

BRITISH POLICY TOWARDS HAITI, 1801-1805

IN 1793 Britain found herself at war with the French Republic. The people of Jamaica were officially notified by means of the insertion of a communication from Dundas to the Governor in the *Royal Gazette*, published weekly in Kingston by Mr. Aikman, printer to the colonial government. On April 6 this paper carried on the front page the following announcement:

For the Royal Gazette, Governor's Office, March 30th, 1793.

Mr. Aikman,

His Honour the Lieutenant Governor having received the following letter from the Right Honourable Henry Dundas, one of His Majesty's Principal Secretaries of State, takes the earliest opportunity, and, as he conceives the best method, of communicating it to the public, by means of your paper, that none may plead ignorance.

Of the circular from Dundas, dated Whitehall, February 9, 1793, we quote the following extract: "The persons exercising Supreme Authority in France having declared War against his Majesty on the 1st of this month, I am to signify to you the King's Commands, that you instantly cause the same to be made as public as possible in the Island under your Government, that his Majesty's subjects, having this notice, may take care on the one hand, to prevent any mischief which otherwise they might suffer from the French, and on the other may do their utmost in their several stations to distress and annoy them, by making captures of their ships, and by destroying their Commerce. . . ." It will be noticed in passing that almost two months elapsed between the outbreak of war in Europe and the date of its official announcement in Jamaica.

As far as the Caribbean was concerned the plan of campaign adopted by the British government involved the seizure of the French West Indian islands, and in 1795 an expeditionary force was sent out to assist the British Navy to effect this purpose under the command of Sir Ralph Abercromby. Successfully carried out in the Lesser Antilles, this plan miscarried in St. Domingue—as the French section of the old Spanish colony of Hispaniola was then called. When Spain withdrew from the First Coalition she ceded to France at the Treaty of Bâle her rights over the Spanish portion of this island. During the years immediately following, however, it was not the French Directory but the Black leader Toussaint Louverture thrown up by the Revolution in St. Domingue who in actual fact controlled the destinies of what

today constitute the twin republics of Haiti and Santo Domingo. Such, in a few words, was the situation when Bonaparte as First Consul made his celebrated attempt to reconquer Hispaniola.

The acting British Governor of Jamaica at this time was General (later Sir George) Nugent, well known to students of West Indian affairs as the husband of Lady Maria Nugent whose celebrated *Journal* furnishes such a revealing picture of the manners and customs of Jamaica in her day. In the West India Reference Library in Kingston, the foundations of which were laid by that distinguished West Indian scholar the late Mr. Frank Cundall, there are preserved three large boxes filled with documents connected with General Nugent's term of governorship, extending from April, 1801, to February, 1806. Among these papers a series of letters from the Home government to Nugent, with duplicate copies of some of his replies, throws an interesting light on the attitude of the British Cabinet toward the nascent Black state of Haiti.

Of these one of the earliest is a letter marked "Confidential and Private" from Lord Hobart, Secretary of State for the colonial and war department in the Addington administration, to Major General Nugent. It is dated Downing Street, November 18, 1801, and was written therefore prior to the signing of the Peace of Amiens but at a time when the Home government knew that a cessation of hostilities was within sight. As an introduction to the correspondence that ensued we quote this document *in extenso*:

My dear Nugent,

This letter accompanies an Official Dispatch upon points of the most serious importance, but which, in your hands, I am persuaded will be managed with all the Discretion and Ability they so much demand.

There are some of them however upon which Some explanation may possibly be usefull to you, and I therefore trouble you privately for that purpose.

Whatever may be the consequence of the Reestablishment of the Government of France in the Island of St. Domingo, I think there can be no doubt, that the Eventual danger from the Continuance of the power of Tousaint, or a *Black Empire* there in any hands, must be the subject of more real and well-founded alarm to the Jamaica planters, than any that can be apprehended from its being restored to the Authority of the Mother Country; and therefore, that at all hazards, it is not fit that we should throw any obstacle in the way of the Accomplishment of that Object.

Under this impression, & considering the extent of Toussaint's means, we should not have thought that 25,000 men was a Force disproportioned to the difficulties they might have to encounter; but the extent of the Naval part of the Armament cannot be seen without at first sight exciting some degree of Anxiety.

In discussing that part of the subject with the French Government, it however appears, that they have no Transports, and that they would not be able to procure

a Sufficiency of Tonnage for their Troops, in time for operation in the West Indies, during the Season most suited for Action.

