were frequently forced to travel great distances and waste much time when they either wished or had to attend judicial sessions.

It is difficult to view this, Munro's parting shot, as merely another contribution on his part to the debates on revenue and judicial policies currently dividing the Madras Administration. There can be little doubt that Munro wrote this report with the Court of Directors and the Board of Control in mind, being fully aware that the Board of Revenue would forward it to the Madras Government who would in turn despatch it to the Court for consideration by the Directors. Munro probably hoped that the Directors would take advantage of his presence in Britain to ask him to explain in person the ideas he had so comprehensively and carefully expounded. It is also probable that, seeing no possibility of persuading the Madras Government to adopt his policies, he intended to try to use the opportunities opened by his presence in Britain to bring individuals in the home administration round to his ideas. In Britain he could communicate directly with these men in private letters and meetings, thereby by-passing the official channels of



communication. This would permit him to express himself more forcibly and perhaps more critically than he felt that he could in his official correspondence. Munro was aware that there existed a variety of means to influence the decision-making process in Britain that were not available in Madras. Because authority was more widely distributed, the opportunities open to individuals and parties to bring pressure on those responsible for deciding policy were consequently greatly increased.

## Chapter Six

## The Re-emergence of Munro:

Munro's Influence on the Home Authorities, 1808-1814.

When Munro returned to Britain in 1808, it appeared that the ideas and policies which he and the other members of the 'New School' advocated were most unlikely to be officially adopted by the Company. The Cornwallis Judicial System, to which Munro was so deeply opposed, had been generally introduced and the home authorities as yet retained full confidence in it. Despite some sporadic criticism of the system in Madras and some more sustained attacks upon it by a growing number of Bengal civil servants who had been disillusioned by their experiences of its effectiveness and efficiency, the basic assumptions behind the system remained unchallenged in Britain. The generally held opinion was that the system at the most required a number of minor adjustments or reforms made to it to reduce its costs and possibly expedite its operations. There also seemed little likelihood that a ryotwari revenue system would be introduced into the Madras territories. While the home authorities, the Court of Directors in particular, had for some time doubted the wisdom of extending the Permanent

Settlement System,<sup>1</sup> neither they nor the local governments were prepared to introduce annual ryotwari leases. In addition, no progress had been made towards the introduction of the other major reforms to the Company's administration that the 'New School' had proposed. The majority of the civil servants still failed to qualify themselves for their employment by learning Indian languages, relied heavily on dubashes and showed no signs of developing into the efficient administrators with whom Wellesley had hoped to staff the empire. The situation had not improved since 1803 when Webbe, in answer to a request from Munro for an assistant trained in accounting to help him prepare his revenue statements, had told him that such a man was impossible to find in the civil service.<sup>2</sup> He had added that accounting was not even taught at the College of Fort William and had suggested that Munro privately employ somebody from one of the Madras agency houses. Appointments were still governed by considerations of seniority and influence, a factor which operated against innovation and impaired administrative efficiency.

Yet only six years later, significant changes in the policies of the home authorities had been made. These changes, largely the consequence of the adoption of ideas developed by Munro and other members of the 'New School', resulted in the home authorities ordering both the introduction of ryotwari leases into all parts of Madras not permanently settled and a complete reform of the judicial system. In addition, they encouraged serious attempts to establish an administrative structure in which qualification

and merit rather than seniority and influence governed appointments and promotions. In this chapter the roles played by Munro, by other individuals, by the Directors and by the members of the Board of Control in this process are examined. Special attention is devoted to the techniques employed by Munro and his supporters to promote his ideas and himself with them. In addition, the factors which influenced the operations of the decision-making process during this period are reviewed, in particular the tensions generated between competing parties in the Court which, together with Company's seriously weakened financial position, resulted in a significant transfer of power to the Board of Control. The manner in which the official divisions of authority and channels of communication were ignored and the ways in which the Board took advantage of the situation to extend and even to exceed its formal powers are analysed.

Munro arrived in England on 5 April 1808. He returned to a country he had not seen since he left London 28 years before, with very mixed feelings. While he was looking forward to seeing his family again, it was not the one that he had left behind when he travelled to India at the age of 20. Two of his brothers and his mother had died, his father was ill and senile, and his beloved sister Erskine had been widowed and then remarried. Munro was also very uncertain what his future would be. He had not managed to save as much in India as he had hoped to and he appears to have at times regretted the decision he had taken to resign his post as Principal Collector. The thought that, had he remained in the Ceded Districts a few years longer, he might have saved

sufficient to ensure his future comfort, seems to have preyed on his mind. As it was, he was unsure whether he would be returning to India again, thought that he would be unable to find any employment in Europe, and dreaded a retired existence of enforced idleness on a restricted income. Fear for the last of these was one of two powerful motives which impelled him to try to have the decision reversed which had resulted in his losing a substantial proportion of the commission he had received as the Principal Collector of the Ceded Districts. Ever since he had witnessed, as a young man, the traumatic consequences of his father's bankruptcy, Munro had been obsessively concerned to create and maintain a fortune for himself. Another motive behind Munro's determination to regain the money was his conviction that it was rightfully his. Munro was a man who, once he believed himself right on any matter, was prepared to argue his case until others accepted it.

Munro's problem with his commission had begun in 1803 when the Civil Auditor demanded he refund some of it to the Treasury, claiming that he had received more in commission than the regulations entitled him to.<sup>3</sup> Munro had then written to Webbe, complaining that he had expected his income to be raised, not reduced, when he moved from Kanara to the Ceded Districts.<sup>4</sup> He told Webbe that he could not deal with a man who 'spoke by Acts of Parliament'. Munro expressed a hope that Webbe could recover the money for him. Webbe wrote back, explaining that the decision had been taken by the Court of Directors, who had been persuaded by John Huddleston, a man extremely hostile to the employment of

military collectors, to pass a regulation that no collector should receive more than 7500 pagodas a year without the Government's express permission.<sup>5</sup> Munro did not give up and he approached Bentinck when it was obvious that Webbe could do little for him. Bentinck confirmed Webbe's letter, stating that Munro's commission had definitely been limited to 7500 pagodas by the Court's orders.<sup>6</sup> In 1805, Munro brought the matter up with Petrie who was able to do no more for him than Bentinck and Webbe had.<sup>7</sup> He did though promise to try to find a way round the Court's orders and promised to suggest to the Government that certain collectors should receive additional money for 'extraordinary services'.<sup>8</sup>

Petrie's suggestion was accepted by the Madras Government and later by the Court. Consequently Munro's commission was raised to 12,000 pagodas but this still fell short of what he felt himself entitled to. The fact that the newly appointed judges were receiving higher allowances, apparently funded from the retrenched commissions of the revenue officials, appears to have made the issue a matter of principle for Munro. It certainly embittered him. There can be little doubt that a desire to personally persuade the Directors to permit him to keep the £4500 that was to be taken from him, was a powerful factor in Munro's decision to return to Britain. He also had good grounds for expecting to be successful. Before Munro left Madras, Petrie, as President of the Board of Revenue, had recorded a minute in which he strongly supported Munro's claim and expressed the hope that the Court would reconsider the matter.<sup>9</sup> The Government had concurred and embodied a recommendation that

Munro be allowed to keep his full commission in a revenue letter to the home authorities.<sup>10</sup>

On his arrival in London, Munro contacted his new brother-in-law, Henry Erskine, to ask him to assist in persuading the Court to reverse the decision that had deprived him of £4500.<sup>11</sup> Henry Erskine, who had married Munro's sister Erskine in 1805, was a man of enormous political influence. In 1783, he had been Lord Advocate, temporarily replacing Dundas, and he had held office again in 1806 under the ministry of 'All the Talents'. In 1808, he had just been appointed to a commission to enquire into the administration of justice in Scotland. He was also a noted Whig, venerated, even by his rivals, for his political integrity and valued for his sharp wit.<sup>12</sup> He agreed to help Munro. At the same time, Munro petitioned the Court.<sup>13</sup> Initially, the Court rejected the petition, informing Munro in June that he could not be allowed to keep the full commission.<sup>14</sup> Faced by this rebuff, Munro asked Erskine to canvass support amongst the Directors.<sup>15</sup> This was done and Erskine introduced Munro to several of the leading Directors, in particular Sir Hugh Inglis, Sir Francis Baring, Robert Thornton, Abraham Robarts and the Hon William Fullerton Elphinstone.<sup>16</sup>

On 6 July 1808, Munro prepared another petition to the Court.<sup>17</sup> In it he laid out the grounds on which he felt he should be permitted to retain the full commission. He compared his allowances with those Read had received, stating that his had been lower despite the fact that he had

had to work harder and had raised more revenue. He mentioned the additional duties he had performed, in particular his responsibility for military supplies. He observed that Read had received a 5 per cent commission on his supplies to the army while he, Munro, had foregone this, believing his revenue allowances sufficient for his work. He also claimed that the Government had promised him a minimum commission on the revenues of 1 per cent in August 1801. Finally Munro concluded that he had settled the revenues and collected them more cheaply than would have been the case had civil servants been employed and argued that the Company could easily pay him his full commission out of the savings he had made them.

Before Munro presented this petition, he must have been warned by friends in the Court that the hostility his treatment of the Vimla poligar had aroused was still acting against him. He therefore produced a second draft in which he included a long defence of his poligar policies in general and of his measures against the Vimla poligar in particular.<sup>18</sup> The arguments he employed to justify his actions were identical to those which he had presented to the Board of Revenue in 1805 and they seem to have made no more of an impression on the Directors this time than they had when the Court first reviewed them. Nine months later the Court still showed no signs of reaching a decision. Munro therefore had no option but to present a third petition.<sup>19</sup> By this time he had a number of friends among the Directors prepared to support his claim. Even so, the outcome was far from certain and Munro could not afford to take any risks. He delayed the



presentation of his petition for a week until he was certain that Sir Francis Baring, who had been ill, would be in attendance.<sup>20</sup>

In July, the matter was finally considered and this time the Court reached a decision in Munro's favour. Munro described the business in a letter to his brother Alexander.<sup>21</sup> 'The Committee of Correspondence came to a resolution that the balances of my commission should be retrenched but that a present should be made to me of ten thousand pagodas or £4000. Though I shall in consequence lose about £500, I am better pleased that the measure has been passed in this way than if my original claim had been carried for it is more creditable and may also in the end be more useful'. On 3 August 1809, the Court officially informed Munro that he was to be granted a special payment 10,000 pagodas.<sup>22</sup>

The pursuit of his money seems to have fully occupied what little time Munro had to devote to Company affairs during 1808 and the first half of 1809, though he did present Sir Hugh Inglis with a copy of his report to the Madras Government on judicial affairs, which Sir Hugh promptly lost.<sup>23</sup> While it is no doubt probable that Munro did discuss his ideas about India when he was in the company of those men intimately involved in the country's administration to whom his brother-in-law had introduced him, there is no evidence to show that he was pressing his views or otherwise seriously concerned with Company business. On the contrary, there is considerable evidence to suggest that he was fully occupied with other interests at this time. Apart from

wishing to spend as much time as possible with his family and old acquaintances in Scotland, he wanted to make a tour of Wales and visit friends he had known in India who were now living in the West Country. He was also deeply concerned about his increasing deafness and this concern prompted him to try progressively more bizarre cures such as the application of turnip juice or the use of Mr Hawkins artificial ears. He even visited a Dr Saunders, whom he described as a 'filthy old man almost as deaf as us'.<sup>24</sup> The evidence suggests that it was at this time that Munro began an affair with Jessy McCorquodale in Edinburgh, which only ended when she presented him with an illegitimate daughter.<sup>25</sup> Admittedly, in 1809, he tried to persuade Charles Grant and John Bannerman to add their influence to that of the other supporters of his claim to the commission but, unless a large part of his correspondence, and the more important part of it, has been lost, much more of his time was spent dealing with begging letters and requests for his assistance from those seeking posts for themselves and friends or relatives in India. It is perhaps a measure of his standing and involvement with the Court at this time that the ultimate decision to allow him his money was a close run affair. The Court first refused his request in one paragraph of their General Letter of 1809, only to change their minds and reverse the decision in a later paragraph.<sup>26</sup>

Some indications of Munro's general state of mind at this time can be gleaned from his letters and they suggest that he was slightly depressed, nostalgic, uncertain what his future would be and feeling more than ever alienated from

the society of his contemporaries. His letters make it quite clear that he felt himself somehow excluded from the social circles he had expected to enter in Scotland. He had been away too long and now felt that he had few interests in common with those he had left behind. His mood was perhaps best captured in a letter he wrote to his sister in which he claimed that 'a solitary walk is almost the only thing in which I have any enjoyment'.<sup>27</sup> Continuing, he wrote that he had twice returned to Northside, once the family home, where he realized that 'former times were gone'. By and large, Munro seems to have been disillusioned with Britain, which he described as 'cold and dark, wet and dirty'.<sup>28</sup> He appears to have been principally interested in returning to India, hopefully to take up his old post again or a similar appointment. It is however necessary to qualify this by observing that Munro's plans changed easily and frequently at this period. At one point he had hopes that Lady Stuart, who with her husband and brother-in-law had done so much for him when he was a junior officer in India, might use her influence in Glasgow to help him get elected to Parliament. Munro told his brother that, 'even if I fail the attempt, it would be useful as it would pave the way for my coming forward on any future vacancy'.<sup>29</sup>

News reaching Munro from Madras about developments there, particularly some in the revenue administration, were probably a contributing factor to his uncertainty and concern for his future. Despite increasing reservations on the part of the home authorities about the efficacy of permanent settlements,<sup>30</sup> the Madras Board of Revenue continued

to advocate them and to pursue policies designed to make their general introduction possible, even inevitable. While the Court argued against precipitous action, the local authorities claimed conditions were ripe for the extension of permanent settlements to the whole of Madras. The Madras Board of Revenue, having recognized that the absence of zamindars made permanent settlements with such a class impossible, had proposed to conclude similar settlements with mirasdars and, where these could not be found, with village headmen. Since the Court had prohibited the conclusion of permanent settlements without its sanction, the Board of Revenue had urged, and the Madras Government had approved, the conclusion of decennial leases.<sup>31</sup> It was always the Board of Revenue's intention that these leases should be made permanent. The argument was that permanency would encourage cultivation and thereby increase the wealth of the country. In consequence, while the possibility of a depreciation of the currency suggested that fixed money rents might ultimately lead to a diminution of the Company's income from the land revenues, any losses would be more than augmented by increases in other sources of revenue such as customs and excise.

Once the Madras Government had, under pressure from the Board of Revenue,<sup>32</sup> espoused villages leases as the best method of settling the land revenues, support in India for ryotwari settlements quickly evaporated. A number of Munro's supporters, men who had advocated the general employment of ryotwari settlements, now abandoned them in favour of the village leases, believing it in their interest

to be seen to follow the lead of the Governor and senior civil servants, on whom they were dependent for promotion. Thackeray in particular switched his allegiance, though he did try to justify this desertion in a letter to Munro. 'We have introduced a kind of village rent generally', he wrote.<sup>33</sup> 'This was acceded to by me at the Board because I thought that we had not men to carry on the ryotwari, that the regulations and courts were generally speaking incompatible with ryotwari, that the economy which they have adopted with respect to native servants made it necessary to give them in the shape of profit what the Government meant to refuse them in the shape of salary, that Sir George Barlow was determined upon this system, that upon the whole your general system was more likely to be preserved by a modified village settlement than by attempting to preserve a pure ryotwari which is found every day more and more inconsistent with judges, courts and commissioners. I am not Cato, I am a Cicero with regard to ryotwari; to keep as much as we can, not to risk all by endeavouring to keep all when we can save a part by being content with as much as circumstances will allow'.

Soon after writing this letter, Thackeray completely abandoned the ryotwari system. His principal motive seems to have been fear that continued support for the system might damaged his career prospects. At the same time however, he clearly wished to keep his options open and had no wish to offend Munro. 'The village rent', he wrote to him, 'which has been almost generally introduced, is not so good as your ryotwari managed by you but it is better than ryotwari

managed indifferently under a controlling power'.<sup>34</sup> Unwilling to expose his real motives, Thackeray produced an excuse for his defection which was likely to both flatter and appeal to Munro. 'We can hardly get men to carry on the village rents', he wrote, 'even though we have managed to get the best young men in the service made collectors; how could we then get men to carry on ryotwari under increasing difficulties and obstacles that have arisen?'<sup>35</sup>

It is clear that although Thackeray was not prepared to support policies which were unpopular with his superiors, he wished to remain on private record as being totally in agreement with them. In this way, should the political situation change in favour of Munro's ideas, he might easily return to them. 'Your system was excellent', he informed Munro, 'when unchecked by superior authority (the courts) and administered by such men as we have not (now) got in our service. What you say of the courts is true - that their institution was premature, that many of the regulations are absurd, that most of the judges are inexperienced. But it would be worse perhaps were these same men both judges and collectors as they would have been had the old system continued.... Your system is the best abstractly. It is the best as far as regards the country itself but not with respect to our government. Our government is one of form, private interest, of rise by seniority.... I know of many rising geniuses in both the civil and military departments...but hardly one fit to be the prince which a collector was formerly. This is the real cause of the changes of systems, the others which were assigned in public

writings were pretence'.<sup>36</sup> By arguing that only a dearth of qualified men had caused him to abandon ryotwari and by disassociating himself from the other arguments which Munro's opponents had advanced in favour of their policies and against his, Thackeray clearly hoped to retain the good opinion of all parties. Thus he concluded his defence of his actions with the statement that village leases had had to be adopted since they alone would permit the social and economic developments to occur that Munro looked for from ryotwari.

It is impossible to say from the available material how Munro's career might have progressed had not events overtaken him in the latter half of 1809. With few supporters and many active and powerful opponents in the Madras administration, his civil career in India seemed finished unless he could interest the home authorities in his ideas. However, although he was generally respected, he was without sufficient influence in Britain to be able to hope to become intimately involved in the decision-making process of the Company.

The opportunity to enter Indian politics in Britain came to Munro when news reached England of the officers mutiny in Madras. The mutiny, which was the culmination of a long period of unrest amongst the officers in the Company's army, was a direct consequence of the Commander-in-Chief's indiscreet behaviour. Macdowall, who had succeeded Craddock as Commander-in-Chief after his recall, had not been given Craddock's seat on the Council by the home authorities. He

regarded this as a personal slight and he allowed his bitterness to sour his relations with the new Governor, Sir George Barlow. There is little doubt that, while Macdowall was not looking for a fight with the Government, he was sufficiently encouraged by the number of those sympathetic to his case to be quite prepared to have one if given the opportunity. Amongst others, Macdowall knew he had the sympathy of Petrie, who had been superseded when Barlow arrived from Bengal to become Governor yet had remained a powerful and potentially supportive member of the Council. Barlow soon gave Macdowall an opportunity challenge him. Having decided to implement a policy of retrenchment in the army, he ordered the Quartermaster-General, Colonel John Munro, to report on the possibility of abolishing the Tent Contract. An unfortunate phrase in Munro's report was regarded by his fellow officers, already sensitive and threatened by the retrenchment, as a libel on their characters. Macdowall, quite happy to embarrass the Government, had Munro placed under arrest. When Munro appealed directly to him, Barlow ordered his release. Macdowall resigned in protest but not before he had signed a general order in which he claimed that only his resignation prevented him from court-martialling Munro. Barlow retaliated by dismissing Macdowall before his resignation became effective and suspending the two officers who had been responsible for publishing the order, Major Boles and Colonel Capper. The suspension of these two officers brought discontent with the Government in the army to a head and during the following weeks there were acts of mutiny committed by some of the Company's officers. Order was only



restored after Barlow dismissed a few of these men and the rest agreed to submit to Lord Minto, the new Governor-General, when he arrived in Madras.<sup>37</sup>

The mutiny's impact on the Court of Directors was enormous, resulting as it did in the revival of old animosities between two competing parties. In the ensuing conflict, both sides called on men outside the Court for support for their causes and in this way Munro was pulled into the Company's politics at the highest level. In the process of assisting Grant's opponents, Munro attracted the attention of influential men. He was able to use the personal contacts he made to interest some of them in his policies and he ultimately succeeded in winning their support for his ideas.

In the aftermath of the Vellore Mutiny, wide divisions had appeared in the Court of Directors as the arguments raged over what had been its actual causes. Though it was generally agreed to ascribe the immediate blame to the commander-in-Chief, Sir John Craddock, and partial responsibility to the Governor, William Bentinck, the arguments had continued after their recall when it was increasingly believed that the real cause of the mutiny had not been Craddock's army regulations but the activities of the missionaries and the evangelical chaplains who were in India with Grant's sanction and support. Among those who now voiced their opposition to the missionaries were many who were old friends or political allies of Henry Erskine, most notably Baring, Toone, Elphinstone and Inglis. To defend their position in the face of this attack and to exonerate

the missionaries, Grant and Edward Parry had rejected the idea that it was resentment of missionary activities that had inspired the mutiny. They had blamed it on the machinations of Tipu Sultan's family, which had been exiled to Vellore, and on the recent extension of the Bengal administrative system.<sup>38</sup> They argued that the latter, by excluding the Indians from any role in the higher administration of their country and by removing the Government's officials from direct contact with the people, had made the Indians willing to entertain subversive ideas and had prevented the Government from being aware of this. When Grant had carried his resolution in favour of the missionaries and for acceptance of his view of the mutiny in the face of opposition led by Sir Francis Baring, he had failed to reconcile the minority who were left embittered and eager for revenge. Sweny Toone expressed the feelings of these men when he wrote of Grant and his supporters; 'I never loved them, but now I detest them'.<sup>39</sup>

It was therefore not surprising that, when news reached England of the officers' mutiny, the divisions in the Company should have reappeared nor that the same Directors whom Grant had defeated should have looked on it as another opportunity to attack him. In this they had the advantage of Grant's increasing unpopularity. For a number of years Grant had strongly opposed American trade with India and this had brought him into conflict with Sir Francis Baring and other influential men in London's City. This was part of the reason why Baring had been so willing to lead the attack on Grant's interpretation of the events that had led up to the

Vellore Mutiny. Grant had also made himself unpopular with some of the other Directors by instigating an investigation into abuses of patronage in 1809. Above all, Grant's uncompromising and sanctimonious behaviour towards his opponents infuriated them while his willingness to bring religion into every argument led them to accuse him of using it to lend gravity to his intrigues. A typical example of Grant's technique was when, during a debate over whether missionaries should be sent to India, he asked Toone, who opposed him, 'if he was disposed to trample upon the Cross'.<sup>40</sup>

The immediate reaction of the Court, which was under the Chairmanship of William Astell and Grant, to the so-called 'White Mutiny' was to support Barlow, confirm his dismissal of offending officers and recall Petrie, who had criticized Barlow's handling of the crisis. From the start there had been a minority of Directors, led by the same men who had opposed Grant over the missionary questions raised by the Vellore Mutiny, who refused to accept his handling of this latest affair. Amongst Grant's critics were Elphinstone, Inglis, Baring, Huddleston, Bannerman, Toone, Samuel Davis and Robert Thornton.<sup>41</sup> As the Directors went out of office, Grant slowly lost his supporters and, between 1810 and 1812, the dismissed officers, including Major Boles and Colonel Capper, were reinstated, Petrie's recall condemned, and finally Sir George Barlow himself recalled. Whatever the merits of the contending parties' arguments, the whole affair had far more to do with internal Company politics than with the mutiny itself. Grant claimed that his opponents were motivated by 'personal enmity and political

intrigue' and he was particularly annoyed that the motion to recall Barlow was passed at a meeting which his opponents knew he could not attend because he was in Scotland.<sup>42</sup> It is clear from the correspondence of the time that Grant, rather than Barlow, was the real target of the officers' supporters in the Court.<sup>43</sup>

Munro had been interested in the mutiny from the beginning, both as an army officer in the Company's forces of Madras and as a personal friend of some of the men involved. Petrie had recently taken an friendly interest in Munro's career, supporting his proposals for ryotwari settlements and his arguments against the introduction of zamindari estates as well as trying to help Munro retain his full commission on the revenue collections in the Ceded Districts. Major Boles and some of the other officers who had been suspended were also long term friends and acquaintances of his. His interest was sustained while he was in England by a letter from Boles, telling him of the grave financial problems that the writer's dismissal had caused him and asking for Munro's assistance, both financial and political. Munro, though always particularly careful and close with his money, immediately lent Boles £500.<sup>44</sup>

In addition to those inspired by concern for his friends, Munro had other reasons for being interested in the event. It must have occurred to him that, if Barlow's civilians were to totally triumph over the military, his own position and that of many of his friends and supporters in Madras, already under attack by those who opposed the employment of

military collectors, would be disastrously undermined. He knew that Barlow was strongly opposed to his ideas about the introduction of ryotwari settlements and for reforms in the judicial administration, being firmly committed to those embodied in the 'Bengal System' that he had helped to introduce and administer in that Presidency. It was therefore natural that Munro should support those Directors who opposed Grant, especially as these were the men to whom he had previously been introduced by his brother-in-law and who had already assisted him over the retrenched commission. It was also natural that they should turn to him for assistance. He was very well informed of events since he had received detailed reports of them from Thackeray and Gahagan and was in possession of copies of most of the relevant documents.<sup>45</sup> He was certainly better informed than Grant, who anxiously asked Dundas in 1810 if it were true that the army had executed the Governor.<sup>46</sup>

The ways Munro was able to use the mutiny and his subsequent involvement in the Court's politics to bring his policies forward are revealing of the decision-making processes of the Company. First he worked to create an image of himself as an expert on Indian affairs. There can be little doubt that, while assisting Grant's opponents with general information about the unrest and disorders in Madras, he also argued the merits of his own judicial and revenue theories. At the same time his reputation was unexpectedly enhanced from another quarter. Colonel Mark Wilks, who was not only a close friend of Munro but also of Major Boles, whom he later employed as his deputy when he was appointed

Governor of St Helena, was committed to defending the cases of the dismissed officers and therefore, like Munro, was actively involved in the Court's in-fighting. In 1810, Wilks published his Historical Sketches of the South of India, a book which had a significant impact on contemporary thought and which, because Wilks had so consistently supported them, attracted the sympathetic attention of the Court's dominant faction. In the book Wilks strongly supported many of Munro's views on the employment of Indian judges and the judicial administration generally.<sup>47</sup> He extensively quoted from Munro and in effect drew attention to him as being the expert on the administration of Madras.

At the same time as building a reputation as an expert, Munro enlisted the support of powerful individuals in the Company, using his involvement in the mutiny debate as an introduction. Colonel Sir George Dallas was an influential figure in the Company. He had served in Bengal under Warren Hastings and remained a firm supporter of him all his life. He frequently attended the India House debates, where his opinions carried great weight, and he was fairly active in the Company's politics. Colonel Dallas had two reasons for opposing Grant; his membership of Hastings's faction and his support of Free Trade, or at least the extension of the right to trade with India to the Outports, a policy that Grant resisted with determination. He was particularly interested in army reform and therefore in the whole question of the mutiny. Munro used the shared adherence to laissez-faire doctrines and mutual interest in the mutiny to enable him to approach Colonel Dallas and then subtly

manipulate the latter into support for his ideas. Above all else, Dallas did not wish to see the army retrenched or reduced in size because he believed that it was the sole support of British supremacy in India. In 1808, Munro had prepared a memo on the judicial system of Madras in which he suggested that the introductions of judicial reforms based on his ideas would lead to savings for the Company, which was in financial difficulties as a result of the recent wars, the Board's decision to repatriate part of the India Debt, and the unexpectedly high costs of administering the country. Shortly after the debate over the mutiny began in England, Munro changed the introduction of this memo to read; 'The number of troops now employed is not more than adequate to the purposes of maintaining tranquillity and defending the country...no material reduction can with safety be attempted. But, in the judicial branch, a very large proportion of the whole expense now incurred may be retrenched'<sup>48</sup>. It was almost certainly this version that Munro sent Colonel Dallas.

