

VEJLEDENDE ARKIVREGISTRATURER XX

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# THE CENTRAL MANAGEMENT OF THE COLONIES

Introduction to  
Vejledende Arkivregistratur XX  
KOLONIERNES CENTRALBESTYRELSE  
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translated by Inge N. Ovesen

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THE CENTRAL MANAGEMENT OF THE COLONIES.  
KOLONIALKONTORET (*the Colonial Department*) AND KOLONIAL-  
REVISIONSKONTORET (*the Colonial Audit Department*).

The Administration.

For 246 years i.e. from 1671 to 1917 Denmark had colonies in the West Indies. The earliest Danish possession was the island of St. Thomas. According to the Royal Charter of March 11th, 1671 a West India Company was established, and the company was entitled to take possession of the commercial, executive, and judicial rights of the island which was at that time almost uninhabited. Thus the island was not governed by the Danish government, but by the central office of the company in Copenhagen. According to the proclamation of November 28th, 1674 the company also got the privilege of sailing and trading on the Guinea Coast where a number of permanent establishments were founded. One of the purposes of these establishments was to form the basis of the company's imports of slaves to St. Thomas.

In 1718 the smaller neighbouring island St. Jan was occupied, and by the company's treaty with France in 1733 the island of St. Croix - situated farther south - was acquired by purchase.<sup>2</sup>

1754-55 the company was abolished, and the State took over the islands as well as the establishments on the Guinea Coast. Regarding the records of the company, see Vejledende Arkivregistratur XIV (*inventory XIV*), p. 159-257.

The former Danish islands are named Jomfruøerne or the Virgin Islands, and they are situated at the north-western part of the group of islands called the Lesser

Antilles,  $18^{\circ}\text{N}$  and  $65^{\circ}\text{W}$  in the waters between Puerto Rico and the Leeward Islands. Northernmost are St. Thomas and St. Jan of 86 and 55  $\text{km}^2$  respectively. In 1841 the population figures were 12.776 and 2.555 respectively, and in 1911 10.678 and 941 respectively. About 70 km farther south St. Croix ( $218 \text{ km}^2$ ) is situated. For the years mentioned the population figures of St. Croix were 25.624 and 15.567. The total area of the islands is 359  $\text{km}^2$ , about the size of the Danish island of Mors.

St. Croix differed much from the two northern islands as to the economic pattern. While St. Croix was predominantly dependant of the output of the plantations, the main source of income of St. Thomas was the traffic of the Charlotte Amalie harbour. The communication between the two parts of the possessions was very troublesome especially before the time of the steamers. In fact nothing but the Danish administration seems to have been mutual for those islands.

The majority of the inhabitants was coloured. The whites were of different nationalities and communities. Except for the official class the Danish element was weak, and the Danish language was not widely used. Official notices were given in Danish and English. After the emancipation of slaves in 1848 the social system was based on provisions corresponding to the respective Danish legislation relating to f. inst. master and servant, vagrancy etc. Racial discriminating rules of law did not exist, and the language of the courts did not include the expressions "negro" or "coloured".

When the State 1754-55 after the abolition of the West India-Guinea Company took over the islands, a West India-Guinea Rentekriverkontor (*Office of Treasury*) was - according to Royal decree of November 28th, 1754 - establish-

ed under the Rentekammer (*the Chamber of Finance / the Exchequer*), see p. 93 et sequens in the Vejledende Arkivregistratur XII (*inventory No. XII*). In 1760 the office was placed under the newly established Vestindisk-Guineisk Rente- og Generaltoldkammer (*the West India-Guinea Chamber of Finance and Board of Customs*). In 1816 this board was united with the Generallandøkonomi- og Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Agricultural Economics and Trade*) to a Generaltoldkammer- og Kommercekollegium (*the Board of Customs and Trade*). The Vestindisk-Guineisk Renteskriverkontor (*the West India-Guinea Office of Treasury*) was now united with the Kommercekollegiets Ostindiske Fags sekretariat (*the secretariat of the East India office of the Board of Trade*) which secretariat administered the possessions of Tranquebar. The new office was named the Indiske Kontor (*the India Office*) and all tropical colonies at that time were administered from the office. On the reorganization in 1840 of the Generaltoldkammer- and the Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Customs and Trade*) the India Office was according to the Royal proclamation of December 30th united with the Handels- og Konsulatskontoret (*the Office of Trade and Consular Affairs*) and became the Kolonial- og Handelskontoret (*the Office of Trade and Colonial Affairs*) under the third section of the board.

The amalgamation of the various offices became of little importance to the archival formation. Separate archival formation was maintained all the time for the West India-Guinea affairs and the East India-Guinea Affairs respectively. However, the recommendations to the king concerning the colonies made up a mutual series - "Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner" (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) - see the following passages.

Certain matters concerning the tropical colonies belonged under other administrative services. In accordance with the principles of the 1840-reform of the collegiate system, the Kolonial- og Handelskontoret (*the Office of Trade and Colonial Affairs*) did not take over the audit of the colonial accounts. The audit was made out in the Kolonialrevisionen (*the Colonial Audit Office*) being a part of the 1. danske revisionskontor (*the first Danish audit department*). For the reorganization of the audit system in 1840 see, Den danske Centraladministration, Copenhagen 1921, p. 423 et sequens.

Under the Finanskollegiet (*the Board of Finance*) the vestindiske Gældslikvidationsdirektion (*the West India Department of Liquidation of Debt*) was established in 1786. Under this department belonged the local commissions of liquidation of debt in the islands, see Vejledende Arkivregistratur III (*inventory III*), p. 95-98. In 1816 the department was abolished and the business transferred to the Direktionen for statsgælden og den synkende Fond (*the Commission for the National Debt and the Sinking Fund*), see Vejledende Arkivregistratur III (*inventory III*), p. 171 et sequens.

Ecclesiastical and judicial affairs all the time belonged under the Danske Kancelli (*the Danish Chancery*), also during the period of company regime, see Vejledende Arkivregistraturer I, p.4, 44, 55, 69, 73, and 120. From 1800 judicial affairs were dealt with in the third (fifth) department of the Danske Kancelli (*the Danish Chancery*), while ecclesiastical affairs belonged under the first department.

When the State took over the islands, military affairs were at first placed under the Generalkommissariatskollegiet (Generalitetet) (*the General Commissariat Department*).

The military forces in West India remained, however, a special corps outside the ordinary military organization. Their officers were not officers of the Danish army. By the military reform 1763-64 the "Land Militair Etaten paa de kongel. Americanske Eylande" (*the Central Military Administration of the Royal American isles*) were vested in the Vestindisk-Guineisk Rente- og Generaltoldkammer (*the West India-Guinea Board of Finance and Customs*).<sup>3</sup>

In connection with the military plan of 1803 it was considered to retransfer the colonial forces - both the West Indian and the East Indian troops (belonging under the Generallandøkonomi- og Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Agricultural Economics and Trade*)) - to the Generalitet. Both civil boards deprecated this change, and they were supported by the Generalitet (*the General Commissariat Department*) in a statement to the crown prince. In a letter of August 4th, 1804 to the two civil boards the crown prince decided, however, that the colonial forces from January 1st, 1805 should be under his immediate supreme command.<sup>4</sup>

During the war 1807-14 the islands were occupied by the British. At the end of this occupation the military authority as to the colonies was defined more exactly in the Royal ordinance of April 5th, 1816 based on the sections 13 and 15-18 of the ordinance of January 20th, 1802 on the organization of the Landmilitæretaten (*the Central Military Administration*). From now on only military commands (section 13) had to be reported by the Governor-general direct to the king (Generaladjutanturen (*aides-de-camp to the king*)), while military judicial affairs (section 15) should be reported to the generalauditor (*the chief prosecutor in military matters*), and other military matters (sections 16-18) to the Generaltoldkam-

mer- og Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Customs and Trade*).<sup>5</sup>

Until 1848 the local government was placed under a governor-general being at the same time military commander-in-chief. By his side he had a vice-governor-general acting also as governor of St. Thomas and St. Jan. The administration was in the hand of the West India Government - a collegiate institution consisting of the governor-general, the vice-governor-general, and two councillors. The islands of St. Thomas and St. Jan had a local council consisting of the governor and two officials. A high court of justice was the supreme judicial power. Deriving from the company-period councils of citizens still existed with almost the same authority as "the 32 men" in Copenhagen.