Upon this Explanation, with various other Circumstances unnecessary to state at present, we have judged it Adviseable to suffer the Armament to proceed; taking care at the same time to guard against the worst, by sending a Naval force adequate to the protection of Jamaica; and which will remain there as long as the French may find it [illegible], or practicable, to retain their ships in the West Indies; diminishing or encreasing ours in proportion to theirs.

This, you will say, does not look very pacifick;—but Tousaint's Black Empire is one, amongst many evils, that have grown out of the War; & it is by no means our interest to prevent its Annihilation— It is desireable that your intercourse with the French should be of the most friendly nature. But as their Continuance in the West Indies may in a great degree depend upon the Supplies they may be able to obtain in Jamaica, & as it is in our interest to accelerate rather than protract their departure for Europe; & as a strict neutrality between them and Toussaint is, in fact, the line we are bound to pursue; you must assist neither party with Supplies of any kind *during the Contest*. This may be done without assigning any other reason for it, than that which will be sufficiently obvious—viz—that the augmentation of Naval & Military Force actually arrived, or expected, at Jamaica, has put it out of your power.

My Official Dispatch directs your attention to another point of Essential Consequence to the Country, & under present Circumstances, of the greatest importance to the Government:—The prevailing upon the Island of Jamaica to contribute largely to the support of their Military Establishment.

I am aware that it will require much delicacy & address to carry this Point; and that it will be adviseable for you to feel your way before you can make such a proposition; but, from what I can learn of the Pecuniary circumstances of the Island, & the disposition of the Planters, if well managed, I should hope in your hands the attempt may be made with success.

You will easily perceive that this letter is written in great haste, but you shall hear from me again more at length in the course of a short time.

Believe me Ever, Yours most faithfully,

HOBART

The Peace of Amiens was concluded on March 26, 1802. Before this event took place the French Armada, composed in part of veterans of the Italian and Egyptian campaigns under the command of Napoleon's brother-in-law General Leclerc, sailed, with the cognizance of the British government, from France to Hispaniola. Hobart in a communication to Nugent, dated Downing Street, February 4, 1802, notified the Governor of Jamaica of this event. "In my letter of the 18th November I informed you of the preparations that were making by the French Government for sending an Armament to the Island of Saint Domingo. The greater part of that force has sailed from the Ports of France Whatever may be the issue of that Expedition, the vicinity of Jamaica to a Scene, where so large an Assemblage of French Troops and Ships of War, are to be collected, will make it necessary that

your attention should be particularly directed to rendering the Militia of the Island as efficient as possible."

The decision of the British government not to hinder Napoleon's schemes in the Caribbean had been simply the choice of the lesser of two evils. Should war with France break out once more British policy would naturally swing in the opposite direction. It soon became apparent that this was going to happen. In the Caribbean, meanwhile, things had not been going well for France. Though Toussaint had been kidnapped by Leclerc, the latter was dead and his army greatly reduced by the ravages of yellow fever. Under these circumstances the widowed Pauline Bonaparte had sailed for France, and the command of the French troops had devolved on Rochambeau who was now engaged in a bitter and desperate struggle against the new Black leader Dessalines. What is known to Haitians as the War of Independence had begun.

This changed picture is reflected in the correspondence between Hobart and Nugent. "My dear Lord," writes the latter from Jamaica on March 4, 1803, when the truce of Amiens was almost over, "I enclose some Intelligence and some Newspapers from St. Domingo, & I learn since that the French have been in a most critical state there of late G—d grant that the French may continue in their present Error, & that they may waste their Strength and Resources in prosecuting so ruinous an Enterprize, as the Restoration of the Advantages formerly derived from the Possession of St. Domingo." The turn of events was now going to make the existence of a Black empire in Hispaniola seem an evil of smaller magnitude than the re-establishment there of French colonial government. British policy was going to veer towards the support of Dessalines.

An independent Black state constituted, nevertheless, an unsettling factor in the Caribbean. Might not the spirit of revolt spread from Hispaniola to Jamaica, where there were at the time about 300,000 Negro slaves? The rest of Nugent's letter to Hobart is occupied by his observations on this aspect of the situation.