A third method that Munro now employed to bring sympathetic attention to his ideas was to attempt to have friends elected to the Court. Originally Munro became involved when he canvassed support for the candidates Grant's opponents nominated for the vacant seats in the Direction. He soon concentrated his efforts on helping those candidates who were also personal friends of his or likely to support him later. Thus he supported James Taylor, whom he described as 'a very old friend' and Hugh Lindsay and Colonel Allan, whose elections, he said, would give him 'two great friends

in the Direction'.<sup>49</sup> Once Munro realized the potential of this means of influencing the Court, he continued to work for his friends until he left for India, always looking to build a secure foundation of support for himself in the Court.<sup>50</sup>

Although the eventual triumph of Munro's friends over their opponents in the Court and his own activities were winning him some supporters and the interest of an increasingly wide circle of influential people, something else was needed before Munro could seriously hope that his ideas would prevail. The publication of the Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company' proved to be the catalyst that he needed.

The Select Committee had been established in 1808 when Dundas moved for its appointment in view of the imminent need to renew the Company's Charter. The Fifth Report itself was the consequence of three events simultaneously having an impact on the Select Committee. In 1807, the Board of Control had been reorganized and its old departments dealing with each Presidency had been replaced with departments dealing with particular subjects, one of which now handled revenue and judicial matters. Previous to this reorganization, 'neither the President nor the members, still less the permanent officers of the Board, had any detailed knowledge of what was going on in the several departments of India'.<sup>51</sup> It was only after the new departments had been created that the necessary expertise and access to information needed to produce a detailed survey of the Company's administration was available. Then, in 1810, the



Select Committee called upon Samuel Davis to assist them in the preparation of their report. Davis had only recently returned from Bengal, where he had been a judge at Benares, but had in the meantime been elected to the Court of Directors. He was determined 'to unmask the effects of Lord Cornwallis's Code'.<sup>52</sup> In 1811, Thomas Wallace, a member of the Board and Chairman of the Select Committee, had accidentally heard of the researches of James Cumming, the head clerk in the Board's Revenue and Judicial Department and a man who had devoted much of his official time and a great deal of his leisure to the investigation of the Company's judicial and revenue records. It was at Wallace's request that Cumming wrote his 'Memoir on the Revision of the Judicial System under the Government of Fort St George with a view to the reduction of Expenses and the more expeditious and efficient Administration of Justice',<sup>53</sup> and it was through Wallace that he came to the attention of the Board's President, Robert Dundas. When Davis asked to be supplied with official records, Dundas referred him to Cumming. It was largely as a consequence of Davis's discovery of Cumming's unrivalled knowledge of administrative affairs that the Committee accepted Davis's suggestion that he should write the part of the report dealing with Bengal while Cumming dealt with Madras.<sup>54</sup>

The report, by removing the principal obstacle to their general acceptance, cleared the way for the home authorities' adoption of Munro's ideas. It was a damning indictment of the Cornwallis Judicial System as a system and not just of its consequences in practice. As such, it raised

doubts in the minds of many who, prior to the Report's publication, had refused to listen to any criticism of the system because of the 'reverence entertained for its illustrious founder'.<sup>55</sup> But the Report went much further and Cumming's treatment of the revenue management of Madras presented a strong case for the ryotwari system.

Furthermore, both he and Davis recommended reforms of the judicial administration which very closely resembled those Munro had advanced. Equally important for Munro, Cumming quoted extensively from his writings and from Wilks's book in such a way as to suggest that these two men were the foremost experts in judicial and revenue matters and that it was practical experience rather than empty theorizing which had given them their knowledge. In addition, a large number of Munro's reports to the Madras Government and Board of Revenue, in which he had succinctly presented his arguments against the extension of zamindari settlements and the Bengal Judicial System, were printed in the Report's appendices.

The Fifth Report's support of Munro was not just an example of coincidence and fortuitous timing. It is clear that Munro had, in a variety of ways, managed to exert a direct influence over its contents quite apart from the indirect influence his reports and minutes despatched from Madras had already had on Cumming. First, he had cultivated a relationship with Davis. In this he had been aided by the fact that Davis, while a judge at Benares, had been Mountstuart Elphinstone's superior and friend. This had given him some influence with Mountstuart's uncle in the

Direction and was probably partly responsible for him joining Elphinstone and Munro's other friends in the Court in their opposition to Grant over the business of the suspended officers. It appears that Munro met Davis at this time and impressed him with his views since it was Davis who arranged for Munro to speak to the Committee.

It was with his evidence before the Select Committee that Munro had found a second way to influence the contents of the Fifth Report. In his evidence Munro had consistently presented the zamindar as either a military chieftain who posed a threat to the British or, where zamindari settlements had been introduced, as a tax farmer. On the other hand, he had argued that the ryot was, 'in almost every part of India, ...considered as the cultivating proprietor'<sup>56</sup>. Munro had then proceeded to urge the adoption of ryotwari settlements. Arguing that ryotwari settlements were no less permanent than zamindari or village settlements, he stressed that they alone permitted the Company to benefit directly from any extension in cultivation. He also claimed that ryotwari settlements were simple to administer, less open to abuses, and 'better calculated than any other to bring to view the whole resources of the country'. In addition, he stated his opinion that direct settlements with the ryots were the most likely to encourage the social and economic development of India.<sup>57</sup>

Munro's close friendship with James Cumming had given him his third means of influencing the contents of the Fifth

Report. It was also probably through Davis that Munro had been introduced to Cumming, whom the evidence suggests he had not met prior to 1812 despite the fact that Cumming had long admired his work. Cumming had based his 'Memoir on the Revision of the Judicial System' on papers Munro had written in 1806. In this paper, he had followed Munro's layout and arguments while frequently quoting him. Though it did not develop overnight, the two men had quickly formed a close friendship. One of the consequences of this friendship was that Munro had worked closely with Cumming while the latter prepared his part of the Fifth Report, reviewing what Cumming had written and sending him notes.<sup>58</sup>

Gleig claimed that Munro had also been able to influence the contents of the report in a fourth way by manipulating public opinion. According to Gleig, a significant number of authors submitted their reviews, articles and pamphlets on Indian affairs to Munro for his revision. The subsequent publication of these not only increased respect for his ideas but helped establish his credentials as one of the leading experts on Madras and brought his name before the general public.<sup>59</sup> Although there appears to be no direct evidence to support this assertion, it would seem difficult to exaggerate Munro's influence on the Report when one of its authors could write to him to say that he was 'perfectly convinced that no two men of ordinary understanding and unbiased minds who have examined attentively the revenue records can entertain the least doubt that the ryotwari principle of government ... is far, very far, superior in its good effects to any other'.<sup>60</sup>

The impact of the Fifth Report's publication on Munro's career was enormous. Prior to 1812, Munro's future had still been uncertain, even though he had many influential friends in the Court. His leave was nearly finished and it must have seemed to him that, for all he had done, he had essentially failed to establish his views or advance his career. He was so convinced of this, he had already begun to look around for a good post anywhere in India. When it was rumoured that Lord Moira might be sent to India as Governor-General, Munro wrote to his sister Erskine asking whether she could persuade her husband to use his friendship with Lord Moira to get him appointed to some high diplomatic post.<sup>61</sup> As late as April 1812, Munro's future seemed in the balance. When the Board refused to keep him in England because it did not think his presence necessary, he became seriously worried that the Court would order him back to Madras before he had been able to guarantee himself a position.<sup>62</sup> His anxiety was such that he even considered leaving India permanently and thought of accepting Wilks's offer of the Deputy Governorship of St Helena, the post later given to Major Boles.

After the publication of the report everything began to change for Munro. People now began to regard him as an authority on Indian affairs and they turned to him for information and advice. Even the Directors acknowledged his new status. In August he wrote to his brother to tell him that he could not leave London as he was about to be called upon by the Company to give his opinions on several topics.<sup>63</sup> Admittedly individuals at East India House had approached

him before. He been asked by M'Culloch in January to prepare a paper on his settlement of the Ceded Districts in order that it might be sent to Bengal<sup>64</sup> and in May Sir Hugh Inglis had sent him a paper on military topics for his opinions.<sup>65</sup> However these had been fairly routine requests which might have been made to any of the Company's senior officials on leave in Britain. By the second half of the year the situation was quite different. He was being inundated with requests for his assistance. Many of these were addressed to him privately. M'Culloch and Davis asked him to settle a disagreement over the differences between khas and ryotwari revenue management,<sup>66</sup> Elphinstone asked for papers on the judicial administration,<sup>67</sup> Grant wanted to discuss judicial matters with him,<sup>68</sup> and John Campbell, a friend of Wilberforce, asked his advice on the possibility of converting India.<sup>69</sup> Others were official. He was requested to attend committee meetings at India House to advise on sundry matters.<sup>70</sup> Munro's policy of promoting himself as an expert on Indian affairs was now paying dividends.

It is clear that Munro intended to take the maximum advantage of the reputation he and others had built up for him. The Company's Charter was due for renewal in 1813 and Munro was determined to involve himself in the debates preceding this. Even before the publication of the Fifth Report had had its full impact on his reputation, Munro was being urged by Bannerman to return to London since the Charter was already under discussion.<sup>71</sup> But, while Munro's contributions to the proceedings no doubt further enhanced his reputation and perhaps helped him to disseminate his

ideas, the really important event in terms of his future career was the appointment in March 1812 of Lord Buckinghamshire to the post of President of the Board of Control.

Buckinghamshire, as Lord Hobart, had been Governor of Madras from 1794 to 1798. During this time he had supported Read's and Munro's introduction of ryotwari settlements in the Baramahal until, in consequence of his quarrels with Sir John Shore, the Governor-General, the Court had recalled him.<sup>72</sup> The strong criticism to which the Court had subjected his general policies in Madras, its decision to recall him and the manner in which it had cavilled at granting him a pension, all left Buckinghamshire ill-disposed towards the Directors. He appeared determined to humiliate the Court. During the renewal of the Charter, Buckinghamshire consistently supported measures to break the Company's monopoly of the Indian trade and then further alienated the majority of the Directors by insisting that the new Charter had established the complete predominance of the Board over the Court. Adding insult to injury, he forced the Court to send amended despatches in which they were made to speak approvingly of measures to which they had always been opposed. At the same time, he insisted on referring slightly to the Company as a 'mercantile firm'.<sup>73</sup>

Until Buckinghamshire's appointment, Munro had been careful to offend as few interests as possible. The notes he prepared for use when he gave evidence before the Select Committee reveal just how careful he had been to avoid

incurring the hostility of any of the four major competing interest groups concerned with Indian affairs - the Free-Traders and the Monopolists, the pro and the anti-missionary groups.<sup>74</sup> To attract the interest of the free-trade lobby, he suggested that there was no reason why the Company's monopoly should not be broken in the ports controlled by the Europeans. To appease the Company monopolists, he insisted however that Europeans should not be permitted to trade in the interior, arguing that they were 'too apt to consider themselves as among a conquered people and treat them as an inferior race'. To further appease the monopolists, he claimed that there was no real demand for European articles in India and what there was the Company already adequately supplied. Munro stepped even more carefully when he considered the question of the missionaries in India. As a sop to Grant's party, he stated that he considered that Christian establishments posed no threat to the British in India provided the missionaries did not actively seek to convert the Hindus. As long as they worked in a solely private capacity, they were regarded as a 'harmless invasion'. On the other hand Munro, who seems to have privately doubted that missionary activity was very beneficial, stated that, were the Company's governments to be seen to support the missionaries, considerable discontent and hostility directed against the British would quickly emerge. He feared a religious rebellion might ensue, one which could easily result in the expulsion of the British.

With Buckinghamshire President of the Board of Control, Munro appears to have decided that he must connect himself



now with a specific interest group if he was to advance his prospects. Early in his career, Munro appears to have espoused the view that the Board rather than the Court was the lynch pin in the Company's administration.<sup>75</sup> He therefore now decided to throw in his lot with Buckinghamshire and chose to openly ally himself with the Board and its supporters. He had a number of good reasons for doing this, quite apart from the support Buckinghamshire had given to Read and himself while Governor of Madras. His family background, his adherence to the economic theories of Adam Smith and his friendship with Kirkman Finlay,<sup>76</sup> a leading member of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures, inclined Munro at this time to support the opening of the Indian trade. Buckinghamshire's son-in-law, John Sullivan, who had joined the Board as a paid Assistant Commissioner, had served as a civilian in Madras where he had known, liked and supported Munro. Munro realized that he could reach Buckinghamshire, who greatly valued Sullivan's advice on revenue and judicial matters, through his influence with the latter. In addition, there were Munro's close friendships with James Cumming, head of the Revenue and Judicial Department at the Board, and Thomas Wallace, who was serving as another paid Assistant Commissioner at the Board. These gave Munro an opportunity to exercise a much greater influence over the Board of Control than he could ever hope to exert on the Court of Directors. Furthermore, although there were now a number of men in the Court on whose support he knew he might rely, Munro realized that there were others, among them the influential Director Charles Grant, who strongly opposed his ideas.<sup>77</sup> It was therefore clear to

him that he had little cause to expect to be able to influence policy through that body.

There is little doubt that from the start Buckinghamshire and the other members of the Board intended to reform the revenue and judicial systems of India along the lines Munro had advocated. In 1812, the Board and the Court agreed a despatch which ordered the reintroduction of ryotwari into Madras but opposition in the Court initially blocked similar moves to order a revision of the judicial system.<sup>78</sup>

Buckinghamshire's reaction to this opposition was to try to have Thomas Wallace appointed Governor of Madras in place of Abercromby, who was temporarily filling the post which Barlow's recall had left vacant. He clearly hoped that Wallace in Madras, with the support of the Board at home, would be able to carry the reforms. Unfortunately Wallace's unpopularity with the Court and Buckinghamshire's tactless conduct united the Directors in their opposition.

Buckinghamshire was forced to withdraw his support for Wallace and accept the substitution of Hugh Elliot, Lord Minto's younger brother and his own wife's uncle, in Wallace's stead.

In November 1813, when it was clear that Wallace would probably not be appointed the next Governor of Madras, Munro, Sullivan and Cumming began preparing a judicial despatch incorporating all of Munro's ideas.<sup>79</sup> The Court had already set up a committee to investigate all aspects of the Company's administration, including the judicial, as a partial answer to the criticisms contained in the Fifth

Report. Munro was fully aware of what its findings were going to be since he was himself intimately involved in its investigations, as were a number of his friends and supporters.<sup>80</sup> Although he was exerting a considerable influence over the committee's work, he was aware that he had not fully brought it round to an acceptance of his views and realized that he stood little chance of winning over the Court to them. Men like Huddleston, who had previously supported him, were not prepared to see the ideals embodied in Cornwallis's Code thrown out while others, like Grant, were determined to oppose Munro's principal contention that executive and judicial powers should be reunited in the office of Collector. In December, almost immediately after Buckinghamshire had been manoeuvred into accepting Elliot as the next Governor of Madras, the Board ordered the Court to immediately prepare a despatch to Madras 'upon the subject of the system of criminal justice and police...as well as the administration of civil justice'.<sup>81</sup> Since the Board was aware that the Court's committee was about to report its findings and in view of its refusal to allow the Court to postpone the preparation of a despatch until George Barlow and Lord Moira should return to Britain and report,<sup>82</sup> it is more than probable that Buckinghamshire ordered the Court to produce a despatch merely to enable the Board to introduce the one it had already prepared.

Buckinghamshire had good reason to adopt this method of presenting the judicial despatch the Board had prepared to the Court. Earlier in 1813 he had been responsible for a significant deterioration in relations between the Board and

the Court. In July he had privately discussed with the Chairmen a despatch to be sent to India in which the provisions of the new Act of Parliament were to be explained. The Court forwarded a draft in 'previous communication' to the Board which returned a different draft, one which entirely superseded the Court's, with instructions that it was to be sent as it stood to India. The Court had objected strongly to the Board's action, rightly claiming that it alone possessed the power of originating despatches on ordinary subjects. In particular, the Court refused to accept Buckinghamshire's claim, which he had incorporated in his draft, that the new Act had established the complete predominance of the Board over the Court. Grant, Smith, Robarts, Toone, Reid, Huddleston and Daniell had been prepared to appeal for a legal decision and only Thornton's intervention had persuaded the Court to send Buckinghamshire's despatch. Although the fact that the majority of the East India members in Parliament were supporting the Ministry encouraged Buckinghamshire, there can be little doubt that he did not wish to risk another confrontation over his judicial despatch.<sup>83</sup>

While the Directors prepared their despatch, members of the Board began to canvass support for their own. Cumming contacted Sir Henry Strachey, a recognized authority on Indian affairs, and persuaded him to change his views on ryotwari settlements, which he had originally opposed.<sup>84</sup> Since the incompatibility of ryotwari settlements with the Cornwallis judicial system had been the principal reason for the former's rejection, it seems clear that the Board

intended, now that ryotwari had been accepted in principle, to reverse the argument. In January or early February, the Board received the Court's draft despatch. In it the Court advocated the transfer of judicial authority to the collectors in fiscal matters, gave them the power of magistrates to try petty cases, and urged the extended employment of Indian commissioners. But it still left the overall ascendancy of the judges largely unimpaired and gave the Madras Government and the Sadr Court the right to revise all its recommendations if they should appear unsuitable. The Board then sent the Court its version. This contained orders that effectively ended the separation of powers, made possible the wider employment of Indians and, most importantly of all, took away the discretionary power that the Court would have given the Madras Government to postpone the introduction of the new arrangements.

Only four men attended the Judicial Committee which reviewed the Board's despatch. These were the Chairman, Robert Thornton, the Deputy, William Elphinstone, Charles Grant and Edward Parry.<sup>85</sup> The Chairman and the Deputy had clearly been persuaded to accept the Board's despatch before it was brought before the Committee and had confidentially read it in advance. In the Committee, they met stiff opposition from Grant and Parry but were able to overrule them. Historians have hitherto been unaware of the extent to which the Board once more managed to subvert the legal and customary arrangements by which despatches should have been produced when it succeeded in getting the Court to sanction its judicial despatch to Madras.<sup>86</sup> Although the Board had

outwardly followed prescribed procedures by presenting its draft as a corrected version of the Court's, it had in fact used its power to manipulate circumstances in such a way as to permit it to impose its views on the Company.

In the meantime, Munro was approached by the Board and asked to return to Madras and oversee the introduction of the reforms. Considering the opposition to them that he knew to exist in the Court, Munro was initially unwilling to accept the appointment. In a conversation with Buckinghamshire on 28 February, he first refused the appointment unless an official post should be created for him.<sup>87</sup> When granted this, he then increased his demands and stated that he also wanted a promise of the next Governorship of Bombay.

Buckinghamshire was unable to make this promise but assured Munro that he never forgot his friends, hinting broadly that his request would be met. Munro immediately accepted the appointment and, taking little trouble to conceal his ambitions, received through Colonel Allan a memo from Sir Robert Barclay on the salary and allowances of the Governor of Madras.<sup>88</sup>

By March, Munro's appointment was assured but it had had a stormy passage through the Court and he was asked to keep the news secret.<sup>89</sup> He was also informed that he would be travelling to India on the same boat as Hugh Elliot and that Sullivan would introduce them before they left. It must be assumed that the Board, aware of the strength of the opposition in the Court and of the probable opposition in Madras, hoped that Munro and Elliot, in their respective

offices of Special Commissioner and Governor, would command sufficient authority to carry the day. On 29 April, the Court authorized the Judicial Despatch and on 4 May Munro was officially informed of his new appointment.<sup>90</sup> On the same day, Munro received a letter which revealed the equivocal way in which even some of his supporters viewed his character. In this letter, his long-time friend Colonel Allan hinted that there were fears that Munro would take advantage of his post to excessively remunerate himself. 'Bannerman and I', wrote Allan, 'entreat of you to be as provident as possible in your expenses. Your honour and our credit are at stake'.<sup>91</sup>

The Board celebrated its victory by immediately starting to prepare a similar despatch to Bengal.<sup>92</sup> As some measure of the unpopularity of these judicial reforms, it is interesting that Elphinstone and Davis, two Directors who consistently supported the Board's views, suggested that this second despatch should originate from the Board on the grounds that the whole idea was repugnant to the Court.<sup>93</sup> In doing this, they were encouraging the Board to once again act in a technically illegal manner since such despatches were supposed to be originated by the Court. However Buckinghamshire had now twice succeeded in imposing drafts originated by the Board on the Court and he was aware that, so long as he was supported by the Chairmen, he might continue to act in this manner.

The situation then that Munro left behind in Britain was one of open conflict between the Board and the Court. Toone

wrote to Hastings that the Directors 'are at open war with the Board and the Court divided, agitated beyond anything I ever remember'.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore the Board, under Buckinghamshire's influence, was interesting itself in the administration of India to an extent hitherto unprecedented. Thomas Courtenay, who was Secretary to the Board at this time, later stated that 'an inspection of the official drafts and letters of reasons gives a very imperfect idea of the extent and of the nature of the superintendence and control exercised by the Board. In some departments, especially in the revenue and judicial department, that control was exercised in Lord Buckinghamshire's time...to a very great extent indeed, in matters involving great principles as well as in matters of detail'.<sup>95</sup> This situation suited Munro since, while he knew he might rely totally on the support of the Board, he was aware that, for all his canvassing amongst the Directors and his efforts to have friends and supporters elected to vacancies in the Court, there was a significant number of Directors who completely opposed him. Although only Huddleston dissented to the Judicial Despatch and to Munro's appointment, Munro knew his opinions were shared by Grant and Parry, both of whom exercised great influence over the other Directors.<sup>96</sup>



## Chapter Seven

The Introduction of the 'Munro System':  
Munro's Special Commissionership, 1814-19.

Munro returned to Fort St George on 16 September 1814 after a seven-year furlough in Great Britain. He brought with him orders from the Court appointing him Special Commissioner responsible for the revision of the Madras judicial system in accordance with the instructions sent to the Presidency government in the Judicial Despatch of 29 April 1814. Even before he left Britain, Munro knew that there was strong opposition in Madras to any fundamental reform of the existing system and he was well aware that, though he could rely on the full support of the Board of Control, there were a significant number of Directors who opposed the measures he was to implement and the principles behind them. The ensuing controversy that his work gave rise to therefore came as no surprise to him. It was just an additional source of frustration, another complication to be considered along with the other problems that faced him. It did, however, open a window onto the decision-making processes of the East India Company which might otherwise have remained closed by forcing the conflicting interests and parties to clearly

emerge in the course of the struggles for power that took place. Issues and opinions had to be more precisely defined as attitudes hardened and policies were attacked or defended.

In the course of this chapter the events which dominated the period of Munro's Commissionership are reviewed and analysed for the light they throw on the Company's decision-making process. First, significant new information emerges about the motives which inspired the supporters and opponents of the Munro System in Britain and India. Then the methods used by men in the local administration to obstruct and significantly delay the implementation of orders from the home authorities to which they were strongly opposed are investigated. At the same time, the counter-measures taken by the supporters of the new policies are described. In the course of this research, the important role played by private, unofficial correspondence is examined in detail along with the other ways in which the formal arrangements of the Company were by-passed. Thirdly, changes that were occurring in the Company's power structure are analysed.

On his arrival in Madras, Munro discovered that the Company's administration in the Presidency was even more deeply divided by a variety of controversies, some of long standing and others of recent origin, than was the Court in London. Bitter dissension arising from personal and policy differences existed between individuals and groups who manoeuvred to gain advantages over their opponents. One officer described the situation succinctly when he wrote to warn Munro that 'if you don't belong to one junta, you must

to another or not be at all in society'<sup>1</sup>. The most deeply entrenched of these divisions was that between the military and the civilian employees of the Company which had been a source of problems for the Madras Administration from the 1780's. There is little doubt that part of the enthusiastic reception given to the extension of the Cornwallis System to Madras by the civil servants arose from their perception that it would greatly strengthen their position vis-a-vis the military. Their support for the system was a clear example of the importance of careerism as a significant factor behind individuals' attitudes towards policies. Not only did the Cornwallis System reduce the collectors to mere fiscal agents collecting fixed revenues from the zamindars, it made the district judges the true heads of the districts and the real representatives of the government. The judicial arrangements, which formed a central feature of the system, created many new official posts and at the same time restricted these to the civil branch of the Company. Many civilians feared that the reforms Munro intended to implement would destroy this advantage they held over the military.

Munro also discovered that the Madras Administration was still split by the long-standing division between the 'New' and 'Old School' interest groups. Although the power struggle that this division had produced had lost much of the intensity that had characterized it between 1800 and 1804, there remained in Madras a sufficient number of senior civil servants, members of the 'Old School', who felt they had justifiable grounds for resenting Munro's reappearance

with special authority to implement ideas they had always opposed, for it to be certain that he would experience considerable opposition.

During the years between the introduction of the Cornwallis System and Munro's return, a third major controversy had appeared to divide the Company's administration in Madras, appearing this time within the ranks of the civil service itself. From its inception, the Cornwallis zamindari settlement system had been subjected to criticism in Madras, largely because the presence of zamindars in the Presidency was the exception rather than the rule. In Bengal, relations between the zamindars and their ryot tenants were to some extent governed by local customs which curtailed the worst excesses of the former. In most of Madras, no such customary rules and traditional practices operated to limit the zamindars' exercise of their power. The indigenous methods of settling disputes were unable to cope with the new conditions and the judicial arrangements introduced by the British were too alien to the inhabitants, too expensive and too slow to provide a viable alternative. Against a background of increasing corruption and oppression, the revenues had fallen as the number of estate bankruptcies rose sharply and agricultural production declined. Opinion within the administration over the corrective action to be taken was, from the start, deeply divided between those who believed that the Cornwallis system, an essentially European solution to Indian problems, might be modified and made to work, and those who argued that the Company should re-examine traditional Indian administrative practices and

adopt a system based on them. Men like John Hodgson, Edward Greenaway and Thomas Oakes, who supported the principles of the Cornwallis System, had developed the concept of village settlements as a means of adapting it to conditions in Madras. On the other side, Munro and his supporters, who were largely drawn from among the younger civil servants who had received their training as collectors under Munro, Macleod or Graham in ryotwari districts, had espoused the alternative view.