As to the ordinary colonial administration the only direct result deriving from the introduction of the ministerial system in March 1848 was that a minister - the minister of Commerce - became responsible for the General-toldkammer- og Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Customs and Trade*) which so far continued the activities. However, the ministerial responsibility prevented the king from being the only person to make decisions as to military commands reported by the officer serving as aide-de-camp. The result was that the Generaladjudanturen (*aides-de-camp to the king*) started transmitting questions of West Indian military commands to the General-toldkammer- og Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Customs and Trade*) - from March 1848 also named the Handelsministeriet (*the Ministry of Commerce*). This resulted in a correspondence between the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of War as to where these affairs should rightly belong. The problem was solved by a Royal decree under the Min-

istry of Commerce on July 22nd, 1848. According to this, military commands concerning the regular troops should belong under the Ministry of War, while affairs concerning the civic guards should belong under the Ministry of Commerce.<sup>6</sup>

At that time Denmark was unacquainted with the events which had already resulted in a de facto abolition of the slavery. The information of these events caused extraordinary administrative precautions. By Royal decree of August 18th, 1848 it was decided that a government commissioner with special authority should be sent to the islands - one of the tasks being to reorganize and simplify the administration. At the same time the Ministry of Commerce was authorized to receive "all reports belonging to any administrative branch as well as proposals from the Colonial Administration instead of the previous procedure being that according to their character these papers were transmitted direct to the relevant Boards - provided, however, that no decisions or proposals were made by the Ministry of Commerce without previous negotiation with the relevant Ministry". (quot. transl.)<sup>7</sup>

This decree was notified to all ministries in letters of August 22nd, 1848. After this the Ministry of Commerce from the Ministry of Justice received a number of documents concerning judicial affairs of the islands.<sup>8</sup> This also meant the annulment of the above allocation of the competence in military affairs. The West Indian troops now belonged under the Minister of Commerce via the government commissioner - also as regards military commands.

These measures were carried out independently of the ordinary administrative reform. By Royal proclamation of November 24th, 1848 the ministerial system was car-



ried out to the full extent. The provisional Ministry of Commerce was abolished, and the Colonial and Commercial office was divided up. The commercial and consular documents were transferred to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs where a special departmental secretariat was established to take care of these questions. The colonial documents were, however, transferred to the newly established Finansministeriet (*the Ministry of Finance*). The organization of the Kolonistyrelsen (*the colonial administration*) was more precisely defined acc. to proclamation of December 3rd, 1848 concerning the organization of the Ministry of Finance. A department called the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) was established. The head of the department had the title of colonial director, and he was direct responsible to the Minister of Finance. Attached to the department was an office named the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*) the head of which had the title of colonial secretary.

The Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) exclusively dealt with the tropical colonies of Denmark. The colonies still belonging to Denmark in 1848 were the possessions in West India and on the Guinea coast. Acc. to convention of August 17th, 1850 the Guinea establishments were surrendered to Great Britain. Thus the function of the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) was limited to St. Thomas, St. Jan, and St. Croix.

The Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) got a very independent status within the Finansministeriet (*the Ministry of Finance*). In his own name and at his own risk the director was entitled to make decisions as to current business as well as

questions "which had their norm and form deriving from legislation or practice". (quot. transl.) Also questions where Royal decrees should be issued, were completed in the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*), the special series of "Indiske Forestillinger" (*Indian recommendations*) being continued (under the same name) in the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*). Other directorates belonging to the Finansministerium (*the Ministry of Finance*), f. inst. the postal services having their own volumes of recommendations and ordinances under the previous system, now had to ask the secretariat of the ministry for the Royal decrees. As to the Central Management of the Colonies only dispatches relating to its staff and the internal affairs had to be made out by the secretariat.

The relations between the Central Management of the Colonies and the other ministries were defined by letter of January 4th, 1849 from the Ministry of Finance, see also letter of December 14th, 1848 to the Justitsministeriet (*the Ministry of Justice*). From these letters it appears that before the Central Management of the Colonies was transferred to the Ministry of Finance, this question had been debated in the Council of State. These debates are not reported in the minutes of the Council of State. According to the letters they should, however, have resulted in a modification of the arrangement which had been carried out by the Royal decree of August 18th, 1848 as extraordinary measure and which stated that ordinances - being of a kind that "in accordance with their character refer exclusively to objects which according to the practice of the mother country belong to the sphere of another Ministry" (quot. transl.) - could no longer be drawn up and issued by the

Ministry of Finance. This Ministry thought it desirable, however, to be informed of the entire situation in the colonies, and so the other ministries were asked to pass any information "which the same might find reason to draw up to Authorities or others in the Colonies, to the Ministry of Finance for further distribution". (quot. transl.)<sup>9</sup>

The consequences of these changes can be illustrated by the following example: From the Danske Kancelli (*the Danish Chancery*) the Justitsministeriet (*the Ministry of Justice*) took over the work to extend - with certain modifications - the validity of the ordinance of 1845 concerning inheritance to the West Indian Islands. In August 1848 the matter was close to being terminated, but according to the Royal decree of August 18th, it was transmitted to the Handelsministeriet (*the Ministry of Commerce*) for a final dispatch. Before this was effected, the Central Management of the Colonies had been established with the above mentioned modified rights. According to this the matter was returned to the Justitsministeriet (*the Ministry of Justice*) where it was dispatched on December 31st.<sup>10</sup>

Danish laws and ordinances did not directly have the force of law in the West Indian islands. By Royal decree of June 6th, 1821 it was decided that a letter from the relevant department could make them valid provided that no modifications caused by the special conditions of the islands were necessitated. If modifications were necessary, Royal decrees had to be obtained.<sup>11</sup>

After the confirmation of the Danish Constitution of 1849 the validity of the Constitution eo ipso with respect to the West Indian Islands was considered in the Council of State. It was stated that the Constitution "covered" the islands as "appurtenances to the mother

country" (quot. transl.), and that especially it gave full responsibility to the minister under whom their affairs belonged. On the other hand the situation did not allow that the Constitution should simply be valid in the islands. It was decided not to mention the question in the open letter of July 1st, 1849 addressed to the inhabitants of the islands, which letter dealt mainly with the problems caused by the emancipation.<sup>12</sup> The Constitution was not proclaimed in the islands, and the islands were not represented in Parliament.<sup>13</sup>

The government commissioner sent out in 1848 effected various provisional changes in the management of the islands. Thus the collegiate West Indian government was abolished, and the administration concentrated in the Generalguvernement (*government headed by a governor-general*). In July 1850 the title of governor-general was replaced by governor and the title of governor replaced by commandant.<sup>14</sup>

The islands' relation to the mother country was regulated acc. to the Colonial Act of March 28th, 1852. The Colonial Council established on this occasion consisted of 16 popularly elected members and 4 members nominated by the Crown, and they got a consultative function at the exercise of the legislative power in the islands. According to section 2 of the act the king was - after having received the Colonial Council's report and under the relevant minister's constitutional responsibility - in a position to issue ordinances partly as to extending the legislation existing for the Kingdom of Denmark to be valid in the West Indies too, and partly concerning a number of internal affairs stated in subsection 2 of section 2. Danish acts could be put into force in the islands with deviations necessitated because of the

special conditions of the islands, but no changes in respect of the principles of the acts should be made. Ordinances containing deviations were not to be passed by Parliament, but had to be presented to Parliament. As to affairs not comprehended by section 2 of the Colonial Act, the constitutional rules concerning the exercise of the legislative power were valid.