As long as we use proper Precautions in Jamaica we have in my humble Opinion but little to fear from that Quarter, with all our Disadvantages of Situation; but it requires great Vigilance to prevent the interested Inhabitants from introducing improper Subjects into this Island. The French Emigrants at Kingston are constantly importing their Slaves from St. Domingo, who are of the worst Description, & I have lately been obliged to take up all those I could find & put them on board a Prison ship in the Harbour in order to transport them when Opportunities might offer—I have also apprehended sixteen out of twenty very

dangerous Negroes, who have been very deeply concerned in the late Insurrection at Tobago, & who had been brought to this Island & sold in Kingston. They are also on board the Prison ship for the same Purpose. During the last session of the Assembly I procured the passing of an Act, which has enabled me to take up all suspicious Foreigners and to transport them out of the Island in a summary Manner, without regard to the interests of Proprietors—I still pay between four & five thousand a year to the distressed class of St. Domingo Emigrants at Kingston, & I do not really see how that sum can be diminished at present.

It may be mentioned in passing that the Nugent Papers contain lists of the French refugees who fled from St. Domingue to Jamaica, and of the financial assistance given them by the colonial government. A committee had been formed to look after this matter. From a document dated April, 1804, we learn that 159 families with 229 female slaves were recommended by the Committee "to remain altogether in the Island." Others were less fortunate; for thirty-two families with forty-four female slaves were ordered to depart immediately at their own expense either to Cuba or New Orleans. A similar order was given to thirty-one families with twenty-nine slaves, who were, however, granted a temporary permit to remain in Jamaica long enough to settle their affairs. It is significant that only female slaves and their children are mentioned in these lists. The names of no adult male slaves appear.

To return to the chronological sequence of events, the Peace of Amiens ended on May 18, 1803. Britain was now once more at war with France. The British navy consequently blockaded Hispaniola, cutting off all supplies from the French commander Rochambeau who was fighting against the Blacks. When towards the end of November, 1803, Cap François, the last French stronghold, fell, Rochambeau was taken off the island by a British ship and conveyed as a prisoner of war first to Jamaica, and later to England. Dessalines had triumphed. No longer interested in this section of the globe, Napoleon had earlier cut his losses and signed with the United States the Louisiana Purchase.

Hobart's next letter to Nugent, marked "Private and Confidential" and dated Roehampton, December 6, 1803, reveals an entirely different attitude of mind from that reflected in his earlier correspondence. He writes:

My dear Nugent,

The official Dispatch will acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 8th Oct.r and before this communication can reach you, Mr. Corbet will have put you in possession of the sentiments of the King's Servants respecting the commercial intercourse which it appeared to them most advisable to establish under the

circumstances in which the Island of Saint Domingo was likely to be placed—and it would therefore have been unnecessary for me to have entered into any further explanation upon that point, had not Mr. Cathcart been instructed by you to prevail on General Dessalines to allow British Troops to occupy Cape Nicolas Mole & Tiburon.

The subject of such a Possession had not escaped our consideration, & altho' it would certainly be attended with many advantages, upon the whole it has been thought better to relinquish the idea—First, because as Dessalines justly observes, it cou'd not fail to be a source of constant jealousy—and might eventually involve us in Hostility with the Brigands—Secondly, because in that case it wou'd require a larger force than we cou'd well spare from other objects, were it only to afford a temporary security.

Thirdly, because we know by experience that it is very doubtful whether we cou'd continue there longer than the Brigands might be disposed to permit us to remain.

Fourthly, because the importance of those Posts as Naval Stations must in a great degree cease with the expulsion of the French—and lastly because the Possession of them might be productive of infinite embarassment in the event of a Negotiation for Peace—an event, by the way, which can only be contemplated at a great distance.

Under this Impression I am neither sorry that you proposed the occupation of those Posts or that Dessalines resisted your proposition—as I am inclined to think the relinquishment of it will enable you to arrange every thing else without difficulty.

If you can secure the proposed commercial intercourse, and restrain the Brigands from getting upon the Water, the establishment of a Black Government at St. Domingo will be less dangerous to Jamaica than that of the French—Your situation must at any rate have been delicate—but all circumstances considered (Provided the French are forced to evacuate) I should say the result was as favourable as we cou'd have wished.

Buonaparte continues to threaten us with invasion, & has certainly an immense body of Troops & Vessels of different Descriptions upon the Coast from Texel to Bayonne prepared for that purpose—but we are protected by a most powerful Navy in every direction—and if he should escape the Vigilance & Valour of our ships, we have about one hundred & Thirty thousand (including Militia) & between three & four hundred thousand Volunteers in Grt Britain ready and anxious to meet him.