While Munro had remained in Madras and commanded the patronage of sympathetic Governors, the supporters of ryotwari had been somewhat in the ascendant. In the years following Munro's return to Britain, the position had been reversed. By 1814, the majority of the civil servants supported the village system, partly because it seemed more compatible with the new judicial system in whose continuance they had a vested interest and partly because, with the arrival of George Barlow as Governor, it had been sanctioned as official policy. Promotion in the administration was, despite rules regarding seniority, largely a matter of influence and patronage. Successive Governors used their powers of appointment to promote their policies. In consequence fundamental switches of allegiance to policies were quite normal amongst the civil servants who would adopt those they perceived most likely to advance their careers. After Bentinck's recall a number of Munro's supporters had joined the opposition camp. Even Thackeray, the most outspoken of the advocates of ryotwari, sensing the change in climate, had joined Hodgson and, feebly justifying his

actions to Munro, energetically promoted village settlements.<sup>2</sup>

In Britain, Munro and the other supporters of ryotwari settlements had succeeded in persuading the Court that any permanent settlements made with intermediaries, be they zamindars, village patels or renters, were a mistake. The Court had accepted that the zamindars had failed to protect the ryots and had had doubts that the village settlements would prove more successful. Most importantly of all, the supporters of ryotwari had overcome the objection that ryotwari settlements were inconsistent with British methods of administering justice. The Court had accepted that the only difference was that, while under a ryotwari system the obstructions occasioned by the judicial system were experienced by the collectors, under other systems the inconvenience was merely transferred to the zamindars, mirasdars or village headmen. It had also been accepted that the use of intermediaries did not make the details of settlements any easier, which still had to be carried out by someone. The question had been whether it were not better that the settlements should be the responsibility of the collectors rather than of some other group composed of Indians. With the question phrased in this way, the Directors' instinctive suspicion of Indians and the generally held assumption in Britain that the Company's officials should be in a position to fully supervise the revenues, had inclined the home authorities to support the introduction of a ryotwari system. This decision had been influenced by Munro who had been able to persuade the

Directors that he had not found his administration impeded by the details of ryotwari settlements. He had argued that, once the initial settlements had been concluded with surveys, the collection went by itself. In consequence, the Court had ordered that ryotwari settlements were to be introduced as soon as the decennial village leases expired.<sup>3</sup>

Despite the Court's orders, the supporters of the village leases in Madras were determined to see them permanently adopted. Apart from seeking with private letters and official minutes, reports and despatches to change the Court's decision, these men were prepared to employ the techniques of delay and inaction to prevent the replacement of their policies by ones to which they had long been vehemently opposed.

It was against the background of these divisions that opposition to Munro, both personal and political, was already being organized, even before his arrival in September. Munro, a military man, a known opponent of the judicial system and an outspoken advocate of ryotwari, was believed to be returning to head a commission intent 'on turning everything upside down'.<sup>4</sup> Additional factors further complicated the situation. Foremost amongst these was the natural animosity felt by the local government towards its distant masters who were now accused, as they had frequently been before, of interfering in matters they did not really understand. Munro was clearly aware of this instinctive resentment harboured by the local administration against the Home Authorities and stressed its importance when he wrote

to Cumming that 'most of the men in office about the Presidency are Regulation-men, sticklers for every part of the present system and opposers of every reform of it from home'.<sup>5</sup> He appreciated that the majority of the civil servants not only opposed reform but failed to see why, if these reforms must be made, they might not be left to the local government. In addition there was a general feeling that, if a special commissioner had to be appointed, he should have been chosen from among the senior civil servants in Madras, a number of whom felt that they had been superseded. The civil servants quite rightly recognized that Munro's appointment was an open criticism by the Home Authorities of their administration and a vote of no confidence on their ability to implement the new policies. Hugh Elliot captured the feel of the situation when he wrote that 'men of the most distinct party prejudices have been huddled together and many secret feelings of personal animosity still rankle in the breasts of those who were engaged in former contentions and virulent discussions'.<sup>6</sup>

On his arrival, Munro immediately began work. He adopted two courses of action, one official and the other unofficial. Officially he began examining all the reports from the judges, collectors and commercial residents to the Committees of Police from 1805 to 1814. He soon discovered that few of their recommendations had been acted upon and he seems to have entertained no very high opinion of the quality of their work. In this he was not alone. Gahagan informed him that the Committees had done little beyond eat hearty tiffins.<sup>7</sup> Unofficially, he began to build a personal



power base within the administration. He wrote to those civil servants, men like Read, Cochrane, Gahagan, Bruce and Chaplain, whom he numbered among his friends and supporters. Under the guise of seeking their advice, which notes he had already drawn up suggest he felt no real need of, he attempted to personally interest them in the introduction of the new measures. He manoeuvred to have George Stratton, an old friend who had just returned to India, appointed as the Second Commissioner and the Third Judge of the Sadr Court. Writing to members of the Board in London, Munro urged them to attempt to have men like Graham and Thackeray, on whom he believed he might rely for support, returned to India. He also asked the Board to arrange for him to be given authority to by-pass the usual rules of procedure and, ignoring the Board of Revenue, the Sadr Court and even the Council, directly introduce his new Regulations.<sup>8</sup>

On 24 December, Munro wrote to the Council spelling out what he understood to be the duties of the Commission as defined in the Judicial Despatch of April.<sup>9</sup> He analysed the despatch, dividing its contents into two sets of orders - those to be implemented as soon as possible and those to be considered. He expressed his opinion that the most important and urgent of the former was the transfer of magisterial and police powers from the zillah judges to the collectors. 'All the rest are', he wrote, 'subordinate to and dependent upon this. It must necessarily be carried into effect before any one of them can be brought forward'.<sup>10</sup> Munro proposed a short regulation which would simply authorize this transfer. This would leave the collectors operating under the existing

regulations until such time as more comprehensive ones should be drawn up. In order to give effect to the other changes ordered by the Court of Directors in the Judicial Despatch of 29 April 1814, Munro proposed another six regulations. One to restore the management of the village police to the headmen and that of the district police to the tahsildars and amildars under the collectors. A second to constitute the headmen as native commissioners and authorize the employment of village panchayats in civil cases and a third to govern the appointment of Indian district commissioners and district panchayats. The remaining three were intended to increase the collectors' authority. They were to be invested with powers to enforce patta regulations, to settle boundary disputes and to prevent proprietors of land from distraining property without their authority.<sup>11</sup>

While waiting for the Council's reply, Munro received letters from Cumming at the Board and from various civil servants in Madras who supported his views.<sup>12</sup> In the former, Cumming regretfully announced that the Board was unable to give Munro the unencumbered authority he desired. At the same time he informed Munro that the Court's Judicial Committee had been disbanded and that he had assumed responsibility for drawing up judicial despatches. He also told Munro that he was receiving increasing support in Britain, both inside and outside the Court of Directors. The letters received from the civil servants contained support for Munro's suggested measures together with comments which throw much light on the Company's bureaucracy. Gahagan,

suggesting that Munro might look at two papers on native commissioners and panchayats prepared in 1812 and 1813, wrote; 'You will find them in the shelves of the Sudder Adawlut where everything sticks if they do not concur. They have hitherto made it a rule never to send up to Government any proposition of the lower courts where they are of a different opinion'.<sup>13</sup> Read, in a letter to Munro telling him that the Indians expected great changes from his reforms, criticized the system by which the Government gathered intelligence. He wrote; 'If I may be permitted to offer an opinion, it would be to attend more to the information given you by the natives than Europeans...for it is astonishing how smooth and easy things are made to appear in the eyes of our superiors when deputed to report on the states of the provinces'.<sup>14</sup> In the light of these remarks and the known hostility of Hodgson and Greenaway at the Revenue Board, the judges of the Sadr Adalat, and some of the members of the Council, it becomes clear why Munro wanted the authority to by-pass these bodies.

On 1 March 1815, Munro was informed by the Madras Council that, though it agreed with him that the Court had ordered the transfer of the management of the police to the collectors, it did not believe that a similar transfer of the magistracy was intended.<sup>15</sup> In their opinion, paragraphs 95 and 102 of the despatch of 29 April 1814 contained 'only incidental expressions favouring that opinion'. It is extremely difficult to understand how the Council reached this decision. Paragraph 95 states that 'the tahsildars of the districts form a part of the regular establishment of

the collector, to whom we propose to transfer the duties of magistrate'. In paragraph 102 there are clear references to the collectors working in their 'magisterial capacity' and as 'acting as the magistrates of zillahs'. Only a determination to resist the Court's orders seems to offer any explanation for the decision. The fact that the Government was not even prepared immediately to transfer the management of the police to the collectors but insisted that the implementation of these orders must wait until additional information about the present situation was available, supports this conclusion. What is however clear is that Hugh Elliot was not supporting Munro in the manner the Board had expected him to do.

There are a number of possible explanations for Elliot's behaviour. First it is clear that the new Governor had been given the impression that 'everything was in the best possible state'. He was assured by men like Robert Fullerton, the second member of Council, that the Court's practical reforms had already been anticipated and that conditions had changed so much in recent years that Munro should abandon his former opinions.<sup>16</sup> But this does not explain the vehemence of his rejection of Munro. For this one has to look elsewhere. There are probably two explanations. Elliot may have discovered the extent of Munro's ambitions and now feared him as a rival with the consequence that he was unduly open to criticism of Munro's measures. In addition, Elliot had been in Britain long enough to be aware of the open conflict between the Board and the Court. He realized that he had not been

Buckinghamshire's choice of governor and may have believed his best chance of continued employment, which his letters clearly reveal was his foremost consideration if only because he needed the money, lay in conciliating the Court rather than in supporting the Board. He had the example of Wellesley's stormy Governor-Generalship to encourage him in this belief. If this was the case, knowing that Buckinghamshire's overbearing attitude over the appointment of the new Commander-in-Chief for Bombay had temporarily united the Directors and aware that Grant, who firmly opposed the reforms ordered in the Judicial Despatch, was to be the next Chairman as from April, Elliot probably believed it to be politic to delay those reforms' introduction. What is certain is that, at the time the Governor-in-Council's decision was announced, Elliot also announced that he did not 'view anything contained in the judicial letter in the light of orders'<sup>17</sup>. He added, in a conversation with the younger John Sullivan, that he pitied 'the ignorance of the poor people in England who had been misled by ill-informed persons and particularly pointed out the absurdity of trusting for information on judicial subjects to four colonels - Munro, Malcolm, Wilks and Smith'.

Munro and Stratton reacted swiftly. On 28 March, they wrote to the Government insisting that the Court's despatch ordered that the offices of magistrate and collector should be united.<sup>18</sup> By doing this, they in effect referred the question back to the Home Authorities to whom the Government was required to forward their comments. To try to insure that the Home Authorities would support him, Munro wrote to

the Board and to friends among the Directors.<sup>19</sup> He told them of the problems facing him and asked them to arrange that the local government should receive the clearest orders in his favour. To Cumming he wrote, 'I think it necessary to caution you that, if it is expected that instructions are to be obeyed, the strongest and plainest words must be used'. Munro also persuaded his friends at Madras to write similar letters to the authorities in London. In particular, he encouraged John Sullivan to write to his father at the Board, knowing the influence the older Sullivan exercised over Lord Buckinghamshire.

At the same time Munro prepared a memo on the Governor-in-Council's decision in which he listed the various heads of information that he understood the Government to require before he might proceed further with the transfer of the police to the collectors and the introduction of the other six regulations he had proposed.<sup>20</sup> These included statistics about the distribution and allowances of the village patels and additional information about traditional policing techniques. He treated this matter with urgency because he realized that the Council's refusal to allow him to proceed with the promulgation of his less controversial regulations, the transfer of the police and responsibility for deciding revenue disputes to the collectors and the extension of Indian involvement in the judicial processes, was really inspired by a desire to delay matters rather than a belief that the Government lacked sufficient information to act. In a letter to Cumming, he remarked that the Government were clearly determined to

protract the Commission's business 'far beyond the period limited by the Court of Directors'.<sup>21</sup>

In May, the Government discovered another method of delaying Munro's work. Elliot announced in Council that he had found a letter sent in 1804 by the Supreme Government to Bentinck in which the Government of Madras was forbidden to promulgate new regulations without first obtaining permission from Calcutta.<sup>22</sup> Claiming not to be certain whether this order applied to regulations ordered from Britain as well as those drawn up under local initiative, Elliot refused to act until he had heard from the Governor-General in Council.

During the following months, Munro and Stratton worked on the drafts of the seven regulations that had been proposed in December. Two of these restored some judicial authority to the patels, three extended and defined the powers of the Indian district judiciary, one gave the collectors authority to settle some land disputes, and the last transferred responsibility for the police to the collectors.<sup>23</sup> The Government, clearly determined to employ all means at their disposal to delay the Commission's work, referred the draft regulations to the Sadr Adalat for revision. Here Munro's opponents were able to legitimately hold up the whole process and there is strong evidence that this is what they were deliberately doing. In particular, there is the court's refusal to allow Stratton to take part in the regulations' revision even though his participation in this process was clearly the intention behind his appointment to the court.

Faced by the possibility of interminable delays, Munro reacted by writing more letters to the authorities in Britain. To Cumming, he described the tactics employed by the Sadr Adalat, the Government and the Supreme Government.<sup>24</sup> He also laid out what he perceived to be the four principal grounds for the opposition to his measures. These were the civil servants' fears of Indian corruption and of reduced opportunities for employment, their conservative predilection for the established system, and their jealousy of Munro's advancement. At the same time, Munro began to prepare to attack the problem from a new angle. He decided to attempt to discredit the present system and thereby its supporters.

Sullivan's appointment as Collector of Coimbatore gave Munro an opportunity to do this. Sullivan, like his father at the Board, was an enthusiastic supporter of Munro's ideas. Furthermore, because of his father's office, Sullivan was the only collector with sufficient influence to openly challenge the Board of Revenue without endangering his career. Shortly after his arrival in Coimbatore, Sullivan had found evidence of maladministration.<sup>25</sup> The scepticism with which the Revenue Board met his reports may have suggested to Munro the idea of turning Sullivan's investigations into an issue. In many ways, it was an ideal opportunity. The previous collector, Garrow, was dead so there was no possibility of opposition forming round him nor any question of personalities being entangled in the debate which could therefore concentrate on the operation of the system. Should



it be proved to have failed, its supporters would be discredited. Furthermore, the Revenue Board's and the Sadr Adalat's ignorance of any maladministration would cast doubts on the validity of their evidence in support of the existing arrangements.

Munro persuaded Elliot, in spite of objections from the Revenue Board, to appoint him in September to investigate with Sullivan the condition of the district.<sup>26</sup> He immediately asked Sullivan to gather material proving that the village leases should be ended.<sup>27</sup>

Meanwhile in London, the Board and Munro's supporters in the Court had received his letters and were preparing to assist him. They had clearly not expected Elliot's defection. Samuel Davis wrote, 'I am not at all surprised at the difference of opinion between you and the two inferior members of Government, the Secretaries and the Board of Revenue. All this was to be expected. But I owe I am greatly surprised to find that...you have not had the full support and entire confidence of the Governor'.<sup>28</sup> Sullivan at the Board admitted that 'everything had been assumed as if taken for granted'.<sup>29</sup> But, despite being caught unprepared, the Board was able to react quickly to the news. A letter to the Court was drafted in which the Court was required to order Elliot to support Munro.<sup>30</sup> At the earliest opportunity, Buckinghamshire sent this to Grant together with another letter informing him that the Court was to support Munro's interpretation of the Judicial Despatch.<sup>31</sup> Fearing delay, Buckinghamshire ordered Grant to immediately place the

communications before the Committee of Correspondence and send a despatch as soon as possible. He added that, should Grant delay, the Board would send a despatch themselves.

While Buckinghamshire corresponded with Grant, Cumming was actively canvassing support for the Board's actions. He became acquainted with M'Cullo<sup>32</sup>ck, the Assistant Examiner of Indian Correspondence at India House and, inviting him to dinners with Ravenshaw and Thackeray, converted him to Munro's views. Cumming wrote in a letter to Munro, 'I showed M'Cullo<sup>32</sup>ck confidentially your letters and he is decidedly for giving you every support and, as far as his influence goes, it will be cordially afforded in the Court'. In fact M'Cullo<sup>32</sup>ck's support proved very important. Many of the Directors fixed their signatures to despatches they had not read, relying on the Chairman and his deputy to advise them.<sup>33</sup> With Grant opposing the judicial reforms, those Directors who supported Munro would have found it, without M'Cullo<sup>32</sup>ck's help, much harder to bring the Court to a quick acquiescence in the Board's orders.

As it was, some of the Board's acts at this time, in particular Buckinghamshire's support of Major Hart's dubious claims against the Company and the decision to attempt to clear Graham's name, made support in the Court for Munro's measures precarious. Major Hart had, in 1799, sold the Madras army 106,000 seers of grain which he claimed to have bought privately after he had informed the authorities that the army's stores, for which he was responsible, had been exhausted. When he had later proved unable or unwilling to

produce his bills of purchase, the Madras Government had found him guilty of peculation and suspended him.<sup>34</sup> This decision had been endorsed by the home authorities who dismissed him for contravening regulations which forbade commissaries of grain to possess private stores for profit.<sup>35</sup> When Hart appealed against this decision, Dundas ordered that he be paid.<sup>36</sup> The Court took legal advice and were informed that, since the matter did 'not concern civil or military government or revenues of the Indian possessions', the Board of Control had no right to intervene in the matter.<sup>37</sup> Dundas had therefore agreed to shelve the issue. Buckinghamshire, determined to embarrass the Directors, raised the matter again and ordered the Court to authorize the payment of Hart's claim.<sup>38</sup> When the Court refused, Buckinghamshire applied for a mandamus. The Directors appealed to the Privy Council to uphold their authority in this matter. However, since the most members of the Board also sat on the Council, the Privy Council ruled that the case lay within the Board's jurisdiction and that the Court must comply with its orders.<sup>39</sup> The whole episode revealed the extent of Buckinghamshire's hostility towards the Court and his determination to extend the Board's authority over the operations of the Company. It also revealed that, in fact if not theory, the ultimate authority on all Indian affairs had, to all intents and purposes, passed to the Board of Control which now possessed the power to legalize even its decisions even when these dealt with matters were formally outside its jurisdiction.

The Board's decision to have Graham reinstated was another

example of this in action. The decision was taken less with a view to returning a supporter of Munro to Madras than with the aim of embarrassing the Court. Cumming told Munro that the Board intended to reopen the case of Graham's dismissal and he stated that this would greatly annoy Grant because it would discredit men who had been regarded as his supporters.<sup>40</sup> Cumming, who had personally prepared Graham's papers, was convinced that they would publicly reveal 'the scandalous proceedings of Oakes and Place' and show that Graham had been made the victim of 'a vile conspiracy' for no other reason than that he had been a military collector who had belonged to the 'Baramahal fraternity'.<sup>41</sup>

In late December, the Court sent a judicial despatch to Madras.<sup>42</sup> In it the Home Authorities observed that the transfer of the magistracy to the collectors was, in their opinion, 'fairly deducible' from the despatch of 1814 and to be carried out as soon as possible. They agreed with the Commission's suggestion that general regulations should be passed immediately and then subsequently adjusted. It was also confirmed that regulations drawn up for internal administration in conformity with orders from Britain did not need to be submitted to Calcutta for the Governor-General's sanction. The Government was further ordered not to delay the promulgation of new regulations until more detailed investigations were concluded. The influence of the Board is clearly discernible throughout the despatch but especially where the commissioners are directly referred to. The determination to prevent the Madras Government from continuing to employ delaying tactics to

obstruct the introduction of the reforms which is visible in the despatch is further evidence of the Board's influence.

While the Court was arranging to send the judicial despatch to Madras, Munro was occupied in investigating the corruption in Coimbatore. There was little else for him to do at this time because the Sadr Adalat, despite half-hearted requests from Elliot, refused to return the draft regulations with their comments. These did not reach the Government until December.<sup>43</sup> When the revised regulations did finally reach the Government, it was clear that the Sadr Adalat was intentionally obstructing the introduction of the reforms ordered by the Court of Directors. The Commissioners however diplomatically chose to publicly regard the Sadr Adalat's attitude as the consequence of their having completely misunderstood the purposes behind the reforms. They observed that 'most of the difficulties seen by the Sudder Adawlut originate in their viewing the potail, not as what he is, a head ryot engaged in agriculture and deciding one or two petty suits in the year, but as a regular judge solely occupied in hearing causes from one end of the year to the other'.<sup>44</sup> Stratton, in his answer to the Sadr court's criticisms, revealed the gulf between the court and the Commission. 'Our object', he wrote, 'is to administer speedy and summary justice on petty disputes.... The selection of heads of villages as judges...affords the only means of bringing into operation the speedy administration of justice'.<sup>45</sup> He then laid down a very important principle which represented a revolutionary advance in administrative practice. He stated that 'all regulations should in the

beginning conform as nearly as possible to the existing customs of the country and be changed progressively with these customs. Though justice is everywhere the same, the mode of dispensing it differs in all countries and that which is acceptable under one state of society may be quite the reverse under another. We should therefore give to the natives...courts suited rather to the present state of society among them than to our ideas of what such courts ought to be'.

By the beginning of 1816, the tide of opinion was turning in favour of Munro. Letters started to arrive at Madras which made it clear to all concerned that the Commission had the support of both the Board and the Court. Sullivan, for example, informed Munro that his father was remaining at the Board merely to support the Commissioners.<sup>46</sup> Elliot heard, probably from Elphinstone, his correspondent at the Court, that Grant's election to the Chair had not deflected the Home Authorities from their determination to introduce the reforms. Delicately weighing the consequences of continued opposition to the Board's wishes against the benefits to be expected from the Court, Elliot wrote to Cumming to assure him that he had complete confidence in Munro.<sup>47</sup> Although he was as yet unaware of it, Elliot had made one of the shrewder moves of his career. A letter was on its way to him from Buckinghamshire informing him that, as a consequence of the delays, Munro's appointment was to be continued beyond the original two years. Buckinghamshire commented that he hoped this would 'show to those who have preferred their own private system...that the authorities at home are not to be

turned from their course'.<sup>48</sup>

At the same time, the results of Munro's and Sullivan's investigations in Coimbatore were becoming general knowledge in Madras. These had disclosed 'a scene of malversation, fraud and embezzlement' by the Company's Indian employees and possibly by the last collector which the Court of Directors were to claim later stood 'unparalleled in the annals of British India'.<sup>49</sup> As Munro had fully intended, these findings and the report he and Sullivan presented to the Government in February proved 'a tender subject for most of the great authorities..., who did not believe there could be any abuses where the regulations were so well understood'.<sup>50</sup> Its revelations were so unpalatable for many of the civilians in Madras that it was neither referred to the Board of Revenue nor sent to Britain for over six months. But this did not lessen its impact. Although Munro's diehard critics remained unconvinced, less committed civil servants and those whose opposition was already wavering in the face of the Home Authorities' obvious determination to support Munro began to switch allegiance. Most importantly, Elliot found in the investigation's results a justification for his new commitment to the commissioners.<sup>51</sup>

In the light of these developments, Fullerton's Minute of 1 January should not only be seen as another attack on Munro's policies but also as a desperate attempt to stem the tide.<sup>52</sup> His constant references to Munro and his supporters as mere 'military authorities' and the manner in which he emphasized the remarks which appeared to be attacks on the judges as

individuals rather than those which dealt with the judiciary as an organization clearly indicated that the Minute was supposed to rally the opposition. Among his general arguments against the new policies, which tended to be repetitions of those already advanced, Fullerton presented two new ones. First, he stated that Munro had made a fundamental error in not recognizing that the present courts acted as courts of equity as well as of law and were hence far more flexible than Munro gave them credit for being. By presenting this argument, Fullerton could attack Munro's proposals and drive home the observation that the present policies rested only on 'the opinions of military gentlemen who have written on the civil judicature'. His second point was particularly interesting since it showed how Munro's opponents, having resigned themselves to some reforms, were prepared to use arguments in favour of these to try to discredit those reforms yet to be introduced. Fullerton, recognizing that the village system was definitely to be replaced by a ryotwari one, argued that the central principle of the latter was the removal from the patels of the power to oppress the ryots. This, he claimed, was why settlements were made directly with the ryots and, examining Read's and Munro's reasons for introducing ryotwari settlements into Baramahal, he seems to have had a valid point. From this position Fullerton argued that Munro's plans to enlarge the native agency and give the patels judicial powers would, if carried into effect, give them a renewed capacity to oppress the ryots and thereby defeat the whole purpose of the re-introduction of ryotwari.



By the end of January, Elliot was giving Munro the support which it had been the Board's intention he should, as Governor, be in a position to supply. He asked Munro to send him the report on Coimbatore as soon as possible in order that replies might be drafted to the critical minutes of Fullerton and Alexander.<sup>53</sup> Elliot also expressed himself 'in very strong terms regarding the systematic opposition and the want of cooperation evinced on all occasions by the Sudder Adawlut and by the Board of Revenue'.<sup>54</sup> He also announced that he would tolerate no further delays and let it be known that he would promulgate any further regulations without referring them to the Sadr court.

During the next months, the commissioners drew up a final draft of the seven regulations which Munro had first proposed in December 1814. On the surface, these regulations were to give the patels limited judicial powers, to extend those of the district munsiffs, to permit the employment of panchayats and to transfer the superintendence of the police to the collectors. However, behind each of these was a clear intention to try to re-introduce traditional modes of administering justice and the police. Munro hoped that the employment of the patels would restore to them their former authority in their villages which the introduction of the judicial regulations had destroyed. Satisfied that panchayats were commonly employed under Indian governments to decide suits, Munro believed that they were as central to the Indian conception of justice as juries were to the British. The primary purpose of the decision to abolish the daroga establishments and return much of the responsibility

for the police to the villages was clearly to revive traditional practice.<sup>55</sup>

These draft regulations were presented to the Government on 25 April by Elliot. His accompanying minute stated, 'The President submits to the Board a correct copy of the regulations formed by the commissioners for the revision of the judicial system and proposes that the said regulations be passed and promulgated'. Munro, who must have often wondered if he would ever see his regulations passed, wrote with delight and relief on the bottom of his copy of this minute just three words which summed up all his feelings - 'Short and sweet'.<sup>56</sup>

But Munro's relief was premature. Over the next few days Fullerton and Alexander, the Second and Third Members of the Council, strenuously opposed the promulgation of the regulations. Elliot finally informed Munro that 'it will be left to me to carry through by my own authority, or perhaps with the concurrence of the Commander in Chief, your amended regulations'.<sup>57</sup> But, as usual, his words were bolder than his actions and, under pressure from Fullerton and Alexander, he accepted the expediency of further delay and consented to it.<sup>58</sup> It was typical of him that, on the day he agreed in Council to further delay, he wrote to Munro that this was the one thing he would not do.<sup>59</sup> Had Munro also known that Buckinghamshire had died after a fall from a horse on the 4 February, he might have been very worried.

Towards the end of May the Court's Judicial Despatch, which

gave unqualified support to the Commission's proposals, arrived and Elliot immediately sent Munro a private, unofficial copy.<sup>60</sup> With the despatch came Buckinghamshire's letter to Elliot ordering him to support Munro. Immediately work on the police and boundary regulations was suspended and the commissioners directed to prepare three new regulations. These modified and defined the powers of the magistrates, transferred them from the zillah judges to the collectors and established a general system of police under the collectors as magistrates. The Commission's drafts were laid before the Council on 8 July 1816 and then sent to the Sadr Adalat for revision. When the Sadr court tried to employ delaying tactics again, the commissioners revised and corrected the regulations themselves.<sup>61</sup> The court then produced an alternative scheme under which the collectors would act as police magistrates and the judges would remain zillah magistrates. The commissioners decided it was so much at variance with the Court of Directors' intentions that it might be ignored and they persuaded Elliot to pass their regulations without further delay. There was a last ditch attempt by the Board of Revenue, now under Fullerton's presidency, to stop this.<sup>62</sup> The Board produced a paper which it had hitherto held back but Elliot told Munro that he had no doubt that this was a ploy to delay the regulations and that he intended to press ahead regardless.