The abolition of the West Indian Government received the Royal assent on September 10th, 1853. At the same time the Council of St. Thomas was abolished. The framework of the local administration was laid down by Act of April 4th, 1855 concerning supplementary estimates to the Budget for 1855/56 relating to revenue and expenditure of the colonies.<sup>15</sup> The superior administration should be attended to by the governor who resided in St. Croix and was the chief administrative officer of this island too. As to the islands of St. Thomas and St. Jan a president was appointed being also vice governor and chief administrative officer of these islands. An ordinance of May 9th, 1855<sup>16</sup> gave the civil councils the more up-to-date form of local councils.

In respect of the central Danish administration the Colonial Act had the effect that all West Indian affairs were again centralized in one ministry viz. the Ministry of Finance. When the Minister of Finance, Mr. Sporneck, for the first time introduced to the king a draft to an ordinance concerning vagrancy - having been treated by the Colonial Council - he inserted in the recommendation some remarks on the treatment of such matters. Thus he assumed that acc. to the provisions of the Colonial Act "it must be left to the relevant minister under whose responsibility the ordinances were to be drawn up - i.e. the Minister of Finance - after the receipt of the re-

port from the Colonial Council to submit the ordinances in question to Your Majesty's Royal approval if the submittance is given unhesitatingly by the relevant minister" (quot. transl.). The obligations laid down in the Royal decree of August 18th, 1848 as to negotiating these questions with other ministries according to their spheres of authority existing at the time in question, thus had to be considered no longer valid. It would be contrary to the premises of the Act if these matters were made the subject of further correspondence and negotiations in the mother country. <sup>17</sup>

At the meeting of the Council of State on August 14th, A.S. Ørsted in his capacity of Prime Minister made some critical remarks with reference to the "principle laid down by the Minister of Finance stating that when the Gouvernement (*the local government*) and the Colonial Council have agreed upon certain matters, the Government should make no change". (quot. transl.) Sponneck referred to his own remarks in the recommendation - "urging that it was absolutely necessary that as to such matters the minister under whom the colonies are placed can consider his position in the same way as is the case with the ministers of the Duchies as to matters belonging under them". (quot. transl.) <sup>18</sup>

Sponneck's statement cannot be said to be warranted by the constitutional law at that time in force, and surely he only says that he "urges", i.e. insists on his interpretation. His position can in no way be compared to that of the ministers of the Duchies. According to the proclamation of January 28th, 1852 these ministers were only responsible to the king. Sponneck's comments only concern the division into spheres among the ministries as this was not subject to the legislative power of the

constitution. The Colonial Act applies the term "the relevant minister" which does not exclude that the minister in charge may change from one matter to another. Based on the intentions of the Colonial Act, however, Spønnecks succeeds in carrying through that only the Minister of Finance is competent to deal with West Indian affairs, and that he has no duty to consult the relevant ministers. That the decision is hidden within the Royal assent of a West Indian ordinance concerning vagrancy, obviously meant that it was not sufficiently known. A short time after when the Kultusministeriet (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction*) granted an exemption from the matrimonial legislation acc. to letter sent direct to the Guvernemetet (*the local government*), the same ministry received a severe reprimand from the Ministry of Finance. In the reprimand it is said inter alia "that the change caused by the introduction of the Colonial Act as to the colonies' position and relations to the Government (of the mother country) means that in future there will be only little - if any - correspondence to the colonies from other ministries than the one to which the Central Management of the Colonies in the mother country is subject". (quot. transl.) <sup>19</sup>

A couple of years later a new situation arose. The so-called "Qualification Act of the Constitution" (October 2nd, 1855) in section two enumerated the affairs which under the unitary constitution were to belong to the kingdom's special affairs - among these the internal affairs of the colonies. Hence it could be concluded that other colonial affairs were to belong to the monarchy's mutual affairs. According to a Royal decree of October 16th, 1855 the Central Danish Management of the Colonies was transferred to the newly established Ministeriet for Mo-



narkiets fælles indre Anliggender (*the Ministry for Mutual Internal Affairs of the Monarchy*).

It proved difficult in practice to make a distinction between internal affairs and other affairs of the colonies - problems arose f. inst. as to the budgets. In order to clarify the situation, the kingdom's Minister for Home Affairs in December 1855 introduced a bill saying that the internal affairs of the colonies - among these also Greenland - should not any more be considered as special affairs of the kingdom of Denmark.<sup>20</sup>

The bill met with resistance in the Folketing (*the Lower House of the Danish Parliament*). At the committee stage a new bill was drawn up and passed in the Rigsdag (*Parliament*). In the bill the internal affairs of the West Indian colonies were characterized as those corresponding to the kingdom's special affairs. The supreme management hereof was to be attended to by the relevant ministers for the special affairs of the kingdom.<sup>21</sup> As both the Colonial Council and the Monarkiets finanssstyrelse (*the Directorate of Finance of the Monarchy*) opposed the proposal, and as it was hardly to be expected that the approval of the Rigsråd (*the Legislative assembly of the mutual affairs of the Danish Monarchy*) could be obtained, the bill was not confirmed.<sup>22</sup>

The result was that no changes were made in the administrative field. All West Indian affairs were still administered by the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*). From October 16th, 1855 until August 1st, 1858 the Central Management belonged under the Ministry for Mutual Internal Affairs of the Monarchy, and after that time it was again transferred to the Minister of Finance. This was of little practical importance, and in fact it only meant that the man-



agement's own secretariat-affairs were handled in the secretariat of the ministry under which the management belonged at any time. Bills relating to the internal affairs of the colonies were certainly introduced in the Rigsdag (*Parliament*) of the kingdom, but it was done by the Minister for Internal Affairs of the Monarchy or by the Minister of Finance. The colonial budget became part of the monarchy's budget, but in the kingdom's Yearly Budget Act a section was embodied according to which the colonial budget was "approved" as far as the kingdom was concerned. The first time this took place was in the Supplementary Estimates Bill for the financial year 1856/57 and henceforward in every year's Budget until 1862/63 inclusive. In 1862 it was decided by the Rigsråd (*the legislative assembly of the mutual affairs of the Danish Monarchy*) in the Act of April 16th and by the Rigsdag (*Parliament*) in the Act of December 29th that the Colonial budget until 1865/66 inclusive could be issued by Royal ordinance. The reason to this was partly the trouble involved in dealing with the budget - although very summarily - in two legislation branches, partly a wish to give more liberty of action to the government as to preparing a reorganization of the administration of the islands, including also a division of the Colonial Council. The two Acts had the effect that from now on the same procedure was followed both as to the financial affairs and as to the "internal" affairs of the islands.

Before the expiration of these Acts affairs were regulated according to a new Colonial Act of November 27th, 1863 put into force on April 1st, 1865. According to this Act the islands were divided into two Overøvrigheds-kredse ("kommuner") (*districts of public authority*) each having a Colonial Council. Already in the Colonial Act

of 1852 such a division was made possible and provisionally it had been carried through according to ordinance of April 26th, 1863. The new Colonial Act meant an extension of the autonomy of the islands. Thus their finances were separated from those of the mother country. From now on they only had to pay a fixed contribution to the "Ordinary State Expenditure" (section 56) and bear all administrative expenses of the islands including a yearly amount of 12.600 Rd1. (*rix-dollars*) to the Overbestyrelsen (*the Supreme Management*) and the Kolonialrevisionen (*the Colonial Audit*) in Copenhagen (section 53). The division of the Colonial Council had the effect that the civil councils disappeared, their functions being taken over by the new councils. Symbolically the reform manifested itself in the changing from the previous official designation "the Danish-West India Possessions" to the designation "the Danish-West India Islands".