With Napoleon encamped at Boulogne, Britain was now very naturally making every effort to eject the last remnants of the French expeditionary force from their precarious foothold in Hispaniola. In this altered situation, however, she relinquished all idea of territorial acquisitions in the former French colony by waiving any claim to maintain a body of troops at the extremities of the northern and southern peninsulas of St. Domingue, namely Cape Nicholas and Cape Tiburon. She was prepared to strike a bargain with the victorious Dessalines, but would at the same time endeavour to draw around the island which the Black leader was

amputating from the old French colonial empire a sanitary cordon, to prevent the revolution spreading to Jamaica.

Contact with Dessalines was established through an unofficial agent, Mr. Corbet, already mentioned in Hobart's letter. To reach an agreement with the ex-slave, who on January 1, 1804, proclaimed the independence of his country, changing its name from St. Domingue to Haiti, proved nevertheless no easy matter. From the style of the following communication addressed to Mr. Edward Corbet, one would gather that Dessalines was somewhat flattered by the notion of making a treaty with Britain, despite the difference of viewpoint between the two negotiating parties.

Armée Indigène D'Hayti.

Liberté ou La Mort.

Au Quartier Général de Jeremie

le 26 Fevrier 1804, an 1.e de L'Independence.

Monsieur,

Je laisserai avec peine echapper l'occasion de temoigner au Gouvernement Britannique le desir sincere de proteger son commerce par un traité qu'il serait facile de mener à la perfection en y apportant de la bonne foi et quelques legers sacrifices de part et d'autres. En consequence je dois vous faire connoitre, Monsieur, mes dernières resolutions relatives aux propositions discutées au Port au Prince.

Here follow observations, into which we need not enter, on various points of the proposed treaty. The letter concludes as follows: "Tel est en definitif, Monsieur, ce que je souhaite ardemment que son Excellence Mons. le Gouverneur de la Jamaïque accepte pour l'interêt du Commerce Anglais." The letter is signed "Le Gouverneur General, Dessalines."

The Nugent Papers contain a draft of the proposed Convention between the Governor of Jamaica and Dessalines, divided under seven headings. The discussions with Dessalines seem to have centred mainly around points 4 and 5, which he showed extreme reluctance to accept, on the list we are about to quote. The substance of the British proposals was as follows:

(1) Navigation between British subjects and Haiti to be carried on directly between Haiti and certain ports in the United Kingdom and Ireland, or indirectly through the Grand Caicos, an island at that time under the Bahamas government.

(2) British subjects to be on the footing of the most favoured nation.

(3) British agents to be allowed to reside in the ports of Haiti for the purpose of superintending all matters relating to trade and navigation. The said agents to be allowed the privileges which are enjoyed by His Britannic Majesty's consuls in foreign states.

(4) The remaining white inhabitants of Haiti to be placed under the protection of the government there and their personal liberty and property respected. Three years to be allowed to them for the removal of their property if they choose to quit the island. All white persons and inhabitants in garrison, in any part of Haiti to be treated according to the laws of civilized nations, and if by chance they fall into the hands of the forces employed by the Haitian government they shall be delivered up to the Governor of Jamaica.

(5) Upon the strict observance of this article a supply of arms and ammunition, as far as can conveniently be done, to be from time to time provided to the government of Haiti, sufficient for its internal security and defence, upon due payment being made for the value thereof.

(6) No British vessel to be condemned as a prize in any Haitian port.

(7) In case of war, British subjects to be allowed three months to leave Haiti.

The Haitian War of Independence had been the signal for outbursts of the most revolting and bestial sadism. For this both Rochambeau and Dessalines must jointly be held personally responsible. Now the victorious Dessalines began deliberately to pursue the policy of liquidating every French man, woman, and child, still left alive in Haiti. This, as we shall see, was more than anything else to prevent the Governor of Jamaica from ever coming to an understanding with him. The naval blockade of Hispaniola which Admiral Sir John Duckworth had enforced since the rupture of the Peace of Amiens had now a new purpose—to prevent any contact between Haiti seething with revolution and nearby Jamaica.

Acknowledging Hobart's letter (previously quoted) of December 6, 1803, we find Nugent writing from Jamaica as follows on March 11, 1804:

I am sorry to say that certain Circumstances have prevented me from accomplishing the important Object of renewing Intercourse with St. Domingo I do not despair of Dessalines signifying his Wish at an early Period to renew the Discussion Nothing can be more fair in my humble Opinion than the Terms proposed to the Brigand Chief, but he is so elated by his Success, and has at present so many Schemes in Agitation, that he must feel his Situation before he will submit—No Act of Hostility will however be committed by us against him, unless he should fit out Privateers or armed Vessels, & send them to Sea, when they will of course be captured; Sir John Duckworth having offered to send Vessels of

War wherever he required to protect his coasting Trade, which leaves him no Excuse for that Conduct.