Elliot was undoubtedly encouraged to do this by the news that further attempts in Britain to change the home authorities' policy had failed. In the Court of Directors, Grant and his supporters had attempted to discredit Munro

and the policies he represented. Sullivan wrote to his son from the Board that, 'amongst the acts that have been used to bring the Commission into disrepute, one, addressed to the popular feeling about economy..., has been exhibited showing that the disbursements to Munro alone amount to 28,000 pagodas a year'<sup>63</sup>. Those who opposed Munro and the policies he represented clearly hoped that, if they could win sufficient support at India House, they would be able to cajole or intimidate the new President of the Board, George Canning, into reversing Buckinghamshire's policies. They failed largely because Sullivan and Cumming managed to convince Canning that these policies should not be abandoned. Even so, the attacks in the Court were sufficiently serious to persuade Munro that something had to be done. He arranged with Elliot to have Stratton permanently attached to the Sadr Adalat so that his salary might appear against the Judicial Department's budget rather than the Commission's.<sup>64</sup>

The entire episode illustrated the importance to Munro of the Board of Control's active support. It is clear that without it he would have quickly lost his authority in Madras where opposition to his reforms would have seriously delayed their introduction and probably have significantly modified their content. Munro's supporters in Britain were well aware of the situation and this knowledge influenced their actions. Sullivan in particular placed Munro's need of support before his own personal feelings. On his arrival at the Board of Control, Canning had abolished the formal meetings of the Commissioners and thus openly announced that

the President was in fact the Board.<sup>65</sup> By doing this, he had indirectly undermined Sullivan's status and influence which had already been affected by Buckinghamshire's death. In addition, while Sullivan had realized he could not hope to exercise the same influence over Canning nor stand on the same footing with him as he had with his father-in-law Buckinghamshire, he had been upset when the new President had made Thomas Courtenay, the Board's Secretary, his confidant.<sup>66</sup> In the face of Canning's apparent intention to build a power base for himself at the Board by altering the balance of power in favour of his friends, Sullivan's personal inclination was to retire. However, aware that Munro more than ever needed the support of friends well placed in the home administration, Sullivan decided to continue in office. Announcing his decision to his son, he wrote that he was determined to remain at the Board where he could effectively support Munro.<sup>67</sup>

On 13 September, the new regulations were finally passed by the Council.<sup>68</sup> Fullerton, who at last agreed that these did represent the home authorities' wishes, still tried to introduce additional arrangements for the close supervision of the collectors, probably because these would have preserved the judges' status and offices.<sup>69</sup> Elliot rejected his proposals, agreeing with the commissioners that there were already sufficient controls. Writing to Elphinstone in London, he also succinctly described the new concept of progressive development that was embodied in the regulations. 'The new judicial system', he wrote, 'must in some degree be considered as an experiment called for by the

defects of the former system which, in its turn, will no doubt be subject to improvement or correction'.<sup>70</sup>

With the strain of the last two years lifted and no longer constrained by the demands placed on him by continuous controversy, Munro finally gave vent to all his pent up frustration and anger. He complained of 'wasting months talking and writing about matters which might have been settled in a few weeks'.<sup>71</sup> 'I was never', he wrote, 'in a situation which I felt so irksome as my present one for I never was in one in which I could do so little alone and in which it was necessary to have so many concurring opinions...before anything could be done'. Determined to rectify this situation now that he could concentrate on such matters, Munro began systematically to weed out the opposition. Although his own position was now unassailable, his standing with the home authorities and the Government of Madras did not give him sufficient authority to move for Fullerton's or Alexander's removal. Men like Greenway at the Sadr court and Hodgson at the Board of Revenue were also beyond his reach. All Munro could do was ask his friends in the Court and at the Board to try to ensure that future vacancies at these levels should only be filled by his supporters. The less senior civil servants however were within his reach and he appears to have decided to stamp out opposition amongst them. It seems probable that, even before Hepburn presented him with an opportunity, he had decided to make an example of one civil servant to encourage the rest.

In October, Hepburn, the Collector of Tanjore, wrote to the

commissioners and made clear his opposition to the re-introduction of ryotwari and to the new judicial system.<sup>72</sup> He also injudiciously revealed his intention to delay the introduction of both. He even explained how he might do this by choking his office with work. 'The copies of the three regulations', he wrote, 'occupy twenty four sheets of dummy paper and they have been found to require one and a quarter quires of country paper.... There are 6,117 villages.... To furnish each of these with a copy of the three regulations would therefore require...183,510 manuscript sheets which it is calculated would give full occupation to one hundred scribes for ten months at an expense of almost five thousand pagodas'. Munro immediately accused Hepburn of obstruction and of failing to give the commissioners proper respect. He persuaded Elliot to order Hepburn to Madras and then had him removed from his post.<sup>73</sup>

After Hepburn's removal from his post, systematic opposition in Madras to Munro, the re-introduction of ryotwari and the reformed judicial arrangements appeared to quickly die away. This encouraged Elliot, on 31 December, to inform the commissioners that their work on the revision of the judicial system was finished.<sup>74</sup> He told Munro that he was now free to go on tour and fulfill the second part of his orders from the Court by conducting a general investigation of the administration in the various districts, especially with regard to the revenues.

Munro left for Tanjore early in 1817. Shortly after he had left the seat of government, he received news that Hodgson

had been given a provisional appointment to the Council.<sup>75</sup> This immediately revived anxieties among his supporters that opposition to his measures would reappear. Davis wrote from London that he had heard that Hodgson was 'a great admirer of Lord Cornwallis's system' and stated that he believed the Board of Control should more closely supervise the Court's appointments. In his opinion it was necessary that 'some distinction should be made in filling vacancies between those that are well or ill-disposed towards...the improvements to be introduced'. From Madras, Thackeray informed Munro that opposition had not been eradicated in the capital and that some civil servants were taking advantage of his absence to try to undermine Elliot's confidence in the new arrangements.<sup>76</sup>

These anxieties among Munro's supporters were not unjustified. Fullerton wrote to the Director W F Elphinstone in May a subtle letter in which, while appearing to praise Munro's recent measures, he attempted to raise doubts as to the efficiency of their operation.<sup>77</sup> In particular, he suggested that the collectors were unable to cope with the extra work their duties as magistrates had imposed. 'Assistants must be everywhere appointed', he wrote, 'while the judges and registers have little to do'. Elliot was worried enough to ask Munro to produce a special report on corruption amongst the revenue officials in Salem.<sup>78</sup> 'I conclude from various suggestions', he told Munro, 'that such a report would be of much use to strengthen the hand of those who support the new system at home'.



Supporters of the new policies in Britain did appear to need assistance. Grant and his supporters in the Court were fighting a rearguard action to prevent the introduction of the 'Munro System' into Madras and its extension to other parts of British India. While in fact their actions were being dictated by their resentment at what they saw as the Board of Control's encroachment of the Court's authority rather than by their opposition to Munro's ideas, this was not immediately obvious. The motives for their opposition had become extremely complex. On the one hand, Grant's party disagreed with the new policies because they believed them to be wrong in principle and in effect. On the other hand, they were strongly influenced by the fact that the policies had, by and large, been originated by the Board which had forced the Court to adopt them. They feared that the Board intended in this way to remove all the Court's independent authority and responsibility in the decision-making process. In addition, personal antagonisms were clouding the issues.

The actual attack Grant and his supporters launched at Munro was not so much designed to discredit his ideas because they were regarded as mistaken as to discredit the Board's management of affairs. An opportunity to attack this was opened when the Board's Revenue Department made additions to the Bengal Revenue Draft 193 without bothering to consult the Court. Paragraphs were added which urged Moira to introduce 'the ryotwar settlement throughout the Company's possessions'. The Court rightly objected to this action which the Department had had no right to take.<sup>79</sup> Grant's supporters took advantage of the Directors' indignation to

add adverse comments on the operation of Munro's measures in Madras to the letter which was sent to the Board. They quoted a Minute of Fullerton, that had been unofficially sent to them, in which he had criticized Munro's reforms.

Canning replied to the Court in a letter drawn up by Cumming.<sup>80</sup> The letter began by supporting the Board's position with four points. These were that the system of 1793 had not worked but rather had harmed the interests of the Indians, that Cornwallis's permanent settlements had failed and should not be extended, that the creation of zamindars had been a mistake, and that no settlements should in future be permanently concluded without considerable research and surveys being first made. The letter continued with a defence of Munro's recent measures. Canning stated that he could not agree with Fullerton's criticisms. In addition, he attacked the way in which Fullerton's Minute had been brought to the attention of the home authorities. 'How it happens that a partial extract from the proceedings of the Indian Government is circulated through private channels in England before it has been communicated to the regular authorities', he wrote, 'I forbear to ask'. In a letter to his son, Sullivan revealed the reasoning behind the inclusion of this criticism of the method by which Fullerton's Minute had been brought to the Court's attention.<sup>81</sup> Fullerton was regarded by Munro's supporters as the leader of the opposition to Munro in Madras. Sullivan had already accused him of being 'actively employed in exciting doubts and raising difficulties'.<sup>82</sup> Cumming and Sullivan now hoped that the evidence that Fullerton had

permitted his Minute to be sent unofficially to Britain, something that had been strictly forbidden, would furnish Elliot with an excuse for removing him.

It seems clear that the supporters of the 'Munro System' decided at this time that, in view of the continuing opposition to the recent reforms, it was necessary to try to have Munro appointed Governor of Madras. They employed indirect arguments to convince the new President of the Board that this must be done. Sullivan wrote to Canning that it was vital that Munro should remain in India but that he doubted he would do so if he was offered nothing better than permission to continue to serve as head of the Commission.<sup>83</sup> Since the law excluded him, because he was a military rather than a civilian employee, from a seat on the Council unless he were appointed either Governor or Commander-in-Chief, Sullivan believed he must be offered one of these appointments. Of the two posts, Sullivan clearly favoured the former but feared that the Ministry might not 'find it convenient to forgo their general political patronage' by placing him in that office when Elliot should leave it.

While Munro's supporters worked behind the scenes in Britain to have him placed in a position where he might effectively defend the new policies, the Board of Revenue in Madras produced a new excuse for refusing to implement the order to introduce ryotwari settlements.<sup>84</sup> The Board stated that the survey was an integral part of the ryotwari system and that it was therefore impossible to make ryotwari settlements before full surveys had been completed. The Board also

announced its intention to severely restrict the classes of Indians who were to be permitted to make settlements with the State. 'The Board intend', its members wrote, 'to forbid the collectors to admit any persons to enter agreements direct with the officers of the Government under the ryotwari system who are not by hereditary or prescriptive right entitled to pay their dues directly to the Sirkar.... The object therein is to preserve the right of the meerasdars and the cadeems from that infraction in favour of their tenants, the pycarrees, which, by admitting both on a footing of equality, was the cause of just ground of complaint under the former ryotwari system'. In doing this, the Board threatened to undermine the whole concept of economic development that underlay Munro's ideas since their plans would have effectively prevented the emergence of a class of independent yeoman farmers.

Elliot and Munro's supporters in the Government, worried by this latest ploy to delay the introduction of the new settlements, wrote to Munro for his opinions.<sup>85</sup> Munro's views clearly emerge in the Council's reply to the Board.<sup>86</sup> Because he believed it was important that ryotwari settlements be introduced as soon as possible, he was prepared to abandon the surveys. Consequently the Council told the Board of Revenue that detailed surveys were unnecessary since settlements could be based on the village accounts for previous years. The Council then employed a rather weak argument to justify the decision it had reached to permit direct settlements with men who had previously been sub-tenants. Stating that the Government had no wish to see

mirasi rights infringed, the Council informed the Board that there could be no overall ban on the collectors which might prevent them from making settlements with ryots who had not hitherto paid their rents directly to the State. As far as the Government was concerned, the fact that a ryot should pay his rents directly to the State should not affect his relations with others in the socio-economic structure. This was obviously unlikely to be the case but the Council was clearly anxious that the home authorities should not conclude that existing rights were being threatened, especially as the Court had consistently ordered that these were to be protected.

The entire episode revealed the extent to which the Council was under Munro's influence. In the course of the Council's correspondence with the Board of Revenue one point clearly emerged. The Council supported Munro's view that the revenue system should be made more flexible in order that new classes of landholders might appear and it agreed with him that the frugal and industrious should be encouraged with expectations of eventually being able to establish themselves as independent farmers.

However, just when it seemed that his ryotwari policies would be implemented, Munro found himself in a dilemma. Because he believed that ryotwari settlements were essential for future economic and social development, he was determined to see them replace the village leases. At the same time, his observations during his recent tour of Malabar had convinced him that the village structure of

agrarian society must be maintained. 'Our government rests', he wrote, 'almost entirely upon the single point of military power.... Where there is no village establishment, we have no hold upon the people.... Our situation as foreigners renders a regular village establishment more important to us than to a native government; our inexperience and ignorance make it necessary for us to seek the aid of regular establishments to direct the internal affairs of the country and our security requires that we should have a body of headmen of villages interested in supporting our dominion'.<sup>87</sup> Munro clearly recognized that the emergence of a large class of small, independent yeoman farmers threatened the village structure. The situation in Malabar and Kanara seemed to support this view. It was for this reason that Munro became increasingly insistent that village panchayats and munsiffs must be employed, even though the statistics suggested that the inhabitants very rarely used them. He clearly hoped that the patels and superior ryots would accept the loss of their economic control of the villages if they were compensated with minor judicial and executive authority within the village structure.

In July 1817, events overtook Munro when he received orders from the Government to take control of Dharwar, a district which the Governor-General had forced the Peshwa to cede to the British under the treaty of Poona.<sup>88</sup> In March 1814, Moira had informed the home authorities that the Pindari problem in Central India and the political and social anarchy which he perceived to characterize conditions within the Maratha states required urgent attention.<sup>89</sup> He had proposed that 'the

British Government should become the acknowledged head of a confederacy' of Indian states by entering subsidiary alliances and use this authority to suppress all disorderly elements. In December 1815, Moira had urged the home authorities to permit him to act on his own initiative, even to the extent of waging war on the Marathas, to resolve the problems in Central India.<sup>90</sup> In London Canning had found himself, in effect, called upon to decide whether the time was ripe to risk the threat of the Marathas and wipe out the Pindaris.<sup>91</sup> The Court had been opposed to any further extension of British involvement in Central India and in particular to further acquisitions of territory, as had Thomas Courtenay, the Secretary to the Board. When Canning had asked for their advice, Sir John Shore, Wellesley and Wellington had also opposed any extension of the system of subsidiary alliances that Moira wished to enter into. Only Sullivan had supported the Governor-General. In view of the opposition to Moira's proposals, Canning had sent instructions under which Moira was 'prohibited from undertaking extensive operations with the view of remodelling our (British) political relations and extending our influence and control'.<sup>92</sup> He had also been told that the home authorities were unwilling to become involved in any general war. At the same time however, Canning had given Moira a degree of discretion which had been extended in further orders.

After receiving the Board's reluctant permission to exterminate the Pindaris, Moira had made a series of treaties of subsidiary alliance with Nagpur, Gwalior and the

Rajput states before taking offensive measures against the Pindaris. These measures prompted the Marathas to take counter measures and in the following months the Maratha princes fought the Company one by one, each in turn being defeated. While these events were dominating Munro's attention, Elliot had heard of the plans of Munro's supporters in Britain to attempt to persuade the Board to have him recalled in order to enable Munro to assume the Governorship. He immediately attempted to win the support of the Court, no doubt hoping to play the Directors off against the Board. Knowing that the Court strongly opposed Moira's foreign policies, he wrote letters that were extremely critical of them to various Directors.<sup>93</sup> At the same time, hoping to destroy the favourable impression that Munro's successful operations in the Peshwa's territories were making on the home authorities, he also claimed that the army was deliberately stirring up unnecessary alarm in order to advance its interests.

As he had done once before, Elliot again decided to throw in his lot with Grant's party in the Direction. In February 1818, the young Sullivan informed Munro that his reforms were again under serious attack and that the Court's recent appointment of Hodgson to a provisional seat on the Council had persuaded many people that Munro's influence was on the wane.<sup>94</sup> He particularly warned Munro that Elliot was supporting his opponents, apparently because he believed that the balance of power had shifted from the Board to Grant and his supporters in the Court. Munro immediately decided that he must return to Britain where he undoubtedly



hoped to be able to exert a direct influence over policy and where he may have believed his presence would prove the deciding factor in winning him the Governorship. He informed the Madras Government in June that ill health necessitated his resignation and return to Europe.<sup>95</sup>

Elliot was not so easily deceived. He recognized that Munro was using his health as an excuse to return to London and clearly suspected his motives. Stratton had told him that Munro's sore eyes were a temporary disability, merely the consequence of his having worn the wrong glasses, and that his health was otherwise good.<sup>96</sup> Desperate to prevent Munro from leaving Madras, Elliot offered him the command of the northern divisions of the army and, as an added inducement to remain, promised him a special commission to settle the revenues of the Northern Circars. Munro, who had heard that Elliot's support for the opponents of the recent reforms had angered the Board and also believed his opposition to Moira's campaign, the success of which had undermined its opponents' position, made his recall more probable, refused the offer. On 8 August he resigned his command.

For reasons that are not completely clear, Munro did not leave India immediately but remained in Madras until 24 January 1819. The most likely explanation for Munro's delayed departure was his desire to produce one final report on the operations of the new judicial system. In late August the Board of Revenue published a report which analysed the replies received from collectors about the effects of the transfer of the magisterial duties.<sup>97</sup> In the 17 replies

received, only three collectors claimed that the new duties did not complicate their revenue work while ten stated that they materially interfered with their other duties. To combat the unsatisfactory impression this report had made, Munro and Stratton wrote a final paper on the operation of the new regulations.<sup>98</sup> In this paper they cautiously asserted that some years must elapse before the effects of these could be correctly assessed while at the same time they insisted that available figures suggested that their intentions had been strikingly achieved. In the field of civil justice, the number of suits settled by native courts had greatly increased and nearly double the total number of causes previously decided in any one year had been disposed of. In addition, causes were now being settled more cheaply and quickly. The operation of criminal judicial system was harder to assess since the incidence of crime depended less upon provisions for apprehending criminals than upon 'the state of society, of the country, of peace or war, of plenty or scarcity'. Despite this, Munro and Stratton declared themselves satisfied that the new arrangements represented a significant improvement in the system.

It is also possible that Munro delayed his return to Britain until he was more certain of the reception he would receive. By leaving India, he knew he would forfeit the opportunity to resume his post of First Commissioner that Elliot was prepared to offer him should he remain. Were he not to be returned as Governor, he was also aware that it would be unwise to reject Elliot's repeated offer of the command of the army and revenue administration of the Northern Circars.<sup>99</sup>

It is significant that Munro delayed his departure until he had heard from Britain that he had been proposed as the next Governor of Bombay and had received the important distinction of being made a Companion of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath.<sup>100</sup> Although Elphinstone received the Bombay appointment, Munro recognized that it opened the way to his appointment to Madras. Canning had made a special point of informing the Court that, though the general policy since 1784 had been to select public men in England as Governors, the extraordinary abilities of Elphinstone, Munro and Malcolm justified their consideration for high office.<sup>101</sup> In view of the fact that members of the Board had already decided to try to have Munro appointed Governor of Madras in order that he might supervise the continued implementation of the Board's policies, Canning's moves with regard to Bombay appear to have been designed to test the climate of opinion. If Elphinstone might be appointed to Bombay, why not Munro to Madras.

Munro's departure from Madras, though few people realized it, was about to close an important episode in the Company's administrative history about which a number of significant points can be made. Firstly the pre-eminence of the Board of Control had at last clearly emerged. Secondly the role of Grant's party in the Direction had illustrated that what at first sight appeared to have been the Court of Directors' policies could, on occasions, be those of no more than a few men. The episode had also drawn attention to the ways in which the local governments, though technically subservient to the Home Authorities, could sometimes thwart their orders

and always delay them. The complex interplay of personal ambition and public service had been brought into sharp focus as private animosity, political faction and conflicting conceptions of socio-economic development forced the British to reappraise their role in India. With a clarity not to be found when less controversial issues were involved, the introduction of the new judicial system had revealed the subtle complexities of the East India Company's decision-making process.

## Chapter Eight.

## The Passing of the 'New School':

Munro's Governorship of Madras, 1819-27.

In his study of Munro, Beaglehole dismisses Munro's governorship as having been 'not marked by great changes or far-reaching new reforms' and suggests that he had little to do other than supervise the 'full application of the judicial reforms carried by the Special Commission in 1816 and the establishment of an effective ryotwari system in those districts where the decennial village leases were coming to an end'.<sup>1</sup> In fact the situation was rather more complicated than Beaglehole implies. The first five years of Munro's governorship were initially marked by the continuation of the bitter struggle between the Board and its opponents among the Directors and then by the collapse of the Board's own unity. In addition, far from merely supervising the new administrative systems, Munro was forced to overcome the considerable opposition towards them that still existed in Madras.

Munro left Madras on 24 January 1819 and seems to have arrived in Britain in April. Although there is no evidence of exactly how Munro was occupied during the next three

months, it is probably that he was interviewed by members of the Board and the Court as he took part in the discussions leading up to Elliot's recall and his own appointment as Governor. A letter he received in August from M'Culloch suggests that Munro was also engaged in preparing papers defending the new systems and attacking the arguments of his opponents in Britain and India.<sup>2</sup> By August however, the Board of Control had decided that Munro would return to Madras as the next Governor and informed the Court of their decision.<sup>3</sup> At first his appointment appeared to have hung in the balance, probably because of opposition from Grant and his supporters to his nomination. It was only after Bentinck had refused the office that Munro was officially nominated in November.<sup>4</sup> Even then the matter was not fully settled. Munro requested that Stratton and Thackeray, two men who firmly supported his views, should be appointed to the Council in order that he might exercise total control over the local government. Grant opposed this, insisting that Hodgson and Fullerton should retain their seats.<sup>5</sup> The Board, recognizing that this would place Munro in an intolerable position, compromised over Hodgson but refused to permit Fullerton to continue in office.<sup>6</sup>

While Munro and his supporters sought his appointment and defended his policies in Britain, Fullerton, Hodgson and other opponents of the new system in Madras continued to try to discredit it. Fullerton, while appearing to offer constructive suggestions for the judicial system's improvement, attempted to undermine Munro's candidature for the governorship.<sup>7</sup> He warned Elphinstone that the army was

gaining a dangerous ascendancy and that the distinctions between the civil and military branches of the Company were being eroded. He was clearly trying to resurrect the suspicions and fear of the military that had so long bedevilled the politics of Madras. Hodgson produced a long minute in which he defended the village leases and attacked the decision to replace them with ryotwari settlements.<sup>8</sup> He rejected Munro's claim that ryotwari settlements had been the traditional mode of revenue collection, arguing that village leases were the customary method of collection. He added that in mirasi villages and others accustomed to paying a joint rent, so long as each ryot knew in advance what his share of the village rent was to be, the village system differed in no significant way from the ryotwari.

Aware that this opposition to Munro's policies continued in Madras, his supporters tried, by various means, to disarm it. Cumming proposed that a regulation be passed that would only permit men who had worked as collectors being appointed judges.<sup>9</sup> This would not only have ensured that men who had experience of ryotwari settlements and had served as collector-magistrates would fill the administration's higher offices but should have also enabled Munro to staff the Company with his allies. Cumming recognized that the majority of Munro's supporters in Madras were serving in the revenue department and that many of the judicial employees were hostile to him because they believed he had attacked their interests. Unfortunately Cumming had to confess to Munro that he had had little success with this proposal because he had no control over the Public Department which

was handling the despatches. In the Court Munro's friends were more successfully defending his interests by refusing to vote for men whose appointments Munro opposed. Ravenshaw particularly informed Munro that he had opposed one candidate for the office of Commander-in-Chief because the man was known to be a friend of Hodgson and might use his seat on the Council to oppose the Governor.<sup>10</sup> 'I will not vote for anyone', Ravenshaw wrote to Munro, 'unless you are satisfied that he is a man who will cooperate cordially with you'.

Despite the efforts of his friends, Munro sailed to India knowing that he was entering an arena of political conflict and expecting to encounter opposition. The younger Sullivan warned him that he was returning to an administration in which 'the advocates of old errors have not ceased to uphold them'.<sup>11</sup> Ravenshaw took the opportunity of a last letter to Munro before he sailed to emphasize that his position was not so secure that he might ignore the Court's prejudices.<sup>12</sup> In particular, he was warned not to appoint military officers to civilian posts since, as Ravenshaw observed, 'nothing would be more sure of bringing you into disrepute here'.

Munro arrived at Madras on 10 June 1820. He immediately succeeded Elliot as Governor and the latter returned to Britain a deeply embittered man, convinced he had been the victim of a 'deep lain plot'. There he used the excuse of ill-health to refuse to see the Court or dine with the Directors.<sup>13</sup> Despite his fears, Munro discovered that his opponents were in disarray and that many were prepared to



collaborate with him. To a certain extent, this was a consequence of news from Britain. It was known in Madras that Grant had gone out of office in April, removing one of Munro's staunchest opponents in the Direction, and it was rumoured that Canning intended to succeed Moira as the next Governor-General, from which office he was expected to give Munro powerful support.<sup>14</sup> Only a few men like Fullerton and Hodgson were prepared to openly oppose Munro. Fullerton recorded a minute three days before Munro succeeded Elliot which attacked some of the basic ideas behind the Munro System.<sup>15</sup> In this minute he reiterated his belief that the judicial and revenue administrations should be completely separated. 'All arguments adduced in support of the union of revenue and judicial powers seem to me', he wrote, 'to carry with them indisputable admission of contemplated over-assessment'.<sup>16</sup> He particularly attacked the manner in which Munro had justified his policies by claiming that they most closely resembled traditional institutions. 'Arguments clothed in the garb of respect for ancient usage come in a plausible form', Fullerton observed, 'but we must not allow ourselves to be entirely carried away by their plausible appearance.... To follow customs, usages and practices radically bad because they were observed by preceding governments is only to perpetuate evil'.<sup>17</sup>

Munro replied to Fullerton's minute shortly after he assumed the governorship.<sup>18</sup> While he admitted that many aspects of Indian society were irrational and foolish, he pointed out that European history showed similar blemishes. He argued that every case needed to be judged on its own merits and

claimed that European concepts of liberty and equality, of justice and commonsense, must give way in the face of Indian custom. But, apart from this minute, Munro took little trouble to answer his critics. He clearly felt secure and he had good reason to do so. The home authorities were fully supporting him. Hodgson was replaced on the Council by Thackeray and Graeme appointed the Provisional Member despite the fact that Fullerton, who was his senior in the service, had a better claim to the post. As Ravenshaw informed Munro, all appointments were being made with the specific aim of protecting the Governor from 'all factious opposition'.<sup>19</sup> Munro himself was steadily consolidating his position by deliberately selecting known supporters of his policies for advancement. He defended these appointments in a letter to Canning. 'The (new) system', he wrote, 'must be steadily pursued for a course of years and for this purpose the members of Government must be men who understand and will support it'.<sup>20</sup>

Faced by Munro's determination to see his policies prevail, Hodgson and Fullerton each reacted quite differently.