During the years after the Colonial Act had been put into force, the government received several petitions from the islands on reductions of their economic burdens. Among other things they desired to be exempted from paying the expenditure of the central administration. As the government was at the same time negotiating with the United States concerning the sale of St. Thomas and St. Jan, it adopted temporarily a delaying attitude. Not until the negotiations of sale had broken down in 1870, the government took up the question of a change of the type of management, and the result was that the post as colonial director disappeared and the Kolonialrevisionskontoret (*the Colonial Audit Office*) was abolished.

From a formal point of view the Colonial Audit Office did not belong to the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*), but they were in

close contact with each other. As mentioned above, the audit of the colonial accounts had in 1840 been separated from the ordinary colonial management. According to the 1848-reform of the administration the audit was made an independent office under the Generaldecisoratet for det indirekte Skattevæsen (*the General Committee of Decision for the indirect tax system*), and as the latter was from November 1st, 1856 to August 1st, 1858 placed under the Ministeriet for Monarkiets fælles indre anliggender (*the Ministry for Mutual Internal Affairs of the Monarchy*), the Colonial Audit was placed there too. As the Central Management of the Colonies was also placed there, no problems arose in this connection. This was, however, not the case when the Kolonialbestyrelsen (*the Colonial Management*) was on April 1st, 1865 transferred to the Indenrigsministeriet (*the Ministry of Home Affairs*) while the Kolonialrevisionskontoret (*the Colonial Audit Office*) remained under the Ministry of Finance. As was the case in 1856, the transfer to another minister was of no great importance to the administration. It was part of a redistribution of the business between the ministries on account of the abolition of the unitary system. The formal connection of the Kolonialrevisionskontoret (*the Colonial Audit Office*) to the Generaldecisoratet for det indirekte Skattevæsen (*the General Committee of Decision for the Indirect Tax System*) prevented the Colonial Audit Office from being transferred to the Indenrigsministeriet (*the Ministry of Home Affairs*).

The disadvantages resulting from this arrangement quickly turned up. Already on May 26th, 1865 the Minister of Finance recommended in a letter to the Prime Minister that the Colonial Audit Office should be embraced under the expression the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse

(*the Central Management of the Colonies*) and thus be under the Indenrigsministeriet (*the Ministry of Home Affairs*). The Office had a very close contact with the Kolonialbestyrelsen (*the Colonial Management*), whereas it had only negligible connection with the working field of the Ministry of Finance especially after the Colonial Act of 1863.<sup>23</sup> According to a Royal decree of June 16th, 1865 the Colonial Audit Office should be placed under the Ministry of Home Affairs - as to the decision of the accounts it should, however, continue to be subordinated to the Generaldecisoratet for det indirekte Skattevæsen (*the General Committee of Decision for the Indirect Tax System*).<sup>24</sup>

In 1869 the post as head of the Colonial Audit Office became vacant owing to death. As in any circumstances a reorganization and a reduction of the colonial administration was to be expected, the post remained vacant. Immediately after the final annulment of the agreement about sale of the islands of St. Thomas and St. Jan, the government was changed in May 1870. The consequence was that from June 3rd, 1870 the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) was again transferred to the Ministry of Finance. According to Krieger - the Minister of Justice of the new government - Fonnesbech had made some conditions before accepting the appointment as Minister of Home Affairs, one of them being that the West Indian affairs should not belong to the sphere of the Ministry of Home Affairs.<sup>25</sup>

One of the first official tasks performed by Fenger, Minister of Finance, was the discharge with pension of Skrike, colonial director, with the effect that the post was abolished as an independent one. The purpose was partly to obtain a saving, and partly "to introduce a

simplification of the procedure in better correspondence to the prevailing circumstances" (quot. transl.). The duties of the director were for a small salary assigned to one of the heads of the ministry's departments viz. Martin Levy. This arrangement was maintained as long as the Central Management existed. <sup>26</sup>

The same year the government introduced a bill saying that from April 1st the West Indian colonial funds should stop defraying the expenses of the Overbestyrelsen (*the Supreme Management*) and of the Kolonialrevisionen (*the Colonial Audit*) in Copenhagen. Instead the expenses should be paid from the Treasury. By a simultaneous reduction of the previous permanent staff of eight persons (1 colonial director, 2 office heads, 2 head clerks, 1 clerk, and 2 auditors) to a future staff consisting of three persons (1 office head and 2 head clerks) the total expenses would be reduced by about 5000 Rd1. from 12.600 to 7.400 Rd1.

The committee of the Folketing (*the Lower House of the Danish Parliament*) concerning this proposal agreed with the government that the State should take over these expenses, but they did not agree to the contemplated reorganization of the Central Management. In the opinion of the committee it was not proved that the Central Management was less necessary or usefull now than before. The proposal might give the disadvantageous impression that the government had maintained useless posts as long as they should be paid from the colonial funds, whereas they were abolished when taken over by the State. If the islands should gradually be given more autonomy as contemplated in the Colonial Act, it implied negotiations on reforms in the management, the administration of justice, the system of taxation, the labour regulations etc., negotiations which ought to be in the charge of "a colonial

director proving equal to the task", and thus it seemed unlucky now to abolish the post of director. On the contrary the committee wished to have the former post of director strengthened so "that the Management of the islands is in full handed over to one man to be named Royal commissioner or something like that, and who as far as possible in his person unite the entire authority so that he alone manages and is in charge of the business being at present distributed among the colonial minister, the colonial director, and the governor" (quot. transl.). The committee was of the opinion, however, that in future the Central Management should not be handed over to permanent pensionable officials, but rather to men trusted by the minister and paid by fees. The committee concluded that if the Kolonialdirektoratet (*the Colonial Department*) was abolished and no rational plan as to the future management of the islands was existing, the result would be a considerable reduction of "the total competence and insight being delegated to attend to the interests of the islands" (quot. transl.). It was recommended to modify the Bill into the following terms,

"The amount of 12.600 Rdl. (*rix-dollars*) which until now - according to the Colonial Act of November 27th, 1863, sections 52 and 53, subsection 1 - has been paid by the West Indian colonial funds to the Overbestyrelsen (*the Supreme Management*) and the Kolonialrevisionen (*the Colonial Audit Office*) in the mother country, is from April 1st, 1871 to be paid from the Treasury, and from this day on the amount should be at the disposal of the relevant minister. However, no appointment with pension entitlement should be made in the Central Management or the Audit Office in question until further notice was given" (quot. transl.).<sup>27</sup>

The government did not comply with the points of view stated by the committee of the Lower House. The post as colonial director was not re-established neither as before nor in a new form, but per April 1st, 1871 an amalgamation with the Kolonialrevisionskontoret (*the Colonial Audit Office*) was effected. In his recommendation to the King, Fenger gave the following reasons for this amalgamation, "that in this way he as the head of the Colonial Office would be able - also by means of the accounts - to be kept informed of the local administration just as a larger unity could be obtained as to our supervision of the direction of the Management of the Colonies" (quot. transl.) 28

Before the amalgamation the permanent staff of the Colonial Office consisted of an office head - until 1889 named colonial secretary, a head clerk - being at the same time warehouse keeper (see Vejledende Arkivregistratur XX (*inventory XX*) p. 50), and a clerk. Originally the Colonial Audit Office had an office head - the post was vacant from 1869 - a head clerk and an auditor. As the Colonial Act of 1863 resulted in an increased work of audit, e.g. as to the municipal accounts, one more auditor was attached to the office in 1865. In addition a number of non-permanently employed was attached to the two offices.