By June 10, 1804, the date of the next and last letter of Nugent to Hobart, relations with Dessalines had become extremely strained.

The indiscriminate Massacre of the White Inhabitants of St. Domingo [writes Nugent] will prevent me from maintaining any correspondence with Dessalines. I have therefore not written to him since the 8th of March last, which was previous to our knowledge of those Transactions. I hear that Admiral Duckworth had an Interview with the Brigand Chief at the Cape, and upon being questioned if he was the bearer of any Proposals from the British Government for the renewal of the Treaty agreeably to Dessalines's Wishes, he answered in the Negative; but at the same time stated that he was well convinced, if England was made the favoured Nation, there would be little Difficulty with me in entering into an agreement for that Purpose. This great Baboon became immediately very pompous and the Conversation ended.

Three months after these lines were penned Dessalines, imitating Napoleon's assumption of the imperial dignity in France, had himself crowned in Port au Prince as Jacques I, Emperor of Haiti.

The Nugent Papers contain further letters exchanged between General Nugent and Lord Camden, who about this time took over some of the duties previously performed by Lord Hobart.

Camden's first letter to Nugent, marked "Private" and dated Downing Street, August 3, 1804, contains references to the perplexing situation in Haiti. Under the circumstances Camden writes that he is not prepared to issue at once precise instructions as to what attitude the Governor of Jamaica ought to adopt:

The observation in your letter of the 11th June, *that under present circumstances it may not be unwise to suffer this subject to rest for a moment*, confirms me in my opinion that it will be a wiser course, to postpone those Instructions till the next Mail; but in order to counteract any possible disadvantage, which might arise from this delay, & might tend to give a greater facility to the French, to establish an understanding with General Dessalines, or to the Americans, in entering into any Treaty with him, I think I may venture to hold out to you that the leaning of Opinions in this Country goes very strongly to the policy of rather wishing to establish a friendly intercourse than to conclude a Treaty of great strictness, and that you may therefore venture to let General Dessalines understand, that altho' you are not instructed to enter at present into any Treaty with him, yet that you can state to him the probability of such terms being likely to be proposed as should in policy induce him to wait until you are prepared to communicate with him more decidedly, and I think you would do well to hold out to him that a Cessation of those violences which had been offered to the White Inhabitants of Saint Domingo would much facilitate the future Arrangements between the two Governments.

The instructions in question were forthcoming at the end of the

month. They are clearly stated in Despatch No. 5 from Camden to Nugent, dated Downing Street, August 31, 1804. "As it appears that the Government of that Island is in too unsettled a state to give the expectation of any formal and permanent Arrangement, it has been thought more expedient that I should direct you to endeavour to carry into execution a Convention with General Dessalines, in your name, than conclude a Treaty in that of His Majesty; I now therefore merely enclose the draft of a convention which you are hereby authorized to carry into execution." The draft contains a list of certain ports in Great Britain and Ireland—London, Bristol, Liverpool, Glasgow, Belfast, etc.—which are specified as the only channels through which trade between Britain and Haiti should flow. The danger of disaffection spreading from Haiti to the Negro slaves in Jamaica would thus to all intents and purposes be eliminated. Camden goes on:

By rendering the Commerce direct between Great Britain and Saint Domingo all intercourse between the Black Inhabitants of the two Islands, Saint Domingo and Jamaica, may be avoided, from which the Planter must reasonably apprehend the greatest danger, and, therefore, I am particularly to desire you will impress on General Dessalines that His Majesty has consented to those liberal terms he offers on a full confidence that it is the intention of the Government of Saint Domingo to confine its exertions to the promotion of internal improvement and happiness disclaiming all view of interfering with His Majesty's Possessions or of disturbing by improper intercourse the local habits and institutions of his Colonies.

You will take care to impress upon the mind of General Dessalines the interest which His Majesty takes in the safety of the White Inhabitants of St. Domingo, the necessity of his adopting a more humane line of conduct

Only on these conditions, continues Camden, can the British government continue to assist him to destroy the last vestiges of French colonial power throughout Hispaniola.