Hodgson left the Council, resigned from the service and returned to Britain where he intended to seek election to the Court and planned to write a book which would defend village leases.<sup>21</sup> Fullerton, who wished to remain in India where he hoped to continue to amass a fortune, tried to appease the Governor. He presented Munro with a plan which so agreed with the latter's policies it might have been written by him.<sup>22</sup> He suggested that, since the district munsiffs and the collectors were now doing so much of the

work previously done by the judges, retrenchments might be made in the judicial department and the savings made employed to increase the number of principal collectors. He also proposed that the principal collectors should be ordered to assume the duties of the criminal judges and that the district munsiffs, the sadr amins and the registers should be given increased authority. Munro, who recognized Fullerton's willingness to compromise but was not prepared to completely trust him, rewarded his change of heart with the offer of a seat on the Board of Trade.<sup>23</sup> The appointment was carefully chosen. It offered Fullerton both a position of respect and the chance to accumulate capital but prevented him from taking any part in the revenue and judicial administrations.

While Munro was consolidating his position in Madras, his power base at home was being slowly eroded. To a certain extent, this was a consequence of the increasingly friendly relations between the Board and the Court that a variety of factors had brought about. In particular, Grant had stopped playing such an active part in the Company's politics and his party had lost much of its former influence. Concurrent with this development, the great debate over Cornwallis's judicial and revenue systems had ceased to be a major issue. Partly as a result of these developments and partly because, with Sullivan's retirement, it had lost one of its most active members, the Board's unity had begun to collapse. Lord Binney and Canning were too occupied with other Parliamentary business to devote much attention to Indian affairs. Canning in particular was preoccupied with the Poor

Laws and the Foreign Trade Committees. Mr Bourne, another Commissioner, never attended the Board at all. Courtenay, on the other hand, was determined to make a name for himself by his work at the Board and seems to have wished to take the credit for all that was done. To this end, he was attempting to exclude Cumming from the decision-making process and the latter frequently found that information was being kept back from him. As Cumming now informed Munro, he was finding it increasingly difficult to assist him by bringing forward his policies.<sup>24</sup>

Other events had also weakened the abilities of Munro's friends to support him. Allan and Davis, two men who had been among his staunchest allies in the Court, were no longer Directors.<sup>25</sup> Much more importantly, M'Culloch had been promoted to Superintendent of Indian Correspondence and Mill had become responsible for preparing the revenue drafts. Cumming discovered that Mill was not very good at this job and claimed that it would have cost him less effort to have written these himself from scratch than it did to revise them.<sup>26</sup> In addition, Cumming remarked that he was no longer able to exercise much control over the contents of these because of the Board's disposition 'to let stand all that was not positively objectionable or erroneous in point of sentiment or principle in order to avoid possible controversy with the Chairs'. From Munro's point of view, the worst development had been Strachey's appointment to take charge of the Judicial Department at India House. He had received the post because of his close friendship with the Chairman, Robinson, and, 'contrary to every expectation

that had been formed of him by his late friend Mr Davis..., showed himself a decided stickler for the Judicial and Revenue Codes of 1793 and a decided adversary of all changes'. Strachey joined Hodgson, Fullerton, Greenway, Colesbrook and Grant, 'all sworn advocates of the Cornwallis System', and employed two methods to attack Munro's policies. He used sly innuendos to discredit Munro's supporters and he deliberately avoided 'all notice of what appeared in the records to show the good effects of the regulations of 1816'. Because of his friendship with Strachey, Robinson refused to permit M'Culloch to revise Strachey's judicial drafts. Cumming could not rectify the situation at the Board because Strachey was also an old friend of Courtenay. They had both been educated together at Westminster and Strachey was related to Courtenay's Butler cousins. Whenever Cumming revised Strachey's drafts, the latter went to Courtenay who invariably overruled Cumming.

All these developments meant that Munro could no longer rely on the complete support of the home authorities and he appears to have suffered anxiety on this score. Ravenshaw confirmed Munro's fears when he told him that a large number of people, men in India who felt themselves ill-used and their friends in Britain, were criticizing his administration. <sup>27</sup> 'There are members of our Court', he warned Munro, 'who are too much given to listen to such tittle-tattle and many a measure has before now taken its roots in such a frail foundation'. Informing Munro that Grant's party might yet return to power, where it would undoubtedly attack him and his policies, Ravenshaw admitted

he could do little other than send Munro all the gossip and thereby enable him to forestall criticism. Adverse comment in the Court on Munro's appointment of Colonel Newall as Resident at Travancore, its disapproval of Major McDowall's appointment and its orders that Munro must cancel his appointment of Major Stewart all contributed to Munro's disillusionment.<sup>28</sup>

Quite apart from these set-backs, other factors inclined Munro's thoughts towards retirement. He was now in his sixties and his health was beginning to deteriorate. His wife, who had had a miscarriage shortly after their arrival in India and had later been badly hurt in a riding accident, wished to return to Europe. In addition, many of Munro's friends in the East India Company's administration, both in India and Britain, had either retired from public life or died. In particular, Canning had resigned from the Presidency of the Board in December 1820 and Munro had been unable or unwilling to form the same sort of close relationship with his successors Bathurst and Wynn that he had had with him. The news in January 1823 that Moira had relinquished the Governor-Generalship and the disappointment with which Munro heard that Canning would not be succeeding him, probably decided Munro's mind.<sup>29</sup> In January 1824, the Court received a letter from Munro announcing his intention to resign.<sup>30</sup>

This news precipitated the last major crisis in the East India Company's administration in which Munro was to be involved.<sup>31</sup> A former Madras civilian, Stephen Lushington, who

was now Secretary to the Treasury, pressed his claims to the post. Because of assistance he had rendered the Ministry in previous elections, Liverpool was inclined to support his candidature. Although Canning and Wellington personally favoured Malcolm for the office, they were prepared, like Wynn, to follow Liverpool's lead. The Court however, having received several recent rebuffs, decided to oppose Lushington's appointment. In particular, it appears that the Chairman, Wigram, intended to use the occasion to embarrass the Government because of its refusal to grant his family a Peerage.<sup>32</sup> The Court adopted Elphinstone's suggestion that he should be transferred from Bombay to Madras and nominated Malcolm his successor. When the Board resisted these moves, the Directors nominated Malcolm as the next Governor of Madras.

The Board had been faced with a similar dilemma when Moira had resigned but had been able to overcome opposition in the Court to the appointment of its nominee by buying off Grant's party with the offer of promotion for Grant's son.<sup>33</sup> This time the Board and the Ministry were either unable or unwilling to make concessions. Liverpool, recognizing that opposition to Lushington made it likely that the Directors would publicly resist his appointment, accepted Canning's suggestion that Sir Charles Stuart be offered the post. Unfortunately Stuart's demand that he should be promised the succession to Bengal and Liverpool's refusal to bargain with him resulted in the former's refusal to allow his name to be brought forward. Only the outbreak of the Burmese War, which persuaded Munro to remain in office until the hostilities

were over,<sup>34</sup> enabled the Government to break the deadlock between the Court and the Board. As C H Philips observed, the episode established 'beyond question that in practice the nomination to the superior posts in India lay with the Government and that the Directors possessed what was in effect a power of veto, which they were fully prepared to use'.<sup>35</sup>

The war with Burma had been threatening for some years. The country had emerged since the turn of the century as an aggressive power intent on extending its territories. In 1818, the King of Burma had sent a demand to the Governor-General for the surrender of Eastern Bengal. This had been dismissed but not forgotten and relations between the British and the Burmese had continued to deteriorate. Matters were brought to a crisis in 1823 when the Burmese seized the island of Shahpuri off the coast of Chittagong, annihilating a British detachment in the process. Lord Amherst retaliated by declaring war on the Burmese on 24 February 1824. The Madras Government, which had been given no intimation that war was impending before 23 November, was now informed that it would be required to furnish and supply the sepoy troops that the Governor-General intended to field alongside the Company's European forces.<sup>36</sup>

During the two years the war lasted, Munro was kept fully occupied in Madras by the work involved in supplying the army with troops, ships, boats, transport bullocks, and provisions. At the same time however, he kept up a constant correspondence, both official and private, with Lord Amherst



in which he offered the Governor-General his advice on a variety of subjects concerning the administration of the Company's territories as well as on the strategic management of the war. It can be clearly seen from the latter that Munro's views had changed little since he had advocated an aggressive, expansionist foreign policy against Tipu Sultan and Mysore. 'Our safest and our speediest way of arriving at an honourable peace', he wrote after hearing that Rangoon had been occupied, 'is to consider this first success as only the beginning of a general war with the Burmese empire and to engage in it with our whole disposable force'.<sup>37</sup> A year later, Munro's opinions had hardened further. 'Our chief object in the present war is security from future aggression.... There are two ways of preventing future aggression; one is by so completely breaking the power and spirit of the enemy as to deter him from ever renewing hostilities; another is by dismembering or revolutionizing the kingdom'.<sup>38</sup> He expressed however no particular preference for either solution.

As soon as peace returned in 1826, Munro renewed his application for permission to resign his office. Little had occurred since 1823 to change the reasons he had then for wishing to retire while new ones had arisen. While the war had been in progress, Munro had been created a baronet. This, together with the fortune he had accumulated, ensured his position in Britain and he appears to have looked forward to his retirement. In addition, his wife's health had obliged her to leave Madras for Britain in March 1826 and Munro wanted to be quickly reunited with her. The Court

received Munro's resignation in September. Stephen Lushington's nomination as his successor was again proposed by the Board of Control which this time eventually succeeded in forcing his appointment on the Court in April 1827.<sup>39</sup>

While waiting for Lushington to arrive, Munro decided to pay a final visit to the Ceded Districts. He left Madras at the end of May and travelled to the Bellari district. Here cholera broke out in his camp. On 6 July, Munro contracted the disease and died that evening. When news of his death reached the capital, the Government ordered the flag to be hung at half-mast and 'minute guns, sixty-six in number corresponding with the age of the deceased', to be fired from the ramparts of all the principal military stations and posts.<sup>40</sup> At the place of his death, a grove of trees was planted and a well with stone steps built as a memorial to him.<sup>41</sup>

## Chapter Nine.

Conclusion.

In the years between 1790 and 1827, a new system of administration emerged in Madras that was markedly different to that which had been earlier introduced into Bengal by Cornwallis. Unlike the Bengal System which aimed to introduce an English pattern of landed property supported by a judicial system constructed after the British model and largely administered by Europeans, the administrative system which was developed in Madras aimed to modify the existing social and economic structures the British had found in South India. In the preceding chapters an attempt has been made to chart the development of the ideas behind what became known as the Munro System, to examine the manner in which they were adopted by the Company and so influenced its official policies, and to evaluate the importance of Munro's role in this process. In this concluding chapter, the points made in the previous chapters are summarized. At the same time, an analysis of the events which took place during this period is presented which suggests that the decision-making processes of the East India Company were more complex than

previous studies have conjectured.

Beaglehole suggests that the ideas of Munro and his supporters were principally influenced by 'both an appreciation of and a desire to preserve the property rights and the social system' they found in South India.<sup>1</sup> He then argues that these ideas were eventually adopted by the home authorities after their 'growing realization that the Company had in India an administrative structure inefficient, expensive and failing in its purpose of bringing security and justice to the Indians' forced upon them the need for major reforms in the revenue and judicial systems of their territories.<sup>2</sup> This study argues that neither of these conclusions sufficiently explain what actually occurred.

Munro's character, preconceptions and private ambitions exerted a greater influence over his ideas than did his desire to preserve property rights and the social system he thought he had found in Madras. His mercantile, bourgeois, Scottish background and early education, the traumatic impact of his father's bankruptcy and his interpretation of Adam Smith's socio-economic doctrines had shaped Munro's ideas before he arrived in India. He had no sympathy for any social order based on birth and possession of great landed estates but rather an idealistic attachment to the concept of a society principally composed of independent yeoman farmers whose individual efforts to increase their own prosperity would, he believed, generate sufficient wealth to support a commercial superstructure. His subsequent

opposition to attempts to create in the zamindars a class of superior landlords and to the policies which aimed to protect the rights of the semi-feudal poligars had its origin here.

Initially Munro's proposition that the British should invest the ryots with proprietary ownership of their land was not so much the consequence of any belief of his that this would preserve existing property rights as of his conviction that only such a measure would encourage social and economic development. According to his analysis, it was necessary that the commercial and manufacturing sectors of the economy in India should be encouraged to expand. He argued that this would only occur if the agricultural sector increased production and a sufficient proportion of the revenue derived from this remained with a broad-based class of small, independent farmers. If this could be done, he believed that the commercial and manufacturing sectors would acquire both the raw materials and the markets they needed to develop. As these sectors expanded, the general wealth of the continent would rapidly increase as would trade with Europe. He argued that such a development would directly benefit the Company which, in addition to the revenues it drew from the land, would receive a greatly enhanced income from customs and excise duties.

Only after Munro had adopted the idea that all revenue settlements should be made with the ryots did he gradually introduce the other arguments he used to support his case. His argument that ryotwari settlements protected existing

rights in the land which zamindari settlements destroyed was developed only after he had already espoused the former system's cause and it was specifically aimed at the home authorities who had consistently expressed their concern that such rights should be protected. Although it is clear that Munro did believe that both zamindari and village settlements were more open to abuse than ryotwari ones and frequently resulted in the oppression of the ryots, it is clear from the context in which he used such arguments that he employed them mainly to raise doubts in Britain about settlements with intermediaries. More importantly, once Munro had openly committed himself to the policies of ryotwari, his own career prospects had become inextricably tied to this revenue system's future. Munro had quickly recognized that, were it to become official policy, his reputation as the leading exponent of and expert on ryotwari settlements would ensure his continued employment in the civil administration while the system's rejection in favour of another must lead to his eventual replacement by a civilian.

Munro's private ambitions played a large part in determining his ideas. While there can be little doubt that Munro truly believed that ryotwari settlements were cheaper to administer and represented a more cost effective method of collecting the revenues than either zamindari settlements or village leases, his advocacy of them was partly influenced by the enhanced status such settlements conferred on the office of collector. As a collector himself, Munro had no wish to see the holders of that office reduced to mere tax

gatherers and treated as officials of a subordinate department subject to the supervision of the Company's judicial officers. In addition, having exercised extensive and large independent authority in newly acquired territories, Munro found it difficult to contemplate surrendering or sharing any part of this with the judiciary after these territories had been fully incorporated into the Presidency. Although he justified his proposition that the collectors should be the government's principal representatives in their districts, charged not only with all duties connected with the revenues but also with those of magistrate and superintendent of police, by claiming that this preserved traditional Indian practice and was therefore the arrangement the inhabitants found most satisfactory, it is clear his personal interests were significantly influencing his views. If adopted, it was certainly the policy which most favoured his ambitions.

The judicial reforms Munro advocated even more clearly illustrated the extent to which his policies were influenced by personal and career considerations. Munro's opposition to Cornwallis's judicial system emerged before that system's defects became apparent. Initially Munro objected to the introduction of the Regulation System because he found his authority and status diminished by the presence of judges in his district. He also feared that these men's interference in revenue, rent and land disputes threatened to undermine his authority to such an extent that he would be unable to collect the full revenue his superiors expected from his district. Munro was well aware that any such failure would

destroy his reputation and might even lead to his suspension from civil duties. Another factor influencing his opposition to the new judicial arrangements was the Company's decision to make retrenchments in the Revenue Department to fund the high costs of the Judicial, retrenchments which directly affected his income as his commission on the revenues he collected was restricted.

Even when Munro's ideas appeared to be directly inspired by a general concern for the Company's welfare, they were in fact also shaped by his perception of where his private interests lay. As an officer in the Company's army, Munro believed that there were greater opportunities open to him to acquire fame and fortune in times of war rather than peace. While he continued to perceive this to be the case, he supported the view that the British should follow an expansionist foreign policy in India. He argued then that the consistent implementation of an aggressive policy represented the most effective means of defending existing territories. It is significant that Munro only abandoned these views and argued against further British expansion after his civil career had been firmly established. In 1800, he had rejected Arthur Wellesley's arguments that further British territorial expansion would not only overtax the Company's resources but actually increase the number of its potential enemies. 'The enemies we create by driving men (Indian) out of employment (by assuming the management of hitherto independent native states), I do not apprehend it can ever do us any serious mischief'.<sup>3</sup> By 1817 however, when his future in the civil administration seemed secure and he



no longer looked to war for further advancement, he had reversed his opinions. Now he argued against further expansion. 'Its consequences', he informed Hastings, 'would be...to debase the whole people' because the Indians would no longer have open to them the opportunities of valuable and respectable employment in public office that the Indian states offered to them.<sup>4</sup>

In one respect only were Munro's ideas significantly influenced by his perception of existing conditions in India. His experiences with the army convinced him that the foundations of British power in India were insecure, resting upon the loyalty of Indian sepoys and an indifference amongst the general population as to who administered the country. Similar considerations had prompted Cornwallis to introduce permanent zamindari settlements and his judicial arrangements. He had believed that, by investing the zamindars with ownership of the land, the British would create an influential and powerful body of men who would perceive their interests to be inextricably bound to the Company's. By establishing an impartial judicial system, administered by Europeans, Cornwallis and his supporters conceived that all the Company's Indian subjects would gradually come to appreciate the advantages of British rule over that of their own nationals.

Munro rejected these arguments. He believed that zamindari settlements were so alien to Madras that their introduction could only result in the emergence of a rapacious class of tax farmers whose activities would depress the economy and

lead to the bulk of the population becoming dissatisfied with British rule. At the same time, by removing the British from a close contact with their subjects, such settlements would eventually result in the Indians seeing no advantage in a continued acquiescence to foreign rule. Once the judge's remote and and incomprehensible jurisdiction replaced the collector's paternal authority, Munro feared that the peasantry would look towards their Indian landlords for protection and leadership. The obvious dangers this held for the Company could only be increased if the poligars, whom Munro regarded as intrinsically hostile to British rule, were the very men so elevated. On the other hand, Munro conceived that by investing the ryots with ownership of their land, something they had never before enjoyed, a large sector of the population would be persuaded to identify its interests with those of the British.

Similar considerations partly determined his judicial ideas. His wish to see traditional Indian judicial arrangements preserved was not so much the consequence of any belief that they were better than those introduced by Cornwallis as of his conviction that their retention would directly and indirectly strengthen support for the British. First, he argued that those Indians who exercised authority under his arrangements, especially the patels whose influence was otherwise undermined by ryotwari settlements, discovered social and economic motives for supporting the Company's government. Perhaps more importantly, he believed that his system, being closer to that which had preceded British rule, was more acceptable to the people. What mattered, he

claimed, was not how efficient a system might be so much as its popularity since only the latter could hold the allegiance of the Company's subjects without which the prospects of British rule continuing long would be seriously endangered.<sup>5</sup>

In the course of this study the ways in which Munro attracted attention to his ideas and participated in the decision-making process have been examined. An analysis of the evidence uncovered reveals the extent to which debates on policy took place outside the formal arenas established within the Company's structure. This occurred because the individuals and bodies who were active in the Company were rarely prepared to permit the formal provisions which governed them to restrict their operations. They supplemented the official channels of communication open to them with others which may be designated as being quasi-official and unofficial.

The formal structure of the Company made a number of provisions for individuals interested in its activities to take part officially in the decision-making process. In Britain, people might purchase sufficient stock to entitle them to take part in the debates held in the Court of Proprietors and vote in the elections of the men standing for the Court of Directors. In addition, any British citizen might stand for election as a director in order, should he be successful, to take part in the Company's administration. In India, individuals in the lower echelons of the Company's service, men like the collectors and judges, might send

formal proposals recommending the adoption of courses of action or policies to their immediate superiors. In their answers to official questionnaires, they could enter general and specific criticisms of existing policies. At a higher level in the hierarchy, the members of the boards, committees and councils which formed the intermediate authorities in the structure, could enter official minutes when they dissented with the views adopted by their co-workers. In these minutes, they could explain the grounds for their dissent and argue for alternative policies, knowing that their minutes must sooner or later be considered by the home authorities. The frequent employment of investigative committees by both the Company and Parliament also gave individuals opportunities to directly enter into the decision-making process. They might appear before these committees, give evidence and present their cases. Thomas Munro employed all of these methods of influencing policy during his career.

Supplementing the official channels of access to the decision-making process, there existed a number of quasi-official ways in which members of the Company's administration might influence decisions and policies. These, while not strictly allowed for in the formal arrangements, relied upon them for their existence. The most important was the ability of all officials and authorities to filter information by consciously or unconsciously screening the material they transmitted along the official channels of communication. In this way they were able to exert an influence over the contents and contexts of debates

and to some extent delineate their perimeters. During the period that supporters of the Bengal, the Village and the Munro systems of revenue and judicial administration competed to see their views adopted as official policy, there are several clear examples of interested parties deliberately withholding information in order to influence decisions.

In addition, it is clear that the Company's officials were frequently selective in the information they transmitted to their superiors, filtering out that which they believed might discredit their work or prove unpalatable to their employers, emphasizing only those features likely to attract favourable attention and enhance their career prospects. In 1814, the Collector of Kanara observed that it was 'astonishing how smooth and easy things are made to appear in the eyes of our superiors when (officials are) deputed to report on the states of the provinces'<sup>6</sup>.

The process was not always one of negative selection. The Company's officials frequently exercised a form of positive discrimination in the choice of information that they sent up to their superiors. Munro's activities in Kanara and those of Place during his period at the Board of Revenue both illustrate the operation of positive discrimination. When Munro entered Kanara he brought with him a working hypothesis about the operations of the Indian agricultural economy. There is little question but that he sought confirmation of his preconceived ideas and that, as a consequence of the perceptual framework of analysis he

employed, he uncovered and transmitted information to the Board of Revenue that tended to support the views he held. While employed as the collector of the Jagir, Place investigated the mirasi land tenures which were common in that district. His findings led him to evolve a general, distinctive theory of revenue administration. While he served on the Board of Revenue, which he was able to dominate because neither the President nor the first member attended its meetings and the fourth, Oakes, always deferred to his wishes, Place's views clearly influenced the choice of issues examined by the Board in its proceedings and the material transmitted by it to the Council.<sup>7</sup>

Apart from the official and quasi-official means of influencing the Company's policies available to people interested in its activities, there existed a large number of unofficial or informal methods. The majority of these fell into one or other of two categories which, for convenience, may be designated as the public and the private avenues to unofficial influence.

The public methods of influencing the decisions and policies of the Company included the publication in newspapers, magazines, pamphlets and even in books of information and arguments for and against general policies or specific proposals for action on current issues. The principal objectives behind the employment of these public techniques were changes in the climate of public opinion and the attraction of attention to the authors. Between 1790 and 1825 they were frequently employed, often with considerable

success. There can be little doubt that Wilkes's publication of his book Historical Sketches of the South of India significantly assisted the supporters of what became known as the Munro System to win wide acceptance of their views. The impact that it made was also partly responsible for the decision later to appoint him Governor of St Helena. Other men tried to follow this path to influence with less success. On his return to Britain after seeing his village leases replaced by ryotwari settlements, Hodgson started work on a book which he hoped would generate new interest in his ideas.<sup>8</sup> He never finished it. Munro, who employed these techniques on a variety of occasions during his career, had, according to Gleig, most success with them when he first returned to Britain. Gleig attributed some of his influence then to the publication of a great number of articles and pamphlets which, while not of his authorship, had been previously submitted to him for revision and which consequently reflected his views.<sup>9</sup>

By far the most common, and frequently the most important, informal and unofficial means of influencing the policies, acquiring promotion and generally manipulating the administration of the Company were those which may be designated the private methods. These may be described as private because they were invariably directed at individuals or small, defined groups of men and all had one feature in common. They were designed to create and then sustain personal relationships outside of the formal relationships established by the Company's structure. Family connections, friendships, social, political and economic obligations were

all employed to effect introductions with the view to establishing private correspondence between men who would not normally have communicated with each other through the official channels of communication.

When most effectively used, private correspondence could confer distinct benefits on all the parties involved in it. An analysis of the reasons why nearly all Governors-General and Governors established private correspondence with particular members of the Court of Directors illustrates this point clearly. Such correspondence ensured that they would be kept closely informed of the events influencing the home authorities and have the means of transmitting directly to the Court views and remarks that they desired to keep hidden from people in India or which were otherwise better not included in official letters. The recipient Directors benefitted by acquiring information which, not being generally available to their colleagues, gave them an advantage in the Court's proceedings. It also gave the Directors direct access to fountainheads of patronage in India. Macartney corresponded privately with Laurence Sullivan and used the latter's influence to gain support at the Court for his actions.<sup>10</sup> In return, Macartney employed his power of appointment in the Madras administration to actively promote the careers of Sullivan's proteges, especially member of his family. John Sullivan, for example, was unusually quickly promoted to important posts in the Madras administration.

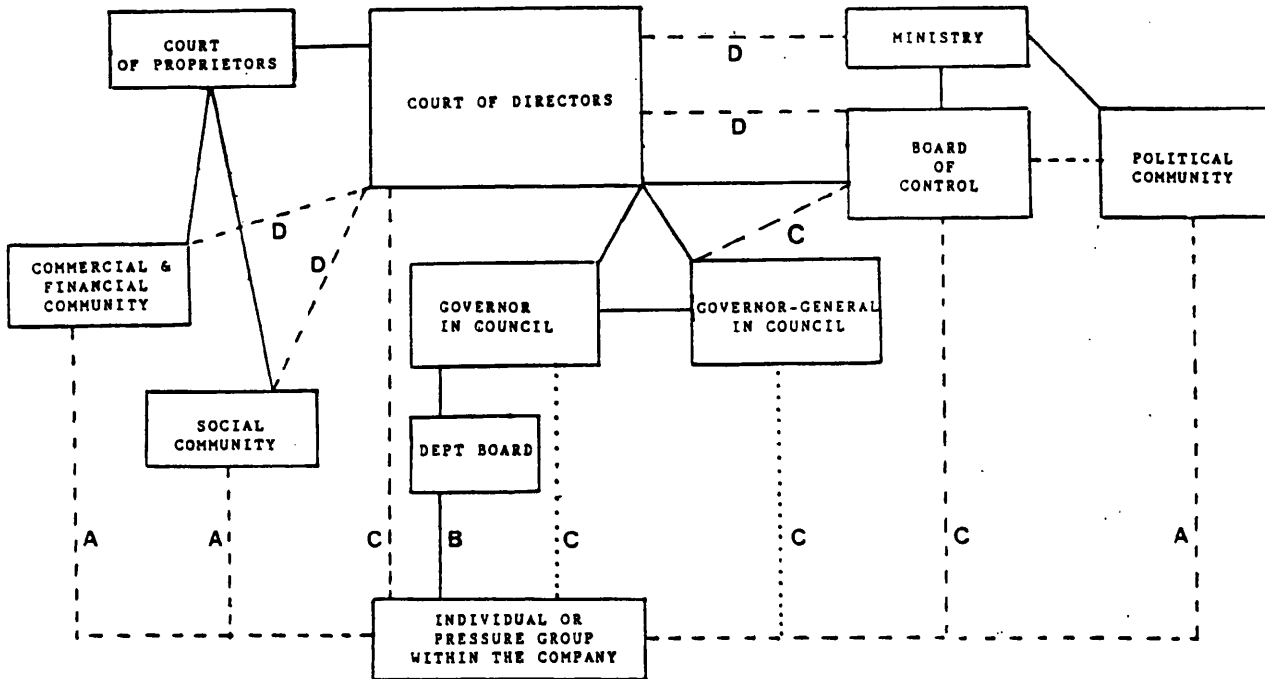
The part played by private correspondence in the Company was



the subject of intense contemporary debate. Some people argued that it had a important role to play in the administration while others claimed it undermined the carefully balanced divisions of authority and responsibility in the formal structure of the Company. Both parties' cases were most clearly stated in 1785 when an attempt was made in Parliament to suppress the practice. On the one hand, its opponents presented it as an instrument of faction and intrigue employed by individuals to further their private interests, often at the expense of the public's. On the other hand there were men, including Edmund Burke who expressed great indignation at the practice's prohibition, who regarded it as a useful, even necessary, guard against the misconduct of the local governments and their officials. By and large however, the majority of people interested in Indian affairs seem to have regarded the practice as a regrettable but unavoidable feature of the Company's administration which, since all employed and benefited from it, they were prepared to tolerate.