After the amalgamation the Colonial Office consisted of an office head, two head clerks, one auditor, and two clerks. In 1880 the post of auditor no longer existed, the number of clerks had, however, been increased to four. The clerks corresponded to the present secretaries of the ministries. During the rest of the period the number of the staff remained unchanged. Occasionally, however, the number of clerks were five.

As determined in the Act of March 25th, 1871 the pen-



sionable posts were at vacancy converted into non-pensionable ones. In practice, however, the retiring officials or their widows got pensions of usual size according to special act, and through the statute of March 22nd, 1907 (Act No. 42) regulating the salaries of the officials and the minor officials of the ministries, the posts of office heads and of head clerks in the Colonial Office were again entitled to pensions according to section 3. <sup>29</sup>

From ancient times St. Croix had been the seat of the governor in the West Indian Islands. In 1871 St. Thomas became the seat of the governor while St. Croix got a presidency. In the recommendation to the Royal decree confirming the change it was stated that the governor ought to have his seat in St. Thomas owing to this island's close relations to the states in the Gulf of Mexico both as to foreign politics and also from a business point of view. The presidency in St. Croix would be sufficient to attend to the interests of this island while on the other hand the governor when he lived in St. Thomas would not be prevented from "influencing the more important questions of St. Croix". <sup>30</sup> According to the Act No. 101 of April 14th, 1883 the presidency was abolished, and after this the governor exercised the authority as the chief administrative officer in both places, and he could alternate between having his seat in St. Thomas and in St. Croix.

In 1906 a smaller reduction was carried through in the field of the Central Management being at that time the only government authority of the West Indian Islands in as much as the affairs of the established church were transferred to the Kultusministeriet (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction*). The



reason was that in 1903 complaints had been lodged against the insufficient serving of the islands' Lutheran Church to which 12 % of the inhabitants belonged. These complaints resulted in a letter of October 6th, 1904 from the Kultusministeriet (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction*) to the Finansministeriet (*the Ministry of Finance*) in which it was suggested that the Kultusministeriet took over the administration of the islands' church-affairs. Supported by Hage, the Minister of Finance, the Colonial Management declined the proposal. However, Hage's successor, Wilhelm Lassen, took up a favourable attitude to the proposal, and on March 30th, 1906 he declared in the Landsting (*the Upper House of the Danish Parliament*) that he had discussed the question with the Minister of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction, and that something would be done as soon as the new colonial acts had been passed.

In the Colonial Act for the Danish West Indian Islands, No. 124 of April 6th, 1906, section 50, it was decided that the Treasury should in future bear the expenses to the established church in the islands. Referring to this the Ministry of Finance in their letter of August 3rd, 1906 approved that on the coming into force of the Act on April 1st, 1907 affairs of the established church should be transferred to the Kultusministeriet (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction*). The Kultusministeriet desired, however, that questions concerning other religious communities should also be transferred to their sphere. On September 11th in the same year the Ministry of Finance declared that only the expenses to the established church should be borne by the Treasury, whereas expenses to other ecclesiastical purposes should be paid via the colonial budgets belong-

ing under the Colonial Councils' economic authority.

"If also questions concerning other religious communities were transferred to the Ministeriet for Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsen (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction*), this ministry might be implicated in the field of the islands' financial authorities. In order to secure the best possible relations between the mother country and the islands, it would, however, be of great importance that the authority with which the representation of the islands is to negotiate is the one acquainted with the islands' special conditions. It should be added, however, that in such matters the Ministry of Finance would attach great importance to having the opinion of the Kirke- og Undervisningsvæsen (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction*) before any decision is made". (quot. transl.) <sup>31</sup>

According to a Royal decree of January 18th, 1907, proclamation No. 7, it was decided that the affairs of the established church in the islands should be transferred to the Kultusministeriet (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction*). This meant that they were administered through the bishop of Sealand's diocese without intervention of the guvernementet (*the local government*).

The Colonial Act of 1906 - the last one - made no changes of importance in the organization of the management of the islands.

In 1913 the designation "Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse" (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) was changed to "De vest-indiske Øers Centralbestyrelse" (*the Central Management of the West Indian Islands*) and the name of the office was changed to "Det vestindiske Kontor" (*the West India Office*). <sup>32</sup> The change has probably been made

only because the last-mentioned designations had been used by the Finanslovkommissionen (*the Budget Commission*) appointed in 1909. It has hardly been a deliberate attempt to avoid the word colony. At any rate designations like Colonial Act and Colonial Councils were still maintained at the revision of law in 1906.

According to the convention of August 4th, 1916 the Virgin Islands were sold to the U.S.A. for 25 million \$.

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A Danish official remained in the islands as special commissioner and acting consul-general to wind up the various affairs and to take care of Danish interests in future. According to a Royal decree of August 29th, 1920<sup>34</sup> the special commissariat was abolished and their affairs were transferred to the acting Danish consul of St. Thomas. In August 1926 the consulate was converted into a consulate-general.

According to proclamation No. 45 of March 20th, 1917 the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) was abolished per April 1st. As there would still for some time be West-Indian matters to settle in the Ministry of Finance, the West India Office was temporarily maintained under the ministry's 1st department. The office was abolished according to a Royal decree of March 20th, 1920. The unsettled West Indian matters were transferred to the secretariat of the Ministry of Finance where the West Indian diary was continued until 1933 incl. West Indian matters from the next years can be found in the diary of the secretariat. Apart from the head of the West India Office, Carl Dines Hansen, who was dismissed with "ventepenge" (*compensation to an official during temporary unemployment*), the staff was transferred to other offices of the ministry.

### The Records.

The first transfer of archival documents from the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) to the Rigsarkivet (*the Danish National Archives*) took place in 1893, and it was later on followed by a few smaller transfers. In 1921 a rather big collection was transferred. Since then a few additional transfers have been made to the Danish National Archives - the latest one in 1959. In 1961, however, the records of the supervisor of Det danske Koloniallotteri (*the Danish Colonial Lottery*) were received from the Skattedepartementet (*the Inland Revenue Department*). Probably it will not be possible to find more records concerning the management of the West Indian Islands - they have either been transferred to the Danish National Archives already or they are lost.

No information is to hand on intentional weeding of the records of the Centralbestyrelsen (*the Central Management*) before the transfer to the Danish National Archives. In connection with a comprehensive weeding of the records of the Ministry of Finance the Danish National Archives was according to the ministry's letter of July 10th, 1944 authorized to make very considerable eliminations in the archive groups of the Central Management - preferably among the matters pertaining to accounts (supplement to the above letter, p.8 et sequens). Not all the documents from the Colonial Office indicated on the elimination-list seem to have been eliminated although the reason does not appear. From a present point of view an elimination made among these documents would have been a real loss. For instance documents concerning emigration, health and quarantine services, pharmacy etc. were intended for elimination.<sup>35</sup>

In a letter of October 7th, 1949 to the Secretariat and Budget Office of the Ministry of Finance the Danish National Archives asked for permission to destroy some specified documents from the previous Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*) in connection with an examination of the matters filed acc. to diary number. It was added, however, that the work as to destroying the matters in question (estimated to take 10-15% of the room meant for the total amount of documents) might be so considerable that it would not be in a reasonable proportion to the space obtainable through an elimination. If that would be the case, the weeding should not be carried through. The Ministry of Finance consented to this in a letter of October 18th, 1949. The weeding was not carried through. During the work with the present inventory - started in 1969 - the documents in question were examined. On this occasion the doubt raised in 1949 about the expediency of the weeding proved to be well-founded.