You are authorised [he tells Nugent] to acquaint him that upon your being satisfied of such sincerity, directions will be given to His Majesty's Squadrons in those Seas to render the blockade of Saint Domingo more strict, without which he must be aware it may not be in his power to dispossess the French of a stronghold in his Country. And as no Power but that of His Majesty can afford him this Aid I trust he will learn justly to appreciate the value of that Friendship and Assistance which is held out to him.

General Dessalines desired that his requisition that British vessels should be allowed to import Slaves into Saint Domingo for the purposes of cultivation should be referred for the decision of His Majesty's Ministers. You will therefore inform him that it is impossible for His Majesty's Government to countenance, by agreeing to this proposition, the importation of Slaves into any Country not in His Majesty's Possession.

Your refusal of the demand made to you by General Dessalines for a large

supply of Arms and Ammunition as a previous condition to entering into any negotiation at all is entirely approved.

Before this Despatch reached him Nugent had already written a letter to Camden, marked "Private" and dated August 29. Dessalines was at that moment attempting to emulate Toussaint Louverture by conquering also the eastern section of Hispaniola which corresponds to the modern Republic of Santo Domingo. In this he was destined to fail. Nugent's letter shrewdly sums up the general situation:

I shall anxiously expect [writes Nugent to Camden] Instructions from Your Lordship on the Subject of the Intercourse between Jamaica & St. Domingo . . . I fear, however, that until a Change takes place in the Government of St. Domingo no agreement can be entered into, in the smallest Degree advantageous to the British Interests, nor that it will be found political to renew the former Treaty at a future Period, under the horrid Circumstances of the last Revolution.

The black Population has decreased in so extraordinary a Degree, since the year 1789, in that Island, that I cannot consider Jamaica insecure from their near Neighbourhood, provided we permit the Americans to supply them with the Articles they want, & our Cruizers prevent them from navigating beyond a certain distance from their Coast—It appears that the Blacks will find full Employment at Home, as their Under-Taking against St. Domingó must cost them much blood, without any immediate Prospect of Success, & as there is every Appearance of a Determination among their principal Chiefs, each to endeavour to exterminate the Classes of which they are not the Leaders.

The People of Colour from their Insignificance will fall an easy Prey, but the Creole and African Classes are sufficiently equal in Numbers, to be most formidable Enemies to each other—Dessalines is Head of the latter & Christophe is considered as the Leader of the former.

Nugent had foreseen what was about to occur. In regard to certain details he may have been mistaken. The Mulattoes, for instance, were not destined to be swept out of existence. But his general surmise was to prove correct. Torn by internal quarrels the Black state which had arisen in the Caribbean as a repercussion of the revolution in European France was not—as had at first been feared—going to cause the British government serious worry. Unable to conquer the whole of the island, Dessalines succeeded in winning control over that section of Hispaniola only which constitutes the modern Republic of Haiti. In October, 1806, the Black Dictator—the Liberator, as he is termed in Haitian patriotic literature—was assassinated. His Kingdom of Haiti now split into two mutually hostile portions; the southern area became a republic governed by the Mulatto president Pétion, the northern an absolute monarchy ruled by the Black General Christophe, who took the title of King Henry I.

By this time Nugent was no longer in Jamaica. He had returned to England, where he had been granted a baronetcy. The Nugent Papers do not extend beyond the year 1805, as in February, 1806, Nugent's term of governorship of Jamaica ended. These papers contain abundant references to minor incidents in the great revolutionary upheaval in Hispaniola, as they appeared to people living in Jamaica at the time. The extracts quoted above reveal, however, sufficiently their main tenor. The Nugent Papers illustrate the successive phases of British policy toward the nascent independent state of Haiti. At the outset an abortive attempt is made to capture the former French colony. This phase is over when Nugent comes as Governor to Jamaica. Then, at the opening of Nugent's governorship, Britain stands aside and allows Napoleon to try his hand at the same job. The resumption of war with France in 1803 leads to the adoption of a new line of policy, that of assisting by means of a naval blockade the Black leader Dessalines to drive the French out of the island. Subsequent attempts to reach an understanding with Dessalines prove, however, fruitless. Meanwhile, as Nugent had foreseen before leaving Jamaica, the problem of reaching an agreement with the Black rulers of Hispaniola tends to become a less urgent matter, owing to the internal weakness of the country torn by civil wars. We may leave the subject here as the Nugent Papers throw no further light on it. Actually, however, in the years immediately following, British policy inclined toward the support of Christophe who, perhaps because he is said to have been born at St. Kitts, evinced Anglophil tendencies.

H. B. L. HUGHES

The University of Toronto.