The different unofficial channels of access to the Company's decision-making bodies which emerged to supplement to official are illustrated in diagram 6 (p 412 ). It is clear that they fulfilled an important function in the administration. They may be said to have oiled the machinery of government and to have acted as safety valves for the tensions which were generated within the system, both between the different bodies which composed it and between individuals within these. More importantly, they provided a necessary counterpoise to the influence of the 'dependency'

The Formal and Informal Channels of Access to the  
Court of Directors and the Board of Control.



- Formal Channels of Access.
- - - - - Informal Channels of Access.
- ..... Informal Channels of Access which might be formalised.

- A Private Correspondence.  
Publication of Arguments in  
Books, Journals and Newspapers.  
Personal Contacts.
- B Formal presentation of Reports,  
Minutes and Letters.
- C Private Correspondence &  
Informal presentation of Reports  
and Minutes.
- D Channels of Access to the decision-making  
process in the Court through private and  
personal relationships with individual  
Directors.

which the formal arrangements of the Company generated. They permitted individuals employed by the Company to express opinions, make proposals, report observations and forward information to their superiors which they would have hesitated to do through official channels. Matters of a controversial or unpopular nature, which the Company's employees might otherwise have suppressed rather than risk their careers by bringing them forward officially, were privately or anonymously conveyed to the authorities through these unofficial channels.

Munro employed all the official and unofficial channels of communication to promote his policies. However, the skill with which he manipulated these does not alone explain the very considerable influence he succeeded in exercising over the Company's decision-making process. He owed his rise to prominence more to two other factors - the collapse of consensus that occurred in all levels of the Company's administration and the appointments to influential positions of men who were either interested in his ideas or had personal reasons for assisting his career.

Throughout the period 1784 to 1827, the Board of Control gradually established its authority over the East India Company by extending the powers allocated to it under Pitt's India Act. It did this by making unauthorized modifications to the machinery of government. Its activities met consistent opposition from the Directors who periodically tried to oppose what they regarded as distortions of the Act. The conflict thus engendered between the Board of

Control and the Court of Directors had a significant impact on the operations of the Company's decision-making process and permitted individuals, in particular Munro, to exert a considerable influence over the policies that were adopted and implemented.

The most important of the modifications made by the Board was its unofficial annexation of the right to appoint the Governor-General and the Governors of the subordinate Presidencies. In 1784, Pitt's India Act had given the Board of Control that it established considerable authority, in particular the right to see all despatches that the Directors intended to send to India and the power to make alterations to those which dealt with other than strictly commercial matters. It had not though given the Board any authority to make appointments but quite deliberately, for political reasons, left the Company's patronage to the Court of Directors. From the start the Act was not strictly enforced and the Court of Directors permitted the President of the Board to nominate a certain number of writers and cadets. Marshall noted that the President of the Board was normally allotted the same number of nominations as the Chairman of the Court.<sup>11</sup> He also observed that, on occasions, Dundas persuaded individual Directors to relinquish their patronage to him. Soon however the Board unofficially assumed the Court's right to appoint the Governor-General and Governors. It was able to do this because the India Act had given the Crown the power to remove from office by recall any man employed by the Company in India. Thus, while the Board could not legally force the Court to appoint its

nominees, it could use its power of recall to make any other appointment impossible. In practice, this resulted in the Board's nominee being appointed. Even when this did not happen, as when Lord Lauderdale's nomination was successfully opposed by the Directors, the Board was able to ensure that whoever was appointed should be someone at least as firmly committed to its policies as he might be to the Court's.

This development could have been foreseen in 1784. Even then it was clear that no government would be prepared to leave such important appointments in the hands of the Directors. Dundas had made his own position clear in the provisions of his bill of 1783. He had clearly intended that the Governor-General and Governors should be primarily regarded as agents of the Crown rather than the Court and subject to the Board's orders. Although Pitt's Act, due to 'considerations altogether of a constitutional nature', had left these appointments in the hands of the Directors, it was only because he and Dundas had assumed that the Directors 'would in all cases accept the recommendation of the state in the nomination of their Governors and that they would leave the appointment of executive officers abroad to those Governors when so appointed'.<sup>12</sup>

The Board's unofficial assumption of these appointments had far-reaching consequences in so far as it did, to a large extent, result in a situation in which the men holding the offices of Governor-General and Governor came to regard the Board rather than the Court as the body to which they were

responsible. This position was further accentuated by the custom which immediately developed for the President of the Board to communicate privately, and therefore unofficially, with these men in India.

Under the provisions of the India Act, the Board of Control was entitled 'to superintend, direct and control' Indian affairs but only through official channels. The Board could alter the Court's despatches but it was not entitled to send instructions of its own directly to India. The Company had secured the removal of the clause in the Act which would have permitted the Board to by-pass the Court and communicate directly with the local governments. Neither Dundas nor subsequent Presidents of the Board were however prepared to strictly adhere to regulations which so restricted their authority. They therefore adopted the simple but unofficial expedient of communicating with the Governor-General and Governors in private letters when they had matters they wished kept secret, especially those which dealt with policies the Board supported but which the Court opposed. This practice naturally strengthened the alliance of interest which already existed between the Board and the men who owed their appointments to its patronage.

Perceiving the Governor-General and the Governor of Madras to be instruments of the Board of Control, the Directors opposed to what could be regarded as the Board's unauthorized assumption of control over the local governments sought to reassert their authority by appointing their supporters amongst the civil servants to the Councils

and to other positions of influence in the local administrations. In this manner the struggle for power which characterized relations between the home authorities was exported to Madras where it further divided an administration already split into antagonistic groups by local issues, in particular by the whole question of the employment of military officers in civil posts. The issues which divided the home authorities and those which divided the Madras administration became inextricably entwined.

The collapse of consensus which resulted had an important impact on the Company's administration. It encouraged men in the local administrations who opposed the home authorities' policies to employ the formal regulations of the Company's constitution to obstruct, delay or modify the orders they received. In particular, opponents of current policy used the formal system to delay the transmission and implementation of orders. The difference between refusing to obey an order and declining to implement one until its exact meaning, intention or authority had been confirmed was a subtle one. By requesting the elucidation of orders or by interpreting them in particular ways, subordinate authorities were able to significantly influence policy. In this way, reforms were resisted by their critics who hoped to delay their introduction until the situations to which they applied had changed or support for them had declined as a result of shifts in the balance of power in the superior authorities. Other techniques were employed by men in the local governments to prevent their opponents from gathering evidence to support their cases. While Munro served as First

Commissioner, members of the Board of Revenue, who opposed the measures he had been ordered to introduce, published and circulated amongst the civil servants and Indians reports critical of his activities. These convinced both Europeans and Indians that the Commissioners did not have the Government's support and therefore discouraged them from coming forward to give evidence.<sup>13</sup>

In order to overcome such opposition, the Board of Control, Governors-General and Governors increasingly made use of their powers of appointment to ensure the implementation of their policies. The evidence does not support Marshall's claim that 'the system of appointments and promotion became more regular, influence in the Company counting for much less than it had done'.<sup>14</sup> Far from promotion by seniority being enforced throughout the service, it is clear that political considerations increasingly determined appointments. In India, members of the local governments at nearly all levels in the administrations sought to augment their official authority and protect their interests by using what patronage was available to them to build power bases within the Company. Governors-General and Governors made the most obvious use of the power of appointment to place supporters in influential posts where they could materially advance their patrons' policies. Wellesley gave important revenue and political posts to military officers who supported his foreign policies, ignoring in the process the claims of civilians who opposed his views. Among Munro's first actions after his arrival in Madras as Governor were the appointments of friends and supporters to posts in which



they could effectively assist him to introduce ryotwari revenue settlements and reorganize the judicial system. The justification for these appointments normally given by that Governors-General and Governors, that those selected had special qualifications for the posts which other claimants lacked, was usually little more than a rationalization designed to conceal their real motives and protect them from accusations of infringing formal regulations.

Munro was able to take advantage of this situation to advance his career. Such management invariably became a two-way process since competing parties in the Company's administration, who needed to form alliances with groups who would support their policies, found it difficult to resist pressure from these groups for aid in furthering their own particular interests. Governors in Madras, in order to establish their authority and to overcome opposition from entrenched interest groups in the civil administration, employed military officers. Not only were they often cheaper since their military pay was less than the civilians', their salaries came out of the military budget so their employment enabled the local governments to appear to have made substantial savings for the Company and thereby win the approbation of the Directors. More importantly, the employment of military men rather than civilians strengthened the position of the Governors-General and Governors in their relations with the Directors. Between 1802 and 1833, an average of only 37 writers a year were sent to India while in the same period the average number of cadets sent was 258.<sup>15</sup> While the Directors usually gave

writerships to people to whom they were related, those selected as cadets were frequently men who were not closely connected with their patrons. Thus military men employed in the civil administration, lacking the sort of influence amongst the Directors that writers often possessed, were much more dependent upon the local governments and therefore usually identified their interests with those of their local benefactors. At the same time however, the resentment military appointments generated amongst the civilians made the chief executives peculiarly reliant on the support of the very men they had promoted to strengthen their own positions. Munro was able to take advantage of the reciprocal relationships which developed to promote his ideas.

As the employment of quasi-official and unofficial methods of influencing policy and of controlling the administration undermined the formal arrangements of the Company, the system ceased to be predominantly adjudicative and the decision-making process was increasingly negotiative in character. This permitted men like Munro with actual operational experience to enter the arenas of debate. It also partly explains why the Board of Control was able to establish itself as the predominant authority in the home government. Throughout the period the President of the Board of Control exercised an untrammelled authority over that body. In the Court of Directors there could never be quite the same unity of purpose. The individual ambitions and interests of the twenty four Directors only very rarely enabled the Court to present a united front to the Board.

Usually the Chairmen had to rely on coalitions of interests which, because a number of Directors annually went out of office, were inherently unstable. While, as C H Philips observed, 'a united Direction could always effectively resist the Government',<sup>16</sup> the formal structure of the Company made certain that such unity should never last long.

In conclusion, it must be stated that Munro owed much of his rise to prominence to entirely accidental factors. Had it not been for such chance events such as his sister's marriage to Erskine and John Sullivan's to Buckinghamshire's daughter, his own friendships with Read and Webbe, and Cumming's emergence at the Board of Control, Munro would probably have had a respectable but otherwise not particularly distinguished career in India. His manipulative talents and the skill with which he recognized and took advantage of the opportunities that became available to him to influence the Company's policies in ways advantageous to himself do not alone explain his success. He was also very fortunate to have been in the right places and the right times.

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Introduction.

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2. Ibid, p.vii.
3. C.H.Philips, The East India Company, 1784-1834.
4. Ibid, p.v.

Chapter One.

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3. C.H.Philips, The East India Company, p.2.
4. Ibid, p.7.
5. Ibid, p.7.
6. Ibid, n 3, p.15.
7. Ibid, p.15.
8. Ibid, n.6, p.14.
9. H.H.Dodwell, CHI, vol.V, p.318.
10. P.Penner, 'Haileybury: School for Anglo-Indian Statesmen', Bengal Past and Present vol. 93, July 1973.

11. This figure is extracted from an analysis of the Writers Petitions in the India Office.
12. L.S.S O'Malley, The Indian Civil Service p.23.
13. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.9.
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21. Ibid.
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25. P.E.Roberts, CHI, vol.V, p.183.
26. C.Ross (ed), Correspondence of Charles, first Marquis Cornwallis, vol.I, p.244.
27. Court to Board, 6 Nov 1805. Letters from the Company to the Board of Control, vol.II, pp.283-7. Printed as Document 10 in P.J.Marshall, Problems of Empire, pp.142-4.
28. C.H.Philips, op cit, n.1, p.35.
29. It seems clear that the rapid creation of an effective bureaucracy at the Board of Control was principally the achievement of Henry Dundas. He probably first recognized that any body established to supervise the Court of Directors would need a bureaucracy at least as effective as that at India House while he was serving as

a member of the Select Committee which, in 1781 and 82, carried out investigations into the wars being fought in India.

30. 24 Geo 3, c.25, s.18.
31. 24 Geo 3, c.25, s.33.
32. 24 Geo 3, c.25, s.31.
33. 24 Geo 3, c.25, s.32.  
B.B.Misra covers the provisions of this act very fully in his book, op cit, p.33.
34. Public Consultations, 12 Feb 1785, vol.135.  
H.D.Love, op cit, vol.III, p.225.
35. Hill's Memo on Allowances to Munro, 12 May 1823.  
Munro Papers, 78.  
The arrangements described in the text existed from 1800. Until 1797, there were only two secretaries, one for the Military and Political, one for the Civil Dept. The former earned 675 pagodas monthly and about 2000 more a year in commissions. The latter 520 a month and fees from the Court of Appeals worth 6500 a year on average. In 1797 the two offices were consolidated with a salary of 895 pagodas a month plus commissions.
36. Furber, John Company at Work, p.24 & p.197.
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#### Chapter Two.

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10. Munro to brother James, 23 Jan 1789.  
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77. Father to Munro, 12 July 1783. MP, 146.
78. Father to Munro, 7 May 1784. MP, 146.
79. Father to Munro, 3 Oct 1784. MP, 146.
80. Father to Munro, 3 June 1785. MP, 146.
81. Father to Munro, 29 Feb 1784. MP, 146.
82. Father to Munro, 18 April 1786. MP, 146.
83. Father to Munro, 3 Oct 1784. MP, 146.
84. Ibid.
85. Father to Munro, 3 Nov 1784. MP, 146.  
Brother Daniel to Munro, 25 June 1785. MP, 146.  
Account of the Admiralty Sessions, 21 June 1785  
MP, 182.
86. Father to Munro, 3 Oct 1784. MP, 146.
87. Father to Munro, 23 Dec 1784. MP 146.
88. Ibid.
89. Father to Munro, 25 April 1787. MP, 147.
90. Dated only with the year (1789), this extract  
appears to come from a letter from Munro to his  
family. MP, 141.
91. Munro to mother, 19 Feb 1788.  
G.R.Gleig, op cit, vol.III, pp.50-2.
92. Munro to father, 15 Feb 1787. MP, 140.
93. Father to Munro, 2 June 1788. MP, 147.
94. Father to Munro, 14 Jan 1788. MP, 147.
95. Munro to Struthers & Melville, 1787.  
MP, 151. This letter appears in Gleig where  
it is listed as being to an unknown correspondent.  
G.R.Gleig, vol.I, pp.58-67.
96. Ibid.  
When Munro stated that he was studying Hindustani,  
he was in fact almost certainly studying Urdu, the  
language which originated between the Mohammedan  
conquerors and their subjects in parts of India.  
Munro's employment in the Intelligence Corps seems  
to prove this. There he was required to translate  
letters and reports from informants in the towns  
and armies of the Nizam and Tipu. Urdu was the  
language commonly used by the news letter writers  
in Mysore.

97. Munro to sister Erskine, 23 Jan 1789. MP, 141.
98. Munro to mother, 19 Feb 1788.  
G.R.Gleig, op cit, vol.III, pp.50-2.
99. Father to Munro, 30 Nov, 1789. MP 147.
100. Munro to father, 17 Jan 1790. MP 141.
101. Munro to mother, 1 March 1790. MP, 141.
102. Munro to brother James, 23 Jan 1789. MP, 139.
103. Munro to mother, 10 Nov 1785.  
G.R.Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.67-8.
104. Munro to mother, 9 April 1782. MP, 140.
105. Munro to mother, 7 Feb 1789. MP, 141.  
Father to Munro, 18 Aug 1790. MP, 147.
106. Munro to mother, 7 Feb 1789. MP, 141.
107. Father to Munro, 18 Aug 1789. MP, 147.
108. Munro to father, 26 May 1790. MP, 141.
109. Cornwallis to Read, 14 Jan 1792.  
Carfrae MSS Eur E 184, pp.17-18.  
Beaglehole, Thomas Munro and the  
Development of Administrative Policy  
in Madras, 1792-18, pp.14-15.
110. Ibid.
111. Father to Munro, 21 Dec 1790. MP 147.
112. Cornwallis the Madras Council, 8 Feb 1790.  
C.Ross (ed), Correspondence of Charles,  
first Marquis Cornwallis vol.I, p.77.
113. Minute of Cornwallis, 2 April 1790.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, pp.10-3.
114. Minute of Cornwallis, 5 Feb 1790  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.I, pp.472-4.
115. Cornwallis to Henry Dundas; 31 Dec 1790.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, pp.65-6.
116. Cornwallis to Henry Dundas, 18 June 1792.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, p.170.
117. Hippisley to Henry Dundas, 27 Nov 1793.  
Add MSS 37,848, f.321.  
Parliamentary History, XXVIII, p.1182.  
C.H.Philips, East India Company, p.68.

118. Parliamentary History, XXIX, p.119.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, p.68.
119. Munro to parents, 11 Oct 1780. MP, 140.
120. Munro to father, 8 Jan 1792.  
G.R.Gleig, op cit, vol.III, p.70.
121. Munro to father, 17 Jan 1790. MP 141.
122. Dundas to Grenville, 28 Sept 1790.  
Home Misc Series, vol.362, f.109.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, p.68.
123. Father to Munro, 22 Sept 1790. MP, 147.  
Alexander Munro claimed that he had  
allowed himself to be persuaded to  
publish the letter by his friend  
Professor Wilson, to whom he had  
shown it.
124. Munro to sister Erskine, 25 July 1791.  
G.R.Gleig, op cit, vol.III, pp.53-7.
125. Munro to George Brown, 10 Aug 1791.  
G.R.Gleig, op cit, vol.III, pp.57-65.
126. Munro to father, 17 Jan 1790. MP, 141.
127. Macartney to Laurence Sullivan, 29 Aug 1782.  
Davies, op cit, pp.199-202.
128. Home Misc Series, vol.824, f 473, 21 Jan 1788.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, pp.54-5.
129. Parliamentary History, XXVII, p.65.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, p.57.
130. Alexander Munro to unnamed friend, 13 Feb 1792.  
Home Misc Series, vol.251, pp.635-8.
131. Father to Munro, 29 Feb 1792. MP, 147.
132. Father to Munro, 30 May 1791. MP, 147.
133. Cornwallis to Henry Dundas, 18 June 1792.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, p.170.
134. General Letter, 18 Dec 1671.  
Personal Records, vol.VI, pp.1117-8.
135. General Letter, 27 Oct 1714, paras 79-81.  
Personal Records, vol.VI, pp.1117-8.
136. Political Letter from Madras, 21 Jan 1791,  
para 55. Board's Collection, vol.300, 1810-11.
137. Political Letter to Madras, 4 Aug 1791, para 27.  
Board's Collection, vol.300, 1810-11.

In the Personal Records, vol.VI, there is a long paper dealing with attempts to persuade the Company's civil servants to learn Indian languages. It is entitled ' A Narrative of the Measures which have been taken with a view to the encouragement of the Junior Civil Servants of the Company at the Presidency of Fort St George in the study of Native Languages'.

138. Munro to father, 6 July 1791.  
G.R.Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.123.
139. Ibid.
140. Munro to George Brown, 10 Aug 1791.  
G.R.Gleig, op cit, vol.III, pp.57-66.
141. Cornwallis to Marquis Landsdowne. 9 Oct 1791.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, pp.125-6.
142. Home Misc Series, vol.789, f.109.  
Parliamentary History, XXVIII, p.127.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, p.68.
143. Ibid.

### Chapter Three.

1. Cornwallis to Court, 7 Sept 1791.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, pp.505-20.
2. Dundas to Grenville, 28 Sept 1790.  
Home Misc Series, vol.362, f.109.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, p.68.
3. Board's Secret Letters, 21 Sept 1791, vol.I.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, p.68.
4. Fifth Report, quoted J.W.Kaye, The Administration of the East India Company, p.203.
5. Military Sundries, 13 Aug 1784, vol.66, p.220.  
K.Rajayyan, 'Taxation in the Carnatic', Journal of Indian History, vol.58, p.29-34. 1980.
6. Ibid.
7. A.Dyce, Jan 1801. Quoted with no further reference by K.Rajayyan, op cit.
8. A.Dow, The History of Hindustan, vol.III, p.118.  
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9. The Letter Copy Books of the Supervisor of Rajshahi at Nator, p.11. R.Guha, op cit, p.56.
10. H.Pattullo, Essai sur l'Amelioration des Terres.

- R.Guha, op cit, p.47.
11. P.Francis to W.Young, 5 July 1778. Francis MSS 51.  
R.Guha, op cit, p.98.
  12. Ibid.
  13. P.Francis, Letter from Mr Francis to Lord North,  
p.7. R.Guha, op cit, p.98.
  14. Cornwallis to Court, 12 April 1790, para 3.  
General Letters to the Court of Directors, Revenue  
Department, vol.VII.
  15. Minute of Cornwallis, 18 Feb 1790.  
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the Governor-General of India, Lord Cornwallis,  
vol.II, p.88.
  16. Minute of Cornwallis,  
G.W.Forrest, op cit, vol.II, p.75.
  17. Dundas to Court, 15 July 1785.  
Letters from the Board to the Court, vol I.
  18. C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, p.195.
  19. Cornwallis to Dundas, 4 March 1792.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, pp.154-6.
  20. Ibid.
  21. Ibid.
  22. Landsdowne to Cornwallis, 9 Oct 1791.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, pp.125-6.
  23. Munro to father, 14 April 1793. MP, 141.
  24. Barry Close to Read, 31 March 1792, para 2.  
Baramahal Records (BR), vol.I, p.86.
  25. Macartney to John Macpherson, 3 Jan 1782.  
C.C.Davies, op cit, pp.9-15.
  26. Macartney to Samuel Johnson, 12 January 1782.  
C.C.Davies, op cit, pp.178-9.
  27. Stuart Hill to Castlereagh, 22 May 1803.  
Home Misc Series, vol.433, p.369.
  28. Cornwallis to Court, 10 April 1790.  
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  29. Stuart Hill to Castlereagh, 22 May 1803.  
Home Misc Series, vol.433, p.369.
  30. A.Ross to Read, 28 Dec 1792. BR, 21, p.23.

31. Cornwallis to Oakeley, 1 July 1791.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, p.505.
32. Stuart Hill to Castlereagh, 22 May 1803.  
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33. Captain Towns to Pitt, 15 Feb 1791.  
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34. Cornwallis to Col Mackenzie, 21 Sept 1791.  
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36. Minute of Robert Alexander, 17 May 1816.  
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38. B.R.Naidu, op cit.
39. Ibid.
40. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 2 March 1798, para 14.  
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43. Munro to father, 28 April 1792.  
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48. Read to Board of Revenue, 10 June 1792.  
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49. A.S.Raju, Economic Conditions in the Madras Presidency.  
D.Kumar, Land and Caste in South India.
50. Read to Board of Revenue, 10 May 1792.  
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51. Board of Revenue to Government, 14 June 1792.  
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52. J.W.B.Dykes, Salem, an Indian Collectorate,  
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53. Minute of C.D.White, 25 March 1793.  
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54. Ross to Cornwallis, 24 May 1792.  
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and vol.XXIX, p.1538.
55. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.69.
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59. Read to Board of Revenue, June 1793.  
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62. Dashwood to Read, 14 Oct 1792. BR, vol.VII, p.14.
63. Munro to Kirkman Finlay, 15 Aug 1825.  
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64. Adam Smith, Wealth of Nations, vol.II, pp.117-9.



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66. Munro to father, 18 Feb 1793. MP, 141.
67. Munro to Read, 23 Nov 1792. BR, vol.VII, p.16.
68. Read to Board of Revenue, 5 March 1793.  
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69. Board of Revenue to Government, 12 March 1793.  
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70. Government to Board of Revenue, 16 March 1793.  
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71. Dashwood to Board of Trade, 6 Nov 1793.  
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72. Munro to Read, 19 March 1794. BR, vol.VII, p.28.
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74. Government to Board of Revenue, 6 Sept 1794.  
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76. Munro to father, 14 April 1793. MP, 141.
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80. William Pultenay to A.Munro, 18 Oct 1793.  
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81. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.77.
82. William Pultenay to A.Munro, 1 Nov 1793.  
MP, 148.
83. Father to Munro, 1 Dec 1793. MP, 148.
84. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 21 May 1794, para 16.  
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85. Read to Board of Revenue, June 1793.  
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86. Munro to Capt Allan, 8 June 1794.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.III, pp.91-8.
87. Ibid.
88. Read to Board of Revenue, 10 Aug 1794, para 24.

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91. Ibid.
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93. Hobart to Bristow, 20 April 1795.  
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94. Bristow to Hobart, 15 May 1795. HP, B - India.
95. Shore to Hobart, 26 Sept 1794. HP, A - India.
96. Hobart to Bristow, 4 Aug 1795. HP, B - India.
97. Hobart to Bristow, 19 Sept 1795. HP, B - India.
98. Hobart to Bristow, 12 Dec 1795. HP, B - India.
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100. Bristow to Hobart, 20 July 1795. HP, B - India.
101. Bristow to Hobart, 21 July 1796. HP, B - India.
102. Hobart to Dundas, 21 March 1794.  
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103. Ibid.
104. Minute of Stuart, 10 May 1785.  
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105. Minute of John Shore, 13 Jan 1782.  
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106. Despatch to Bengal, 12 April 1786.  
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107. Bengal Regulations, 8 & 27 June 1787.  
Details of these can be found in  
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110. A.K.Ghosal, op cit, p.218.
111. Dundas to Hobart, 15 Jan 1796. HP, G - India.
112. Hobart to unnamed correspondent, undated.  
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113. Proclamation of Madras Government, 15 Nov 1794.  
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114. Shore to Hobart, 1 Dec 1794. HP, A - India.
115. Ibid.
116. Hobart to Shore, undated but clearly in reply  
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119. Revenue Letter from Madras, 2 Oct 1795, para 5.  
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120. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 21 May 1794, para 16.  
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124. Munro to father, 31 Jan 1795. MP, 142.
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130. Cockburn to Munro, 29 June 1794. MP, 3.
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133. Hobart to Cornwallis, 18 March 1794.  
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C.H.Philips (ed), The Correspondence of David Scott, Director and Chairman of the East India Company, relating to India Affairs, 1787-1805, vol. I, pp 76-80.
- Hobart considered that the British should take over the management of the Nawab's territories permanently because he considered them so ill managed that, not only were the inhabitants suffering, there was also a danger that the revenues would fall until they were no longer capable of supporting the British troops.
135. Report of the Board of Revenue, 10 Jan 1796.  
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136. Benjamin Sullivan to Hobart, 12 Feb 1799.  
Home Misc Series, vol.430, p.77.
137. John Sullivan to Hobart, 5 Aug 1796.  
HP, K - India.
138. C.H.Philips, East India Company, pp.36-40 & pp.92-4.
139. Dundas to David Scott, 11 March 1797.  
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140. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.92, n.2 & app 1.
141. Dundas to David Scott, 11 March 1797.  
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142. Court to Dundas, 15 March 1797.  
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145. Hobart to Bristow, 1 Dec 1797. HP, B - India.  
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146. Bristow to Hobart, 24 Jan 1798. HP, B - India.  
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147. Munro to father, 1 Feb 1797. MP, 142.
148. Minute of the Board of Revenue, 27 Sept 1798.  
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5. C.H. Philips op cit, p.102.
6. Webbe to Hobart, 15 Oct 1798. HP, M - India.
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9. Wellesley to Court of Directors, 13 Sept 1799.  
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16. Ibid.
17. Notes on Tipu's forces, 1798.  
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18. A.Wellesley to R.Wellesley, 15 Dec 1798.  
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20. A.Wellesley to R.Wellesley, 19 Oct 1798.  
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21. E.Longford, op cit, p.56.
22. Webbe to Wellesley, 16 Nov 1799.  
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23. Scott to Wellesley, 19 April 1799.  
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24. Wellesley to Hobart, 22 April 1799.  
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25. Munro to father, 2 Aug 1798.  
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26. Webbe to Hobart, 20 March 1801. HP, M - India.
27. Wellesley to Hobart, 22 April 1799.  
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28. R.Wellesley to A.Wellesley, 19 Jan 1799.  
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30. Chatham Papers, PRO, vol.361.  
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32. Ibid.
33. Father to Munro, 21 Feb 1797. MP, 148.  
  