Probably parts of the records from the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*) have, however, been lost in other ways. When the keeping of the West Indian diary ceased in 1933, a number of questions were still unsettled. They were continued in the diary of the Secretariat and Budget Office. Some of them were filed within the field of the estimates and the supplementary estimates which seem to have been lost for the period of 1926-1938. According to a letter of October 2nd, 1957 from the Ministry of Finance they have been destroyed because of a misunderstanding during the German occupation of Denmark in the second World War.

Among these papers have probably been the documents concerning the abolition of Den vestindiske Seddelbank (*the West Indian Note-Issuing Bank*) and of Det danske

Koloniallotteri (*the Danish Colonial Lottery*).

The Danish National Archives did not make a real recording of the material when it was transferred in 1893. From that year an inventory on cards is existing. This inventory comprises, however, mainly West Indian revised accounts which are not within the field of the present inventory. Thus it has been necessary for the users of the records to familiarize themselves mainly with the lists of files, i.e. lists summarizing the contents of the documents transferred. In 1950 the records of the Vestindiske Kommission af 1902 (*the West Indian Commission of 1902*) were sorted and registered on cards, and in 1958 a recording mainly comprising the ledgers took place. On this recording the revised accounts were transferred to the West Indian local archive groups. Until 1957 parts of the West Indian Recruiting records were placed in the Landsarkivet for Sjælland (*the Provincial Archives of Sealand*), but in that year they were transferred to the Danish National Archives.

Especially the documents arranged in groups in the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*) have given problems as to the sorting and recording now carried out. In many cases the designation on the parcels did not correspond to the contents of the parcels. It has been attempted to eliminate these divergences. This has made some rearrangement of the material necessary so that only to a certain degree it has been possible to maintain the original administrative system. Personal affairs including questions concerning pensions, insurances, serving of sentence etc. have been arranged according to name on an alphabetical basis where it has been possible. In other cases the documents have been arranged on a chronological basis.

Within the Ministry of Finance the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*) was exceptional in having their own series of Royal recommendations. All the other departments of the Ministry presented their recommendations to the king through the secretariat where they were collected in a mutual series. Only recommendations concerning the Central Management's own affairs - as f. inst. appointment of their officials - must be looked for in the mutual series.

The recommendations of the Central Management are called the Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*the Indian recommendations and decrees*), and they are a direct continuance of the series of the same name in the Generaltoldkammer- og Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Customs and Trade*). From 1754-1760 when the West Indian Islands belonged under the Rentekammeret (*the Chamber of Finance / the Exchequer*), the West Indian recommendations are kept in the Chamber's Relations- og resolutionsprotokoller for Danmark (*the volumes of recommendations and ordinances for Denmark*).<sup>36</sup> In 1760 when the islands were transferred to the new Vestindisk- guineisk Rente- og Generaltoldkammer (*the West India-Guinea Chamber of Finance and Board of Customs*) a separate series of West Indian recommendations also comprising the Guinean ones was started. From 1816 the East Indian recommendations also formed part of this series. In 1824 the name was changed to Indiske forestillinger (*the Indian recommendations*).

The recommendations of the Central Management are collected in volumes, each of them comprising a number of years. They are chronologically arranged according to the date of assent, and they have been given a serial number in the top right-hand corner of the first page of the recommendation. The number to the left is the diary



number of the cabinet secretariat. The serial numbers start again at the beginning of each year. Sometimes supplements are attached to the recommendations, e.g. suggestions from subordinate authorities. These supplements have been marked with the relevant serial number with an additional letter. The recommendations have no reference to the diary number of the relevant matter, and apart from the period 1915-31 there is no index to the recommendations.

To help the users some volumes called Vestindiske resolutionsprotokoller (*West Indian volumes of recommendations and ordinances*) have been made. In these volumes the decrees have been transcribed. If the decree only consists of the remark "the recommendation is approved" or the like, the recommendation too is transcribed. Also other ministries' Royal decrees concerning the West Indian Islands - especially the ones from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - can be found in these volumes. There are four such volumes covering the period 1846-1919. The decrees are arranged chronologically according to the date of assent, and they are serially numbered within each volume. On the first pages of each volume there is an index of names and subjects referring to the numbers of decrees. The indexes are within each letter (from A to Ø) arranged cumulatively with indication of the year. As to the Royal decrees of the Central Management the diary number of the matter is stated for each decree in the margin to the left.

The Vestindiske resolutionsprotokoller (*the West Indian volumes of recommendations and ordinances*) make entry possible both to the recommendations and to the diary numbers of the matters having been submitted to the king for decision. Throughout the period the yearly average number



of matters amounts to about 40. All assents of bills, ordinances, proclamations, and budgets can be found here as well as other matters claiming Royal assent acc. to common practice as f. inst. appointments, exemptions, letters of pardon, appropriations etc. Such affairs are referred to in the index both under personal name and under the designation of the matter.

The records of the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*) consist of four main series, viz. West Indian copy books, West Indian diaries, files to West Indian diary, and documents filed in subject groups. In addition to this there are some smaller groups.

The West Indian copy book continues a corresponding series in the Colonial and Trade Office. Up to 1888 (and including the first half of the year) copying was made by hand, and after that time press-copying was used (see below). For each year there is one hand-written copy book (one volume). The date of dispatch is indicated on top of each page. Addressee, diary number, and letter number are indicated in the margin to the left. The letters to the West Indian Islands - generally to the guvernementet (*the local government*) have besides the letter number also a mail book number indicated above the text. Further more a letter and a number are in some cases given in the margin to the left to make reference to the so-called Tegnebøger (*accounting note books*) (see below). Each volume contains alphabetic person and subject index with reference to the pagination of the volume (not to the letter number). Some of the draft indexes made during each year are preserved, and the person and subject indexes are fair copies of these draft indexes.

From July 1st, 1888 press-copying was the method employed, i.e. that a new copy is obtained when a thin wet sheet

is pressed over the fair copy. The writing of the new copy is laterally reversed and must therefore be read through the sheet. Often the method gave, however, rather weak copies so that it should be recommended to read the laterally reversed text by means of a mirror. As at least one sheet should now be used for each copy, the yearly quantity was increased to two or three volumes. The lowest numbers of the copies are placed at the end of the volume. There are no special letter numbers, only a pagination. On top of the copy the date and diary number are indicated, on letters to the guvernementet (*the local government*) the above special numbering is added. From 1913 typewriter is used, but the copies are still press-copies. No other indexes but draft indexes kept in special volumes are available to these copy books.

From the copy book it appears whether the minister or an official - generally the director - has signed the letter. In the first case "the minister" is indicated at the bottom of the letter in the hand-written copy books, and in the last case the letters "CCB" (an abbreviation of *Coloniernes Central Bestyrelse* (*the Central Management of the Colonies*)) are indicated. In the press-copies the signatures are copied as well.

The yearly average number of outgoing letters within the period 1849-1917 was about 1100. From 1870-1890 the number was somewhat below the average, but from 1890 it showed a rising tendency, and after 1910 the number was increased to about 1500.

A special series of confidential copy books, i.e. five thin books are kept. The first one covering the years 1886-92 is named "Supplement til Kopibog" (*supplement to copy book*). It contains hand-written copies. As long as the copy book is written by hand, the copies of the

confidential letters are included in the series of the copy book's letter numbers, but the text is replaced by the word "confidential".

The following two volumes covering the period 1893-1902 are named "Fortrolig Kopibog" (*confidential copy book*) and consist of press-copies. The two last volumes covering the period up to 1917 are named "Supplement til Fortrolig Kopibog" (*supplement to confidential copy book*). The original confidential copy books are not preserved, and it has been impossible to trace any transfer to the Danish National Archives.

The confidential copy books are arranged in the same way as the ordinary ones with reference to the diary number and with a special numbering of the letters to the guvernementet (*the local government*). Most of the confidential letters are addressed to the government or the governor in person.

Mail books are lists of letters despatched to the West Indian Islands. For each letter the authority to which it has been sent is indicated. The majority is addressed to the government. Furthermore a notice of the contents of the letter is given. The letters are numbered according to year. Each recipient has, however, his own series of numbers. The mail book numbers were indicated both on the out-letter and in the copy book, cf. above. By means of this numbering it was possible for the recipient to control whether he received all the letters meant for him. In the right column of the mail book it is indicated by which ship the letters are forwarded and on which date. Until 1870 each letter was forwarded in duplicate by two different boats. The forwarding-dates of the duplicates are also indicated in the mail book.

The West Indian diary is the continuation of a series

commenced in 1773 and finding a permanent form at the beginning of the 19th century. The diary is arranged according to the model ordinarily used in the chamber system administration - "the system known from the Chamber of Finance". Each letter received was entered in the diary under the first vacant number. The diary is arranged according to year, and each year is covered by one volume - apart from the period after the sale of the islands. The numbers used in the diary nearly corresponded to the number of outgoing letters which is normally the case in a system like the one used in the Chamber of Finance.

On the pages 36-37 in the Vejledende Arkivregistratur XX (*the inventory XX*) there is an illustration from the West Indian diary of 1880 (No. 475-80). On the page to the left there are extracts of the letters received. In the two narrow columns the date of the despatch is indicated as well as the date when the letter is entered in the diary. The time interval should be noted for the numbers 477-80 being letters from the guvernementet (*the local government*). As is the case with letters to the local government, the letters from the local government have a special numbering. On the page to the right the date of decree is indicated in the narrow column to the left; in the wide column there is a very brief notice of the contents of the decree. The older diaries often rendered the text of the decree in a more comprehensive form, but gradually this was changed, and during the 20th century notes were very seldom given in this column. In the column to the right the dispatch was recorded, viz. the date and the addressee of the reply. No. 479 is a letter giving no reason for an answer, so the word "henlagt" (*filed*) is used.

At some of the numbers one or two other diary numbers

are indicated. These numbers are parts of a system of sequential numbering. By this system letters belonging to the same matter are referred to each other. On the page to the left under the extract a reference back to the last received letter of the matter is given, and on receipt of the next letter concerning the same matter a forwarding-reference to its diary number will be given on the page to the right in the right-hand column. When entering each new letter in the diary, the old letters were filed with the new letter so that when finally concluded, the matter was to be found under the number of the last received letter. Thus there will be no older documents to the matter in question if no reference back is given in the diary. If no forwarding-reference is given, the matter has been closed.

Often the sequences are very long with many numbers within each year and stretching over a number of years. In particular this was the case during the period until 1888 when entire groups could be arranged in one sequence. F. inst. all consular questions were referred to each other in this way. After the year of 1888 there is a tendency to make a more specified formation of the subjects, cf. below.

To the West Indian diary there is a very comprehensive index. This index has - like the copy book - two or more entries to the same matter including a register of subjects and names (of persons and institutions).

Two series of documents belong to the diaries, i.e. both the documents filed according to the diary number and the documents filed in subject groups. The latters are mainly numbered according to the diary, but instead of being filed according to the number in the Kolonial-kontoret (*the Colonial Office*), they have been arranged

according to various subjects such as "church and school" or "postal service". Unfortunately it is impossible to establish any criterion to find out whether a certain document is filed on diary number or in a group. It might be assumed that the arranged groups of documents are not complete so that some of the documents filed on diary numbers might as well have been filed in a group. In a few exceptional cases it is indicated in the diary that a document is filed under the name of a group. In some cases a received letter is filed on the diary number whereas the enclosures are filed in a group.

The documents filed in subject groups (Danish: "gruppe-ordnede sager") were not originally arranged as they are now. At different times groups have been established according to requirements, and existing groups have been united. From the year 1835 all documents concerning consular service were collected in an uninterrupted sequence in the India Office of the Generaltoldkammer- og Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Customs and Trade*), and probably the documents have formed a successively growing bundle. As mentioned above, the formation of the documents is made more specified from the year of 1888. Special files are made for general questions and for the consular representation of each country. The older file is dissolved and distributed in separate files in accordance with the new formation of documents.

A similar development is noted in other groups. The development in the group Bevillinger (*grants, permissions, and the like*) is interesting. Before the year of 1857 cross-references were given separately within the different categories, viz. marriage, marriage contract, adoption, grants, free legal aid, etc., but in 1857 they all got a reference forward to the same diary number,

V.J. 584/1857, and until 1888 all such documents were entered in the diary in one mutual sequence. In that year the documents were again specified in different categories. Documents concerning marriage formed, however, a separate group.

When more such changes have been effected in 1888 - the same year as the press-copying method was taken into use in the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*), it is to be assumed that these changes were due to a change of the office head. Poul Rosenørn who had been the head of the office since 1855 died on March the 23rd, 1888. During his time there was a tendency to unite related files to one joint file. It might be a consequence of the changes in 1888 that fewer documents are now filed according to the diary number while more documents are filed in subject groups. Out of 249 diary numbers with no reference forward in 1887 153 are filed according to their numbers. Out of 307 diary numbers with no reference forward in 1888 only 56 are filed according to the numbers. On an average for the whole period only one third of the documents are filed according to the diary number; before 1888, however, more than the half was filed in that way.

There is a strong presumption that successive office heads have modified the archival system according to their own ideas of the most expedient system, but they have never carried through a complete rearrangement. The entering of the correspondence in the diary which was traditionally employed in the offices descending from the chambers of the collegiate system was consistently maintained, but in many cases it was too difficult to file the documents according to that. The result was that there was no organic connection in the formation of the records, a fact which might not have given many problems



in the daily administration - especially in view of the rather limited number of dispatches - but has created a difficult situation for the present user of the records.

The archival continuity from the period before 1849 has had the effect that a very great number of documents going back to the 18th century and deriving from the offices administering the islands at that time, have been filed together with the documents of the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*), and can be found both among the records filed according to the diary number and among those filed in groups.

Although the West Indian diary is kept with the greatest exactitude and has excellent indexes, it makes out a very insufficient means of reference when looking for the documents in question. As previously mentioned, it involves a lot of trouble to find the number where the documents should according to the system be filed - viz. the last number of a sequence of forwarding references. Furthermore it is very probable that the documents are not filed here. In the Danish National Archives a key to the forwarding references is being prepared based on the actual filing of the documents.

If it is probable that the documents wanted might belong to one of the groups mentioned in the list, it is advisable to look here first, and then if no result is obtained, to make an examination based on the forwarding references through the diary. If, however, relevant documents have been found in a group, the diary can give information of possible registered correspondence which has not been filed according to the contents of the documents.

Other means of reference are available f. inst. the "Vestindisk Register" (abb. V.B.), i.e. a subject index to documents having been considered of greater importance.



The index is divided into subject groups. In each one of these a greater or smaller number of documents have been listed with indication of the diary numbers and maybe a short note on the contents of the documents. In some of the subject groups a number of documents are stated as "henlagt i særligt rum" (*filed in a special place*). Only in few exceptional cases a diary number is stated for these documents. In certain cases the date is, however, indicated. There is probably a connection between this filing "i særligt rum" and the documents now filed in groups. Later rearrangements have, however, made this connection uncertain.

In spite of imperfections the index is a help to the user, because it offers entries - not necessarily defined according to year - to a great number of subjects. Often forwarding references are added, in which way some searching in the diary may be saved although it can not be taken for certain that the final number of the file has been discovered. At the end of the index there is an alphabetical list of the subjects.

If the files searched for are not found under the diary numbers or among the documents filed in groups, they can be scantily reconstructed by means of diary and copy book. During the first half of the period the diary often contains rather detailed summaries of the in-letters which together with the copies of the out-letters give a fairly good impression of the correspondence. If the sender of the received letter is a Danish public authority, the text of the letter can ordinarily be found in the copy book of the authority in question.