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34. Webbe to Munro, 4 June 1799. MP, 3.
35. Ibid.
36. John Malcolm to Munro, 28 June 1799. MP, 3.  
Munro to sister Erskine, 30 June 1799. MP, 142.
37. Wellesley to Commissioners of Mysore, 4 June  
1799. MP, 149.
38. Arthur Wellesley to Munro, 1 Sept 1799.  
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39. Read to Munro, 20 Sept 1799. MP, 3.
40. Webbe to Munro, 19 Sept 1799. MP, 3.
41. Malcolm to Munro, 28 June 1799. MP, 3.
42. Munro to Wellesley, 29 June 1799.  
R.M.Martin, op cit, vol.II, pp.58-9. Quoted  
Beaglehole, op cit, p.37.
43. Beaglehole, op cit, p.37.
44. Munro to sister Erskine, 30 June 1799.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.227-9.
45. Ibid.
46. Munro to Wellesley, 29 June 1799.  
R.M.Martin, op cit, vol.II, pp.58-9. Quoted  
Beaglehole, op cit, p.37.
47. Munro to father, 15 March 1794. MP, 142.
48. Munro to father, 31 Jan 1795. MP, 142.
49. Munro and Macleod to Read, 8 May 1795.  
Madras Board of Revenue Consultations,  
30 July 1795, vol.XV, p.5802.
50. Munro to brother Alexander, 22 Aug 1794. MP, 142.
51. Munro and Macleod to Read, 8 May 1795.  
Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 30 July  
1795, vol.XV, p.5802.

52. Munro to Arthur Wellesley, 17 Sept 1799.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.III, p.112.
53. Munro to sister Erskine, 30 June 1799.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.227-9.
54. Munro to Arthur Wellesley, 17 Sept 1799.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.III, p.112.
55. Arthur Wellesley to Munro, 8 Oct 1799.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.235-7.
- Munro to Arthur Wellesley, 12 Nov 1799.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.III, p.115.
56. Webbe to Munro, 19 Sept 1799. MP, 3.  
Webbe to Read, 14 Oct 1799. MP, 3.
57. Arthur Wellesley to Munro, 1 Sept 1799.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.232-3.
58. Ibid.
59. Webbe to Read, 1 Oct 1799. MP, 3.
60. Munro to Board of Revenue, 31 May 1800, para 2.  
Madras Board of Revenue Consultations,  
28 Aug 1800. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.38.
61. Much of the following is based on the research of  
Dr K.Rajayyan and taken from his book, Rise and  
Fall of the Poligars of Tamilnadu, 1974.
62. K.Rajayyan, op cit, p.91. This remark is  
traditionally ascribed to Kattabomman but it must  
be observed that it is also ascribed to others in  
different circumstances.
63. Political Letter from Madras, 29 Sept 1794.  
Political Despatches to England, vol.II, pp.316-8.
64. Military Consultations, 23 Oct 1795, vol.199,  
pp.3747-3802. Quoted Rajayyan, op cit, p.88.
65. Webbe to Bannerman, 19 Aug 1799.  
Secret Sundries, vol.XXVI, pp.389-390. Quoted  
Rajayyan, op cit, p.96.
66. Webbe to Munro, 4 Sept 1800.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.III, p.152.
67. Munro to sister Erskine, 4 Oct 1795.  
Krishnaswami, op cit, p.119.
68. Munro to brother Alexander, 22 Nov 1800.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.310.



69. Beaglehole, op cit, pp.38-9.
70. Munro to Board of Revenue, 31 May 1800, para 3. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 28 Aug 1800. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.39.
71. Munro to Close, 16 June 1800. Carfrae MSS, pp.36-52.
72. Ibid.
73. Munro to Board of Revenue, 12 Sept 1800. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 29 Sept 1800. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.40.
74. Munro to Close, 16 June 1800. Carfrae, MSS, pp.36-52.
75. Munro to Close, 24 July 1800. Enclosed with Close to Government, 2 Aug 1800. Madras Political Consultations, Aug 1800, p.376. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.40.
76. Munro to Cockburn, undated. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.270.
77. Webbe to Bannerman, 19 Aug 1799. Home Misc Series, vol.433, p.369.
78. Colonel Mignon to Munro, 22 July 1800. MP, 4.
79. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 19 Sept 1792, para 37.
80. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 21 April 1795.
81. Report of the Board of Revenue, 10 Feb 1795, paras 118-9. Board's Collection, vol.V.
82. Circular Letter from the Board of Revenue to the collectors, 14 Oct 1799. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, Oct 1799. pp.286-319.
83. Munro to brother Alexander, 22 Nov 1800. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.310.
84. Munro to Close, 16 June 1800. Carfrae MSS, pp.36-52.
85. Munro to Cockburn, 13 July 1800. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.251-2.
86. Munro to family, 19 March 1800. MP, 143.
87. Board of Revenue to Munro, 8 Feb 1800. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 10 Feb 1800.
88. Government to Board of Revenue, 4 Sept 1799. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 1799,

pp.286-319.

89. Circular Letter from the Board of Revenue to the collectors, 14 Oct 1799. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, Oct 1799, pp.286-319.
90. Ibid, para 6.
91. Ibid, paras 10 and 27.
92. Ibid, para 29.
93. Ibid, paras 34 to 36.
94. Government to Board of Revenue, 4 Sept 1799. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 1799, pp.286-319.
95. Madras Board of Revenue Minute of Consultation, 8 Jan 1796. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13613.
96. Cockburn to Munro, 14 March 1800. MP, 4.
97. Cockburn to Wellesley, 3 Feb 1800. Wellesley Papers, Add Mss 13631.
98. Circular Letter from the Board of Revenue to the collectors, 14 Oct 1799, para 62. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, Oct 1799, pp.286-319.
99. Munro to Cockburn, 28 Feb 1800. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.242-6.  
  
Munro to Board of Revenue, 27 Feb 1800. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 10 March 1800.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. Cockburn to Munro, 14 March 1800. MP, 4.
103. Report from Munro to Board of Revenue, 31 May 1800. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 28 Aug 1800.
104. Ibid, para 29.
105. Munro to Wellesley, 25 April 1800. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.
106. Report from Munro to Board of revenue, 31 May 1800, para 37. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 28 Aug 1800.  
  
Munro to Cockburn, 13 July 1800.

- Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.251-1.
107. Wellesley to Clive, 28 July 1800. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13621.
108. Report from Hurdis to Board of Revenue, 16 March 1800. Board's Collection, vol.99.
109. Wellesley to Clive, 31 May 1800. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13621.
110. Wellesley to Clive, 17 July 1800. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13621.
111. Munro to Wellesley, 25 April 1800. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.
112. Wellesley to Clive, 31 May 1800. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13621.
113. J.Welsh, Military Reminiscences, vol.I, p.51. Quoted Rajayyan, op cit, p.101.
114. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 6 Nov, 1799, vol.98, p.2766. Quoted Rajayyan, op cit, p.101.
115. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 9 Nov, 1800, vol.98, p.2941. Quoted Rajayyan, op cit, p.101.
116. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 8 Nov, 1799, vol.98, p.2864. Quoted Rajayyan, op cit, p.102.
117. Webbe to Munro, 27 Sept 1800.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.308-9.
- Clive to Webbe, undated but enclosed with above, p.310.
118. Webbe to Munro, 4 Oct 1800. MP 2.
119. Munro to Cockburn, 7 Oct 1800.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.290.
120. Report from Munro to Board of Revenue, 19 Nov 1800, para 17. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 11 Dec 1800.
121. Ibid, para 19.
122. Ibid, para 17.
123. Ibid, para 20.
124. Ibid, para 22.
125. Munro to Cockburn, 7 Oct 1800.

- Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.291.
126. Munro to his successors in Kanara, Read and Ravenshaw, 9 Dec 1800. Carfrae MSS.
127. Munro to Cockburn, 7 June 1800. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.250.
128. Munro to Colonel Mignon, 18 June 1800. MP, 4.
129. Munro to Padre Joseph Miguel Mendez, 28 Sept 1800. Carfrae MSS.
130. Munro to Read, 16 June 1801. Gleig, op cit, vol.III, pp.160-3.

### Chapter Five.

1. Home Misc Series, vol.789, f.109.  
Parliamentary History, XXVIII, p.127,  
28 Feb 1791. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.68.
- Cornwallis to Marquis Landsdowne, 9 Oct 1791.  
C.Ross, op cit, vol.II, pp .125-6.
2. Dundas to Chairman, 5 June 1800.  
Letters from Board to Court, vol.I, f.503.
3. Ibid.
4. Quoted by E.Thompson and G.T.Garratt, The Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India, pp.266-7.
5. Dundas to Wellesley, 30 Dec 1800.  
Home Misc Series, vol.86, f.965.
- Dundas to Chairman, 21 Aug 1800.  
Add MSS 37275, f.168. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.104.
6. Clive to Wellesley, 30 Oct 1800.  
Home Misc Series, vol.462, ff.189-203.  
Beaglehole, op cit, p.55.
7. Government to Munro, 24 Oct 1800.  
Madras Secret Consultations, 23 Oct 1800.  
Beaglehole, op cit, p.55.
- A copy of this letter can also be found in the  
Munro Papers, 2.
8. Father to Munro, 2 Feb 1801. MP, 149.
9. Wellesley to Webbe, 19 Nov 1800.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13621.
10. Webbe to Wellesley, 12 Dec 1800.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 37280.

11. Memorial of Company to H M's Commissioners of Treasury, 1797. Letters from Board to Court, vol.I, f.381.  
Inglis to Wellesley, 3 June 1799.  
Add MSS 37278, f.54. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.107.
12. C.H.Philips covers the membership, policies and activities of the 'Shipping Interest' in depth in chapters IV and V of The East India Company, 1784-1834. 1961.
13. Memorial of Company to H M's Commissioners of Treasury, 1797. Letters from Board to Court, vol.I, f.381. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.107.
14. R.M.Martin, Despatches of Wellesley, vol.II, p.376.  
Cochrane to Dundas, 3 March 1799.  
Home Misc Series, vol.405, f.1. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.108.
15. Dundas to Chairman, 2 April 1800.  
Letters from Board to Court, vol.I, ff.473-502.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, pp.108-9.
16. Scott to Wellesley, 15 July 1800.  
Add MSS 37282, f.162. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.109.
17. Home Misc Series, vol.402. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.109.
18. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.110.
19. Madras Council, 31 July 1801.  
Madras Secret Consultations, vol.XIII, ff.664-8.
20. Madras Council, 3 Aug 1801.  
Secret Despatches to England, vol.II, ff.92-107.  
K.Rajayyan, Administration and Society in the Carnatic, 1701-1801, p.15.
21. Treaty of the Carnatic, 31 July 1801.  
Madras Secret Consultations, vol.XIII, ff.786-801.
22. Webbe to Hobart, 5 Aug 1801.  
HP, M - India.
23. Hobart to Wellesley, 26 Sept 1802.  
HP, D - India.
24. Wellesley to Hobart, 15 Feb 1803.  
HP, D - India.
25. Webbe to Hobart, 5 Aug 1801.  
HP, M - India.
26. Bengal Public Consultations, 21 Dec 1798,

vol.II, ff.714-6. Quoted B.B.Misra, The Central Administration of the East India Company.

27. Ibid.
28. Wellesley to Court, 10 July 1800.  
R.M.Martin, Despatches of Wellesley, vol.II,  
p.339.
29. Minute of Wellesley, 18 Aug 1800, para 8.  
R.M.Martin, op cit, vol.II, pp.
30. Scott to Wellesley, 26 Aug 1800.  
C.H.Philips, The Correspondence of David Scott,  
vol.II, pp.281-4.
31. Dundas to Wellesley, 4 Sept 1800.  
Add MSS, 37275, f.191. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.125.
32. Public letter from Madras, 14 April 1800.  
Board's Collection, vol.300, 1810-11.
33. J.D.Gurney, The Debts of the Nawab of Arcot,  
1736-76, unpublished thesis for Oxford University,  
1968.
34. Report of Place to the Board of Revenue, 6 Oct  
1795. Board's Collection, vol.31.  
  
Report of Place to the Board of Revenue, 6 June  
1799. Board's Collection, vol.111.
35. Webbe to Hobart, 13 Aug 1801.  
HP, M - India.
36. Webbe to Hobart, 15 Oct 1798.  
HP, M - India.
37. Webbe to Munro, 24 Nov 1802. MP, 5.  
  
Webbe to Munro, 3 July 1803. MP, 6.
38. Clive to Chairman, 15 Oct 1801.  
HP, Ma - War & Colonies.  
  
Clive believed that he was sending this letter to  
David Scott, from whom he expected to receive a  
sympathetic hearing. Scott had resigned in September  
and Charles Mills had replaced him.
39. Webbe to Munro, 24 Nov 1802. MP, 5.
40. Government to Munro, 25 Dec 1800.  
Madras Political Consultations, Dec 1800.
41. Beaglehole, op cit, pp.60-1.
42. Webbe to Munro, 2 April 1801. MP, 5.

43. Toone to Hastings, 12 July 1799.  
Add MSS 29177, f.38. C.H.Philips, op cit,  
p.126.
44. J.Duncan to Scott, 28 Nov 1801.  
C.H.Philips, Correspondence of David Scott,  
vol.II, pp.371-3.
45. Munro to Cockburn, 15 Sept 1801.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.325.
46. Webbe to Munro, 24 Nov 1802. MP, 5.
47. Hobart to Webbe, 27 July 1802.  
HP, M - India.
48. Ibid.
49. Webbe to Hobart, 5 Aug 1801.  
HP, M - India.
- Webbe to Hobart, 15 Feb 1802.  
HP, M - India.
50. R.M.Martin, Despatches of Wellesley, vol.II,  
p.593. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.112,
51. Home Misc Series, vol.402, f.80.
- The entire controversy between the Board and Court  
is dealt with in detail by C.H.Philips, op cit,  
chapter IV, pp.112-117.
52. Wellesley to Scott, 1 Oct 1801.  
C.H.Philips, Correspondence of David Scott,  
vol.II, pp.351-3.
53. Scott to Wellesley, 9 Oct 1801.  
C.H.Philips, Correspondence of David Scott,  
vol.II, pp.354-7.
54. Webbe to Wellesley, 10 Oct 1801.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 37280.
55. Clive to Chairman, 15 Oct 1801.  
HP, Ma - War & Colonies.
56. Webbe to Wellesley, 28 Oct 1801.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 37280.
57. Webbe to Munro, 9 Nov 1801. MP, 5.
58. P.Agnew to Hobart, 1 Feb 1802.  
HP, M - India.
- Hobart to Webbe, 27 July 1802.  
HP, M - India.
59. Webbe to Hobart, 15 Feb 1802.

HP, M - India.

60. Duncan to Scott, 28 Nov 1801.  
C.H.Philips, Correspondence of David Scott,  
vol.II, pp.371-3.
61. Webbe to Munro, 27 Dec 1801. MP, 5.
62. Munro to Webbe, 21 Nov 1800.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13629.
63. Munro to Graham, 31 Dec 1800.  
Erskine MSS, India Office D 31.
64. Munro to Webbe, 1 Jan 1801.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13629.
65. Ibid.
66. Munro to Webbe, 5 Feb 1801.  
Guard Book, India Office MSS F 18.  
  
Munro to Webbe, 6 April 1801.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13629.
67. Col Mackay to Munro, 9 Jan 1801. MP, 5.
68. Gen Campbell to Munro, 20 Feb 1801. MP, 5.
69. Munro to Webbe, 5 Feb 1801.  
Guard Book, India Office MSS F 18.  
  
Munro to Government, 18 March 1801.  
Madras Political Consultations, 3 April 1801.  
  
Government to Campbell, 3 April 1801.  
Ibid. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.62.
70. Munro to Webbe, 16 March 1801.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13629.
71. Webbe to Munro, 2 April 1801. MP 5.
72. Munro to Board of Revenue, 22 Feb 1805.  
Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 4 March  
1805. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.62.
73. Campbell to Government, 10 May 1801.  
Madras Political Consultations, 26 May 1801.  
  
Col Moneypenny to Campbell, 10 May 1801.  
Enclosed with above. Quoted Beaglehole,  
op cit, p.63.
74. Beaglehole, op cit, p.63.
75. Munro to Government, 8 Jan 1801.  
Madras Revenue Consultations, 8 Jan 1802.



- Munro to Board of Revenue, 20 March 1802, paras 12-14. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 15 July 1801. Quoted Beaglehole, p.63.
76. Board of Revenue to Munro, 28 March 1803. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 28 March 1803. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.64.
77. Minute of the Board of Revenue. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 8 June 1801. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.64.
78. Government to Campbell, 28 May 1801. Madras Political Consultations, 26 May 1801.
79. Munro to Webbe, 10 April 1801. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13629. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.64.
80. Wilks to Munro, 2 Jult 1801. MP, 5.
81. Webbe to Munro, 24 Nov 1802. MP, 5.
82. Munro to Cockburn , 15 Sept 1801. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.325.
83. Board of Revenue to Government, 1 Nov 1802, para 19. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 1 Nov 1802. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.64.
84. Beaglehole, op cit, (note.7, p.64), p.152.
85. Government to Munro, 4 April 1801. Madras Political Consultations, 3 April 1801. Beaglehole, ibid.
86. Munro to Cockburn , 18 April 1802. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.331.
87. Munro to Cockburn , 27 May 1802. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.332-4.
88. Munro to Webbe, 18 March 1801. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13629.
89. Ibid.
90. Munro to Gen Stuart, 11 Nov 1802. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.335-9.
91. Munro to Cockburn , 18 April 1802. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.331.
92. Munro to Board of Revenue, 20 March 1802. Erskine MSS, India Office D 31.
93. Ibid.
94. Munro to Cockburn , 18 April 1802.

- Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.331.
95. Webbe to Munro, 24 Nov 1802. MP, 5.
96. Munro to Gen Stuart, 11 Nov 1802.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.335-9.
97. Gen Stuart to Munro, 22 Nov 1802.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.340.
98. Graham to Munro, 26 July 1802. MP 17.
99. Hodgson to Graham, 27 Aug 1802. MP, 17.
100. Ibid.
101. Graham to Government, undated. MP, 17.
102. Hodgson to Graham, 25 Sept 1802. MP, 17.
103. Graham to Munro, 28 Nov 1802. MP, 17.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. A.Wellesley to Munro, 10 Sept 1803. MP, 1.  
  
Petition of Graham to the Court of Directors,  
7 May 1808. MP, 27.
108. G.Buchan to Dundas, 17 Feb 1802.  
Melville Papers, John Rylands Library,  
Eng MSS 674, MS 275. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit,  
(Note.1, p.73), p.154.
- This commission was composed of Petrie, Cockburne and Webbe. Part of the reason for the establishment of a special commission to do the work that might normally have been the responsibility of the Board was the personal animosity existing between Cockburne and Place. Cockburne informed Clive that he would not work with Place. The establishment of the commission allowed Cockburne to continue to oversee the introduction of the permanent settlements without him having to have any immediate connection with Place. It is however clear from the people selected to form the commission that Wellesley and Clive were concerned to neutralise the Board's influence. Wellesley had tried to have Place's appointment cancelled but the Court had refused to permit this.
109. Minute of Place at the Board of Revenue, 9 Oct 1802. MP, 7.
110. Munro to Board of Revenue, 29 June 1802.  
Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 15 July 1802.

Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.57.

111. Munro to Collectors of Kanara, 9 Dec 1800, para 2.  
Carfrae MSS, India Office E 183.

Munro made a habit of employing systems designed to encourage suspicion among his Indian officials and even between the patels and other inhabitants. He found these a useful tool with which, by dividing, to rule. He always kept a large number of men waiting for employment around his kachahri since he knew that they would spy on those already employed and report their mis-doings in order to obtain their jobs. He believed that those employed, knowing this, would work better and avoid corrupt practices. When making assessments, Munro would assemble as many patels and ryots as possible since he imagined that jealousies would reveal attempts to conceal resources. Nobody would be prepared to see another village escape more lightly than his own.

A Read to James Cochrane, undated. MP, 10.  
Munro to Board of Revenue, 3 Nov 1802.  
Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, 25 Nov 1802.

112. Minute of Place at the Board of Revenue, 9 Oct 1802.  
MP, 7.

113. Webbe to Munro, 24 Nov 1802. MP, 5.

114. Reports on Indian built Ships, pp.143-214.  
Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.119.

115. Parliamentary History, XXXVI, p.281.  
25 Nov 1801. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.115.

Scott to Wellesley, 9 Oct 1801.  
C.H.Philips, Correspondence of David Scott,  
vol.II, pp.354-7.

116. Webbe to Munro, 24 Nov 1802. MP, 5.

117. Wellesley to Addington, 10 Jan 1802.  
Add MSS 37282, f.295. C.H.Philips, op  
cit, p.120.

Minute of the Court, 13 Oct 1802.  
Court Minutes, vol.III, f.707.  
HMC, Bathurst Manuscripts, p.30.  
C.H.Philips, op cit, p.121.

118. Government to Board of Revenue, 19 Feb 1803,  
paras 8 & 10-13. MP, 18.

119. Bentinck to Munro, 29 April 1804. MP, 7.

120. Webbe to Bentinck, 18 Jan 1804.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13631.

121. Stuart Hill to Castlereagh, 22 May 1803.  
Home Misc Series, vol.433, p.369.
122. Webbe to Munro, 3 July 1803. MP, 6.
123. Munro to Bruce, 12 Dec 1802. MP, 11.
124. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 10 April 1804,  
paras 19-21. MP, 18.
125. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 15 May 1805,  
paras 40-1. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.65.
126. Grant to Munro, 8 Sept 1804. MP, 7.
127. Bentinck to Webbe, 23 Sept 1804. MP, 7.
128. Gen Stuart to Munro, 6 Oct 1804. MP, 7.
129. Bentinck to Munro, 4 Nov 1804. MP, 7.
130. Munro to Bentinck, 15 Nov 1804.  
Bentinck Papers. Quoted Beaglehole,  
op cit, p.65.
131. Munro to Bentinck, 11 March 1805.  
Bentinck Papers. Quoted Beaglehole,  
op cit, p.66.
132. Ibid.
133. Munro to Board of Revenue, 22 Feb 1805. MP, 18.  
Also in Madras Board of Revenue Consultations,  
4 March 1805.
134. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 2 July 1806, paras 80-3.
135. Munro to Bentinck, 12 May 1806. Bentinck Papers.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.67.
136. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 2 July 1806, paras 80-3.
137. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.129.
138. Ibid, p 141.

C.H.Philips analyses in depth the complicated and acrimonious relations between the Court, the Board of Control and Wellesley which led up to the latter's recall in chapter V of his book The East India Company, 1784-1834 . He makes the interesting point that only one Director, Thomas Metcalfe, supported Wellesley. This man's son was serving in Bengal and was dependent on Wellesley for promotion. On the other hand, the majority of the sons and relatives of the remaining Directors were employed on the Canton establishment and therefore out of Wellesley's reach. Philips suggests that this enabled the Directors to take 'a more independent

attitude than usual to the Governor-General'.  
(p.130)

139. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 24 Aug 1804.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.II, pp.238-9.
140. Bentinck to Munro, 1 Dec 1804. MP, 7.
141. Beaglehole, op cit, p.68.
142. Munro to Wellesley, 10 July 1802.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.
143. Munro to his assistants, 31 Dec 1800.  
Erskine MSS, IO MS EUR D 31, ff.113-32.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.69.
144. Munro to Thackeray, 17 Feb 1801, paras 4-5.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.312-9.
145. Munro to his assistants, 9 April 1801.  
Erskine MSS, IO MS EUR D 31.
146. Munro to his assistants, 10 Aug 1801.  
Erskine MSS, IO MS EUR D 31, ff.189-93.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.70.
147. Munro to his assistants, 25 May 1801, para 6.  
MP, 10.
148. Munro to his assistants, 30 Sept 1802. MP 10.  
Copy also enclosed with letter from Munro to  
Board of Revenue, 2 May 1803. Madras Board of  
Revenue Consultations, 19 May 1803. The latter  
was available to Beaglehole who quoted from it.  
Beaglehole, op cit, pp.70-1.
149. Beaglehole, op cit, p.73.
150. Ibid.
151. See note 107 above.
152. Governor-General in Council to Madras Government,  
19 July 1804. IO Tracts, vol.465. Quoted  
Beaglehole, op cit, p.74.
153. Bentinck to Castlereagh, 16 Oct 1804.  
Bentinck Papers.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.74.  
  
Bentinck to Wellesley, 9 Sept 1804.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13634.
154. Falconar to Munro, 12 Dec 1802. MP, 11.
155. Munro to Petrie, 22 May 1805.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.

156. Munro to Petrie, 29 May 1805.  
Wellesley papers, Add MSS 13679.
157. Memo from Munro to Board of Revenue,  
22 May 1805 with notes attached to it  
by Petrie. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.
158. Bentinck to Munro, 24 May 1805. MP, 8.
159. Report of Munro to Board of Revenue,  
25 Aug 1805. MP 10.
160. Ibid, para 2.
161. Ibid, para 3.
162. Ibid, paras, 11 & 12.
163. Ibid, para 24.
164. Ibid para 14.
165. Minute of Bentinck, 2 Jan 1806.  
Carfrae MSS, IO EUR E 184.
166. Minute of Bentinck, 22 Jan 1806.  
Carfrae MSS, IO EUR E 184.
- Petrie believed that Bentinck was completely  
under the influence of Munro's ryotwari ideas.  
Petrie to Munro, 27 June 1805. MP, 8.
167. Thackeray to Munro, 30 Jan 1806. MP, 9.
168. Minute of Bentinck, 29 April 1806.  
Board's Collection, vol.241.
169. Thackeray to Munro, 16 June 1806. MP, 9.
170. Minute of Bentinck, 29 April 1806.  
Board's Collection, vol.241.
171. Thackeray to Munro, 10 April 1806. MP, 9.  
Thackeray to Munro, 12 May 1806. MP, 9.
172. Munro's notes on his questionnaire,  
15 May 1806. MP, 18.
173. Amongst the Munro Papers is one entitled 'A  
History of the Permanent Settlement of Fort  
St George'. It was probably compiled by  
Cumming on or about 16 March 1813. MP, 24.
174. Thackeray to Munro, 16 Sept 1806. MP, 9.
175. Cumming, 'A History of the Permanent Settlement  
of Fort St George', 16 March 1813. MP, 24.