A series of letter-drafts is collected in separate parcels. The existence of this collection is probably due to the fact that all drafts were taken out of the

files to be written out and then entered in the copy book and marked with a letter-number according to which it was filed. In case of a forwarding-reference the draft was taken out and attached to the file. If no forwarding-references, the drafts remained on the letter-numbers. The series is incomplete. The missing volumes have presumably been destroyed.

The three parcels marked "diverse sager" (*miscellaneous*) contain documents being detached from the systematic archive groups or documents having from various reasons never been in the system. Most of these documents can hardly or not at all be arranged according to the system although many of them have relevance to documents filed according to diary number or to documents filed in subject groups. The list contains a complete specification of these parcels.

Another archive group from the office consists of ledgers serving purposes of accountancy or of registering. Their applications appear from the titles or the comments added - both appearing in the list. Only comments on the Måleprotokoller (*land registers*) and the Tegnebøger (*accounting note books*) will be given here.

The Måleprotokoller are land registers of the buildings at Christianssted and Frederikssted in St. Croix. Two sets are preserved, one from 1853 and one from 1885-86. In the older set all the buildings are indicated acc. to street numbers. Information is given about the name of the owner, the area of the lot in Danish square feet, and the area of each building in kvadratalen (1 kvadratalen = 0.47 square yards). Under "Bemærkninger" (*notes*) information may be given about the condition of the buildings. The younger set contains similar information, and furthermore indications of length and width (in

Danish feet) of the buildings.

The land registers are transcripts of the original registers made in the West Indian Islands, cf. V.J. No. 21/1892. Both sets have to a certain degree been brought up to date; as to the younger set this has been done up to 1900.

Tegnebøger are accounting note books not integrated in the accounts but meant as means of control. In the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*) three series of Tegnebøger are preserved. The first one (letters K-N) continuing a series in the Kommercekollegiet (*the Board of Trade*) registers the outstanding accounts of the office with the treasury, the local government, and the presidency on the basis of the diary and the copy book, cf. above. The second series of Tegnebøger (letters A-B) contains statements of accounts registering the spending of the estimated amounts, and the third series (letters J and B) gives information of amounts being a part of the West Indian officials' salaries to cover life assurance premiums and repayments of loans in Denmark etc.

The list has a supplementary survey of the records concerning the West Indian Islands kept among the archive groups of other directorates for the period after 1848. The survey is not to be considered as complete. Some of these records have originally been received in the Koloniernes Centralbestyrelse (*the Central Management of the Colonies*), but have been transmitted to other directorates; this is f. inst. the case with medical reports kept among the records of the Sundhedskollegiet (Sundhedsstyrelsen) (*the Public Health Board*) together with medical reports from the mother country.

The records of the Kolonialrevisionskontoret (*the Colonial Audit Office*) have been arranged in the same

way as is the case in the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*), but the number of records is very small. Some elimination of the records has been made. After the abolition of the office in 1871 a number of files from the office were referred forward to the West Indian diary, and they are now kept among its papers.

NOTES.

1. Meddelelser fra Rigsarkivet med Landsarkiverne for Aarene 1916-1920 (*Information from the Danish National Archives and the Provincial Archives from the Years 1916-1920*), Copenhagen 1922, page 18 et sequens.
2. The treaty is published in the Efterretninger om Øen Skt. Thomas (*Information about the Island of St. Thomas*) by G. Høst, Copenhagen 1791, page 99 et sequens.
3. Relationer og resolutioner ang. Vestindien og Guinea (*Relations and decrees concerning the West Indian Islands and Guinea*), 1760-65, No. 90, October 15th, 1764.
4. Vestindisk Journal (*West Indian Diary*) 1803, No. 873. Kronprinsens kommandantskab, indkomne sager (*the headquarters of the Crown Prince, ingoing documents*) 1803, No. 3105.
5. Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) 1816, No. 50.
6. Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) 1848, No. 20, West Indian copy book 1848, Nos. 326 and 395. The secretariat of the Ministry for War, military commands and personnel 1848, No. 753.

7. Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) 1848, Nos. 25, 30, and 31, The Departementstidende (*departmental news*) 1848, page 837 et sequens.
8. The Ministry of Justice, 2nd department, 1848 diary No. A 743. See also the "visdomsbog" of the Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*) under the head "Acter afgivne af Justitsministeriet fra dettes Archiv" (*Documents transferred from the Records of the Ministry of Justice*) as well as West Indian diary 1870, No. 313. Furthermore a few documents received from the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction are stated in the "visdomsbog".
9. West Indian copy book 1848, No. 909; 1849, Nos. 6-11.
10. The Ministry of Justice, 2nd department, 1848, diary No. A 443.
11. The Collegial-Tidende for Danmark (*news from the administration*) 1821, page 574 et sequens.
12. Statsrådets Forhandlinger (*the negotiations from the council of state*) vol. II, page 179 et sequens.
13. The Departementstidende (*departmental news*), 1851, page 1072 et sequens.

14. Kgl. resol. (*Royal decree*) of July 11th, 1850, Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) 1850, No. 13.
15. Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) 1855, Nos. 1 and 19.
16. Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) 1855, No. 26.
17. Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) 1853, No. 27 d.
18. Statsrådets forhandlinger (*the negotiations from the council of state*) vol. V, page 179.
19. Kultusministeriet (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction*), 1st department, 1848, diary No. A 34.
20. Supplement to the Rigsdagstidende (*official news from Parliament*) 1855, column 3 et sequens.
21. Supplement B to the Rigsdagstidende (*official news from Parliament*) 1855, column 173 et sequens.
22. The Ministry of Home Affairs, the secretariat,



- 1859, No. 117. The Ministry for Mutual Internal Affairs of the Monarchy, 1856, No. 17 c. West Indian diary 1856, No. 758.
23. The Ministry of Finance, the secretariat, copy book 1865, No. 1845.
24. Konseilspræsidiets forestillingsprotokol (*volumes of recommendations and ordinances of the State Presidium*), 1865, No. 77.
25. A.F. Krieger's personal diaries, vol. IV, Copenhagen 1921, page 378.
26. The recommendations of the Ministry of Finance 1870, No. 66.
27. The Rigsdagstidende (*official news from Parliament*), 1870/71 Folket. Forh. (*Negotiations of the Lower House of the Danish Parliament*), columns 63-67, 185-88, 6018-19, 6291, Supplement A, columns 1411-14, Supplement B, columns 1331-82.
28. The recommendations of the Ministry of Finance 1871, No. 32.
29. Supplement A to the Rigsdagstidende (*official news from Parliament*) 1906/07, column 2661.
30. Kgl. resol. (*Royal decree*) of March 9th, 1872, Indiske forestillinger og resolutioner (*Indian recommendations and decrees*) 1872, No. 12,

West Indian diary 666/1872.

31. The Rigsdagstidende (*official news from Parliament*) 1905/06, Landst. Forh. (*Negotiations of the Upper House of the Danish Parliament*), column 1353 et sequens. Kolonialkontoret (*the Colonial Office*) parcel No. 652, Cultusmin. 1. dpt. j.nr. 3 C 699/1903. (*the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Public Instruction, 1st department, diary No. 3 C 699/1903*).
32. Indiske forestillinger (*Indian recommendations*) 1913, No. 23.
33. Danmarks Traktater efter 1814 (*the treaties of Denmark after 1814*), vol. VII, page 581-602.
34. Kongelige resolutioner vedr. Vestindien (*Royal decrees concerning the West Indian Islands*) 1920, No. 3.
35. Kassationssag (*weeding*) 04-1, the Ministry of Finance as a whole.
36. Vejledende Arkivregistratur XII (*inventory XII*), page 25.