176. Munro to Thackeray, undated.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.372.
177. Report of Munro to Board of Revenue,  
25 Aug 1805, para 2. MP, 10.
178. Munro's comments on Wellesley's letter to  
Bentinck. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.75.
179. Munro to Board of Revenue, Dec 1800.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.
180. Munro's comments on Wellesley's letter to  
Bentinck. Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.75.
181. Munro to Bruce, 25 Oct 1807. MP, 12.
182. Petrie to Munro, 7 May 1805. MP, 8.
183. Government to Munro, 22 Jan 1803. MP, 10.
184. Macleod to Munro, 10 April 1803. MP, 6.
185. Webbe to Munro, 3 July 1803. MP, 6.
186. Bentinck to Munro, 13 Nov 1804. MP, 7.
187. Munro to Petrie, 22 May 1805.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.
- Munro to Petrie, 29 May 1805.  
Wellesley Papers, Add MSS 13679.
188. Munro to George Brown, 19 Aug 1805. MP, 151.
189. These notes can be found amongst the Munro  
Papers, 24.
- Report of Munro to the Committee of Police,  
10 April 1806. Selection of Papers from the  
Records at the East India House relating to  
the Revenue, Police, and Civil and Criminal  
Justice under the Company's Governments in  
India, vol.II, pp.214-33.
190. Munro's notes on judicial matters. MP, 23.
191. Munro to Bruce, 10 July 1806. MP, 12.
192. Munro to sister Erskine, 22 July 1805.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.357.
193. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.158.
- Philips examines the divisions that were  
appearing in the Court at this period in  
chapter VI, pp.158-63.

194. Parliamentary History, XV, p.840.  
Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.161.
195. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.69.
196. Thackeray to Munro, 25 July 1807. MP, 9.
197. Daniel Munro married Caroline Smith. She was Barlow's wife's sister and the niece of Captain Collins, Military Secretary to Sir John Shore.
- Daniel to Munro, 22 Dec 1795. MP, 148.
- Father to Munro, 21 Feb 1797. MP, 148.
- Father to Munro, 14 March 1799. MP, 148.
- Father to Munro, 7 June 1799. MP, 148.
- Father to Munro, 4 June 1800. MP, 149.
- Father to Munro, 30 July 1800. MP, 149.
198. Thackeray to Munro, 25 July 1807. MP, 9.
199. George Brown to Munro, 17 Feb 1806. MP, 152.
200. Munro to Board of Revenue, 15 Aug 1807.  
Madras Board of Revenue Consultations,  
4 Feb 1808. Selection of Papers from the  
Records at East India House..., vol.I, pp.94-8.  
Also in the Board's Collection, vol.314.

#### Chapter Six.

1. Further details of the events leading to the home authorities' decision to abandon zamindari and village settlements in favour of ryotwari ones can be found in B.S.Baliga, 'Home Government and the end of the Policy of Permanent Settlement in Madras, 1802 to 1818', Indian Historical Records Commission Proceedings, vol.XIX, 1942.
2. Webbe to Munro, 22 May 1803. MP, 6.
3. Munro to Webbe, 12 June 1803.  
Guard Book, IO, EUR MSS F 18.
4. Ibid.
5. Webbe to Munro, 3 July 1803. MP, 6.
6. Bentinck to Munro, 5 Nov 1804. MP, 7.
7. Petrie to Munro, 7 May 1805. MP, 8.
8. Ibid.



9. Minute of Petrie, 12 Oct 1807. MP, 54.
10. Revenue Letter from Madras, 21 Oct 1807. MP, 14.
11. Munro to father, 15 Apr 1808. MP, 143.
12. Dictionary of National Biography.
13. Munro to Court. 4 May 1808. MP, 155.
14. Court to Munro, 16 June 1808. MP, 155.
15. Robert Thornton to Henry Erskine, 4 July 1808. MP, 152.
16. Munro to sister Erskine, 12 Aug 1809. MP, 143.
17. Munro to Court, first draft, 6 July 1808. MP, 155.
18. Munro to Court, second draft, 6 July 1808. MP, 155.
19. Munro to brother Alexander, 15 May 1809. MP, 143.
20. Ibid.
21. Munro to brother Alexander, 9 July 1809. MP, 143.
22. Court to Munro, 3 Aug 1809. MP, 155.
23. W.F.Elphinstone to Munro, 5 Oct 1813, MP, 21.
24. Munro to brother Alexander, 16 Nov 1809. MP, 143.
25. Jessy McCorquodale to Munro, 29 April 1813. MP, 21.
26. Despatch to Madras, 30 Aug 1809, paras 141 & 204. MP, 20.
27. Munro to sister Erskine, 25 Oct 1808. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.378-9.
28. Munro to Bruce, 8 Jan 1809. MP, 12.
29. Munro to brother Alexander, 2 June 1809. MP, 143.
30. Revenue Despatches to Madras, 21 July 1802, paras 3 & 4; 18 March 1803, paras 7 & 8; 14 Sept 1803, paras 1 & 2; 15 Feb 1804, para 9; 10 April 1804, paras 8, 30, 35, 39 & 40; 24 April 1804, paras 24-47; 6 Nov 1805, paras 5-17. Quoted B.S.Baliga, op cit.

31. General Reports of the Board of Revenue, 5 Oct 1808, vol.V, pp.170-8 & 30 Jan 1812, vol.VI, pp.127-152.
- Revenues Letter from Madras, 21 Oct 1808, paras 59-76 & 29 Feb 1812, paras 195-256.
- Quoted B.S.Baliga, op cit.
32. Report of the Board of Revenue, 25 Apr 1808. Madras Board of Revenue Consultations, para 49 onwards.
33. Thackeray to Munro, 2 Feb 1809. MP, 20.
34. Thackeray to Munro, 19 Jan 1810. MP, 20.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid.
37. A detailed analysis of this mutiny can be found in Sir Alexander Cardew, The White Mutiny.
38. President's Secret Correspondence, 18 May 1807. Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, pp.161-2.
39. Toone to Hastings, 28 Jan 1808. Add MSS 29183. Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.164.
- C.H.Philips comprehensively covers this episode in the Court's history in The East India Company, 1784-1834, pp.158-164.
40. Add MSS 29182, ff.163, 27 Apr 1807 & ff.171, 4 May 1807. Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.162.
41. Dissents in the Appendix to Court Minutes, vol.II. Pattison, 26 Oct 1809. Huddleston & Pattison, 15 Dec 1809. Bannerman, 15 Dec 1809. Elphinstone, Pattison, Huddleston & Bannerman, 18 April 1810. Baring & Inglis, 25 April 1810. Huddleston, Elphinstone, Pattison & Bannerman, 25 April 1810. Taylor, 7 Nov 1810. Bannerman and Davis, 20 Feb 1811. Huddleston, 27 Feb 1811. Thornton, 1 March 1811.
42. Appendix to Court Minutes, vol.II. Dissent of Charles Grant, 30 Dec 1813.
43. C.H.Philips has analysed this episode in the Court's history in considerable detail in The East India Company, 1784-1834, pp.168-175.

44. Boles to Munro, 12 Aug & 12 Nov 1811. MP, 20.
45. Gahagan to Munro, 5 Feb 1809. MP, 20.  
Thackeray to Munro, 2 Sept 1809. MP, 20.
- Many copies of important documents dealing with the events that led to the White Mutiny can be found amongst the Munro Papers, box 20. These include Macdowall's last orders, Barlow's dismissal of Boles and Macdowall, and his suspension of Capper.
46. Grant to Dundas, 2 Jan 1810. Home Misc Series, vol.817.
47. Col Wilks Historical Sketches of the South of India, vol.III, pp.472-3. These pages deal with Munro in particular but there are frequent references to him in all the volumes.
48. Munro 'Memo on the Reform of the Judicial System of Madras'. There are two copies, one undated and the other dated 1808. The undated copy has all the appearances of being the later of the two. MP, 23.
49. Munro to brother Alexander, 19 Dec 1809. MP, 143.  
Munro to brother Alexander, 1 Dec 1813. MP, 145.
50. A.Park to Munro, 5 Jan 1814. MP, 22.  
Craig to Munro, 4 March 1814. MP, 22.
51. Evidence of the Rt Hon T.P.Courtenay before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, Parliamentary Papers, 1831-32, vol.IX.I, p.36. Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.88.
52. Samuel Davis to Mountstuart Elphinstone, undated. Quoted K.A.Ballhatchet, 'Authors of the Fifth Report of 1812', Notes and Queries, vol CCII, pp 477-8, 1957.
53. Home Misc Series, vol.593, pp.1-120. A copy can also be found in the Munro Papers, box 24, dated 12 June 1811.
54. K.A.Ballhatchet, op cit.
55. Dissent of S.Davis, 9 Aug 1817.  
Appendix to Court Minutes, vol.III.
56. Munro's evidence before the Select Committee of the House of Commons, 15 April 1812.  
Sir A.J.Arbutnot, Selections from the Minutes and other Official Writings of Major General Sir Thomas Munro, p.106.
57. Ibid, pp.107-9.

58. Cumming to Munro, 2 March 1812, 11 Aug 1812, Oct 1812 and 23 July 1813. MP, 21.
59. Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.399.
60. Cumming to Munro, Oct 1812. MP, 21.
61. Munro to sister Erskine, 27 July 1811. MP, 144.
62. Munro to brother Alexander, 22 April 1812. MP, 144.
63. Munro to brother Alexander, 2 Aug 1812. MP, 144.
64. M'Culloch to Munro, 16 Jan 1812. MP, 21.
65. Wilks to Munro, 16 May 1812. MP, 21.
66. M'Culloch to Munro, 13 Jan 1813. MP, 21.
67. Elphinstone to Munro, 5 Oct 1813. MP, 21.
68. Charles Grant to Munro, 15 Oct 1813. MP, 21.
69. John Campbell to Munro, 7 Apr 1813. MP, 21
70. Simons to Munro, 28 Apr 1813. MP, 21.
71. Bannerman to Munro, 2 March 1812. MP, 21.
72. Read to Hobart, 10 Feb 1798.  
Hobart to Read, 19 Feb 1798.  
Baramahal Records, vol.XXI, pp.95-6.
73. Board to Court, 30 Aug 1813.  
Letters from the Board to the Company, vol.III,  
p.504.  
  
Court to Board, 2 Sept 1813.  
Letters from the Company to the Board, vol.IV,  
p.280.  
  
See C.H.Philips, op cit, pp.194-5.
74. Munro Papers, box 54.
75. Munro to father, 31 Jan 1795. MP, 142.
76. Report of the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce and Manufactures, 12 Feb 1812. A copy of this report is amongst Munro's papers, box 27.
77. Grant to Munro, 15 Oct 1813. MP, 21.
78. Revenue Despatch, 16 Dec 1812. MP, 24.  
This despatch can also be found in  
Papers regarding the Village Panchayet and other Judicial Systems of Administration, 1812-16.

79. Cumming to Munro, 17 Nov 1813. MP, 21.
80. Selections, vol.II, pp.95-179.
81. Buckinghamshire to the Court, 21 Dec 1813.  
Letters from the Board to the Court, vol.IV,  
p.24.
82. Cumming to Munro, 11 Feb 1814. MP, 33.
83. C.H.Philips, The East India Company, pp.194-5.  
In the chapter entitled 'Buckinghamshire versus  
the India House', Philips traces the conflicts  
between the Court and the Board that split the  
home authorities at this time.
84. Cumming to Munro, 1 Feb 1814. MP, 33.
85. Ibid.
86. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.203.
87. Memo of a conversation between Munro and  
Lord Buckinghamshire, 28 Feb 1814. MP, 33.
88. Memo from Sir Robert Barclay to Col Allan,  
1814. MP, 54.
89. Munro to brother Alexander, 2 March 1814.  
MP, 145.
90. Judicial Despatch to Madras, 29 Apr 1814.  
Papers regarding the Village Panchayet...  
Col Allan to Munro, 4 May 1814. MP, 22.
91. Col Allan to Munro, 4 May 1814. MP, 22.
92. Cumming to Munro, 7 May 1814, MP, 33.
93. Ibid.
94. Toone to Warren Hastings, 1 Sept 1813.  
Hastings Papers, Add MSS 29188, p.241.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.100.
95. Evidence of the Rt Hon T.P.Courtenay before the  
Select Committee of the House of Commons.  
Parliamentary Papers 1831-2, vol.IX.I, p.35.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.100.
96. Dissent of Huddleston, 13 May 1814.  
Appendix to Court Minutes, vol.III.

#### Chapter Seven.

1. Col Marriott to Munro, 4 March 1815. MP, 34.

2. Thackeray to Munro, 2 Feb 1809.  
Thackeray to Munro, 19 Jan 1810. MP, 20.  
  
Gahagan to Munro, 14 Sept 1814. MP, 22.
3. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 16 Dec 1812,  
paras 3-47.
4. Gahagan to Munro, 14 Sept 1814. MP, 22.
5. Munro to Cumming, 12 Jan 1815.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, p.425.
6. Elliot to W.F.Elphinstone, 25 Sept 1816.  
W.F.Elphinstone Papers, box 2B.
7. Gahagan to Munro, 14 Sept 1814. MP, 22.
8. Cumming to Munro, 4 Oct 1814. MP, 33.
9. Munro to Government, 24 Dec 1814.  
Selections, vol.II, pp.292-6.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.  
  
Commissioners to Government, 28 March  
1815. Selections, vol.II, p.308.  
Quoted Beaglehole, op cit, p.105.
12. Gahagan to Munro, 25 Jan 1815. MP, 34.  
Graeme to Munro, 4 Jan 1815. MP, 34.  
Read to Munro, 22 Feb 1815. MP, 34.
13. Gahagan to Munro, 26 Jan 1815. MP, 34.
14. A.Read to Munro, 5 Oct 1814. MP, 33.
15. Minute of Council, 1 March 1815.  
Selections, vol.II, pp.296-302.
16. Munro to the older John Sullivan, 20 Jan 1815.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.423-5.
17. The younger John Sullivan to Munro, 28 March  
1815. MP, 28.
18. Commissioners to Government, 28 March 1815.  
Papers Regarding the Village Panchayet.
19. Munro to Cumming, 1 March 1815.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.426-9.
20. Memo of Munro, 1815. MP, 114.
21. Munro to Cumming, 9 April 1815.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.433-4.

22. Minute of Elliot, 13 May 1815.  
Papers Regarding the Village Panchayet.
23. For an analysis of these, see Beaglehole,  
op cit, pp.104-5.
24. Munro to Cumming, 1 Sept 1815.  
Krishnaswami, Tom Munro Saheb, p.188.
25. The younger Sullivan to Munro; 22 Sept 1815  
and 24 Sept 1815. MP, 28.
26. Revenue Letter from Madras, 5 Jan 1816, para 145.  
Selections, vol.I, pp.710-1.
27. The younger Sullivan to Munro, 2 Oct 1815. MP, 28.
28. Samuel Davis to Munro, 29 Sept 1815. MP, 34.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. Cumming to Munro, 9 Oct 1815. MP, 34.
32. Ibid.
33. Davis to Munro, 29 Sept 1815. MP, 34.
34. Home Misc Series, vol.91. f.323.  
Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.205.
35. Board of Control to Court, 13 Apr 1802.  
Letters from Board to Court, vol.II,  
f.123. Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.205.
36. Board of Control to Court, 30 May 1808.  
Letters from Board to Court, vol.III,  
f.14. Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.205.
37. Home Misc Series, vol.825, f.113.  
Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.205.
38. Board Minutes, 23 June 1814, vol.V, f.15.  
Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.209.
39. For further details of this affair, see  
C.H.Philips, op cit, pp.204-6. Also Hart  
Correspondence, London, 1816.
40. Cumming to Munro, 9 Oct 1815. MP, 34.
41. Ibid.
42. Judicial Despatch to Madras, 20 Dec 1815.  
Selections, vol.II, pp.313-6.
43. Proceedings of the Sadr Adalat, 14 Dec 1815.  
Papers regarding the Village Panchayet.

44. Commissioners to Government, 20 April 1816.  
Selections, vol.II, pp.421-33.
45. Minute of Stratton, 21 Dec 1815.  
Papers regarding the Village Puchayet.
46. The younger Sullivan to Munro, 6 Jan 1816.  
MP, 28.
47. Cumming to Munro, 10 May 1816. MP, 35.
48. The older Sullivan to Munro, 19 Jan 1816.  
MP, 35.
49. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 22 May 1818, para 86.  
Selections, vol.I, p.755.
50. Munro to Cumming, 24 Sept 1816.  
Gleig, op cit, vol.I, pp.449-52.
51. Cochrane to Munro, 24 Jan 1816. MP, 35.
52. Minute of Fullerton, 1 Jan 1816.  
Papers regarding the Village Puchayets.
53. Cochrane to Munro, 24 Jan 1816. MP, 35.
54. Ibid.
55. For a detailed analysis of these regulations,  
see Beaglehole, op cit, pp.111-2.
56. Minute of Elliot, 25 April 1816. MP, 35.
57. Elliot to Munro, 28 April 1816. MP, 35.
58. Minute of Elliot, 14 May 1816.  
Selections, vol.II, pp.436-7.
59. Elliot to Munro, 14 May 1816. MP, 35.
60. Elliot to Munro, 21 May and 22 May 1816.  
MP, 35.
61. Elliot to W.F.Elphinstone, 25 Sept 1816.  
W.F.Elphinstone Papers, box 2B.
62. Elliot to Munro, 11 Sept 1816. MP, 35.
63. The younger Sullivan to Munro, 6 July 1816.  
MP, 28.
64. Elliot to Munro, 27 July 1816. MP, 35.
65. C.H.Philips makes the interesting point that  
the President had long held a predominant  
position at the Board. He quotes Wallace's  
evidence before Parliament that the



Assistant Commissioners had never been asked to vote on any question at the Board during the 14 years he held that office. They had, at the most, been asked for their opinions and requested to formally sign despatches. Parliamentary History, vol.XXVII, p.926. C.H.Philips, op cit, n.3, p.211.

66. Canning had also increased Courtenay's salary from £1,800 to £2,000 a year. Board's Minutes, 25 June 1816, vol.VI, ff.234-58. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.211.
67. The younger Sullivan to Munro, 7 Aug 1816.
68. Minute of Elliot, 13 Sept 1816. Selections, vol.II, p.469.  
The regulations became Nos IX, X, XI of 1816.
69. Minute of Fullerton, 13 Sept 1816. Selections, vol.II, pp.469-74.
70. Elliot to W.F.Elphinstone, 25 Sept 1816. W.F.Elphinstone Papers, box 2B.
71. Munro to brother Alexander, 25 Sept 1816. MP, 145.
72. Hepburn to Commissioners, 5 Oct 1816. Papers regarding the Village Puchayets.
73. Memo from Hepburn to Elliot, 3 Feb 1817. Cochrane to Munro, 4 March 1817. MP, 36.
74. Minute of Elliot, 31 Dec 1816. Selections, vol.II, p.480.
75. S.Davis to Munro, 4 March 1817. MP, 36.
76. Thackeray to Munro, 14 May 1817. MP, 36.
77. Fullerton to W.F.Elphinstone, 16 May 1817. W.F.Elphinstone Papers, F 89, Box 2B.
78. Elliot to Munro, 23 June 1817. MP, 36.
79. Court to Board, 3 Aug 1817. MP, 28.
80. Board to Court, 16 Aug 1817. MP, 28.  
John Sullivan informed his son, who passed the letter to Munro, that Cumming had written Canning's reply to the Court. See below (72).
81. John Sullivan to son, 31 Aug 1817. MP, 28.
82. John Sullivan to Canning, 20 Aug 1817. MP, 28.

83. Ibid.
84. Board of Revenue to Council, 8 Sept 1817. MP, 36.
85. D.Hill to Munro, 10 Dec 1817. MP, 36.
86. Council to Board of Revenue, 16 Dec 1817. MP, 36.
87. Munro's Report on Malabar, 4 July 1817.  
Selections, vol.I, pp.838-858.
88. G.Strachey to Munro, 19 July 1817. MP, 36.
89. Board's Secret Drafts, 3 March 1814, vol 4.  
Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.213.
90. Board of Control Report. B.Jones British Power in India, p.84. Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.214.
91. A detailed analysis of this affair can be found in C.H.Philips, op cit, pp.212-216.
92. Board's Secret Drafts, 5 Sept 1816, vol V.  
Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.215.
93. Elliot to W.F.Elphinstone, 12 Oct 1817.  
W.F.Elphinstone Papers, F89, Box 2B,
94. Sullivan to Munro, 14 Feb 1818. MP, 37.
95. Madras Government to W.Elphinstone,  
10 June 1818. MP, 37.
96. Elliot to Munro, 5 Aug 1818. MP, 37.
97. Report of the Board of Revenue, 31 Aug 1818.  
Selections, vol.II, pp.600-9.
98. Late Commissioners to Government, 15 Oct 1818.  
Selections, vol.II, pp.629-36.
- Beaglehole observes in Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras, that Stratton had already written a long, factual account of the commission's proceedings. Stratton to Government, 21 March 1818, Selections, vol.II, pp.552-99. Beaglehole, op cit, p.167 (note 1, p.119).
99. Elliot to Munro, 31 Oct 1818. MP, 37.
100. Courtenay to Munro, 23 Sept 1818. MP, 72.  
Whitehall to Munro, 14 Oct 1818. MP, 75.
101. Board to Court, 21 Sept 1818.  
Letters from the Board to the Court, vol.V,  
f.67. Quoted C.H.Philips, op cit, p.222.

Chapter Eight.

1. T.H.Beaglehole, Thomas Munro and the Development of Administrative Policy in Madras, p.121.
2. M'Culloch to Munro, 6 Aug 1819. MP, 58.
3. Ibid.
4. Bentinck to Munro, 8 Aug 1819. MP, 58.
5. Ravenshaw to Munro, 19 Sept 1819. MP, 73.  
Cumming to Munro, 7 Oct 1819. MP, 72.
6. Ravenshaw to Munro, 19 Oct 1819. MP, 73.  
Draft Public Despatch to Madras, 24 Sept 1819. MP, 75.
7. Fullerton to W.F.Elphinstone, 18 July 1819. W.F.Elphinstone Papers, F89, Box 2B.
8. Minute of Hodgson, 15 Nov 1819. Home Misc Series, vol.528.
9. Cumming to Munro, 7 Oct 1819. MP, 72.
10. Ravenshaw to Munro, 19 Oct 1819. MP, 73.
11. Sullivan to Munro, 9 Dec 1819. MP, 58.
12. Ravenshaw to Munro, 6 Dec 1819. MP, 73.
13. Ravenshaw to Munro, 26 Dec 1820. MP, 73.
14. Ravenshaw to Munro, 1 March 1820. MP, 73.
15. Minute of Fullerton, 7 June 1820. Selections, vol.IV, pp.46-64.
16. Ibid, para 65.
17. Ibid, para 19.
18. Minute of Munro, 3 July 1820. Carfrae MSS, India Office, E 183.
19. Ravenshaw to Munro, 13 July 1820. MP, 73.
20. Munro to Canning, 5 Oct 1820. Carfrae MSS, India Office, E 184.
21. Ravenshaw to Munro, 26 Dec 1820. MP, 73.
22. Plan from Fullerton, 1820. MP, 75.

Although this plan is dated with the year only, it seems clear that it was written sometime

July and August 1820.

23. Fullerton to Munro, 12 Aug 1820. MP, 75.
24. Cumming to Munro, 9 May 1823. MP, 72.
25. John Sullivan to Munro, 18 Feb 1821. MP, 72.
26. Cumming to Munro, 9 May 1823. MP, 72.

In this long and important letter, Cumming describes in detail the events that affected and the changes that occurred in the home authorities of the East India Company between 1819 and 1823.

27. Ravenshaw to Munro, 6 Nov 1823. MP, 78.
28. Munro to Col Newall, 29 July 1822. MP, 91.
29. Munro to Canning, 30 June 1821.  
Carfrae MSS, E 184.
30. C.H.Philips, op cit, p.251.

Munro's resignation could not have come as a complete surprise to the home authorities as rumours that Munro intended to leave India had already been circulating since early in 1823, if not before. Ravenshaw to Munro, 25 April 1823. MP, 78.

31. Full details of this affair can be found in C.H.Philips, The East India Company, pp.251-4.
32. Lushington to Liverpool, 25 March 1824.  
Add MSS 38411, f.233. Quoted C.H.Philips,  
op cit, p.251.
33. Ravenshaw to Munro, 10 Oct 1822. MP, 77.
34. Minute, 1 Dec 1824. Secret Committee  
Correspondence, f.121. Quoted C.H.Philips,  
op cit, p.253.
35. C.H.Philips, The East India Company, p.254.
36. A.J.Arbuthnot, Major-General Sir Thomas  
Munro: Selections from his Minutes and  
other Official Writings, p.cxxxv.
37. Minute of Munro, 18 June 1824.  
A.J.Arbuthnot, op cit, pp.430-2.
38. Minute of Munro, 8 Aug 1825.  
A.J.Arbuthnot, op cit, pp.450-3.
39. A.J.Arbuthnot, op cit, p.cxxxviii.

40. Gazette Extraordinary, 9 July 1827.  
The text of the announcement can be found in A.J.Arbuthnot, *op cit*, pp.cxxxix-cxl.
41. A.J.Arbuthnot, *op cit*, p.cxl.

Chapter Nine.

1. T.H.Beaglehole, Thomas Munro, p.3.
2. Ibid.
3. Munro to A.Wellesley, 29 Aug 1800.  
Gleig, *op cit*, vol.III, p.146.
4. Munro to Hastings, 12 Aug 1817.  
P.R.Krishnaswami, Tom Munro Saheb, p.196.  
Carfrae MSS, E 184.
5. Munro to John Sullivan, 24 June 1821.  
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6. A.Read to Munro, 5 Oct 1814. MP, 33.
7. Minute of Place, 9 Oct 1802. MP, 7.
8. Ravenshaw to Munro, 26 Dec 1820. MP, 73.
9. G.R.Gleig, Life of Major General Sir Thomas Munro, vol.I, p.339.
10. Macartney to Laurence Sullivan, 28 Jan 1782, 27 March 1782, 29 Aug 1782. C.C.Davis, Macartney Correspondence, pp.180-4, 194-5, 199-202.
11. P.J.Marshall, Problems of Empire, p.48 and n.98.
12. Castlereagh to Lord Melville, 4 August 1803.  
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13. Revenue Despatch to Madras, 31 Oct 1821, para 43. Selections, vol.III, pp.485-97.
14. P.J.Marshall, *op cit*, pp.44-5.
15. M.H.Fisher, 'Indirect Rule in the British Empire: The Foundations of the Residency System in India 1764-1858', Modern Asian Studies, vol.XVIII, pt.3, July 1984.
16. C.H.Philips, The East India Company 1784-1834, p.305.

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