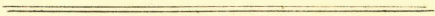


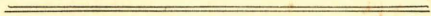
MALTESE QUESTIONS :

1877 TO 1887.



BY

GEORGE FRASER.



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DÉDICATED TO THE
RIGHT HON. EARL DE LA WARR,
WHOSE CONSTANT INTEREST
IN THE WELFARE OF MALTA HAS
EARNED THE GRATITUDE
OF ALL THE INHABITANTS OF THE ISLAND
WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF
RACE OR CREED.

G.F.

2, TOKENHOUSE BUILDINGS, LONDON, E.C.

July 14th, 1887.

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1877 TO 1887.

BOOKS, &c., CONSULTED FOR THIS PAMPHLET.

- Malta Government Gazette, 5th January, 1877, to 7th May, 1887.
- Debates of the Council of Government of Malta, vols. 1 to 8, from 22nd November, 1876, to 16th June, 1886 (mostly in Italian).
- Reports of the Commissioners (Mr. John Austin and Sir G. Cornwall Lewis), appointed to inquire into the affairs of the Island of Malta, ordered by the House of Commons to be printed, parts 1 and 2, 16th February, 1838, part 3, 27th March, 1839, and further correspondence, 22nd April, 1839.
- The Constitution and Instructions as to the procedure of the Council of Government of Malta, embodied in her Majesty's Letters Patent of 23rd June, 1849.
- Correspondence respecting the Taxation and Expenditure of Malta (F. W. Rowsell, Esq., C.B.), presented to Parliament in May, 1878.
- Report on the Civil Establishments of Malta (Sir Penrose G. Julyan K.C.M.G., C.B.), 1879.
- Report upon the Educational system of Malta (P. J. Keenan, Esq., C.B.), 1879.
- Report on the Educational Institutions of Malta and Gozo (Mr. Savona, Director of Education), 1883.
- Correspondence respecting the currency of Malta and demonetisation of the Sicilian dollar (the Hon. W. Hely Hutchinson, C.M.G., and others), presented to Parliament, June, 1886.
- Giornale della presa di Malta e Gozo dalla Republica Francese, scritto nell' anno 1833, dal Barone Azopardi (published by the Malta Government Press, 1836).
- Letters of Mr. Savona to Sir Michael Hicks-Beach (the Reduction of the Wheat Duty and the Petition of the Maltese), printed in Malta as pamphlets in 1879 and 1880.
- Letters of Mr. Plimsoll, M.P., to the *Times* on the "Condition of Malta," published in London as a pamphlet, 1879.
- Correspondence and remarks on the Constitution of Malta—Cambridge, Deighton, Bell and Co., 1887.
- The *Malta Times* and various other Maltese newspapers of sundry dates, from 1876 to 1887.
- Correspondence respecting the Constitution and Administration of Malta, presented to Parliament in the years 1883, 1885, and 1887.
- "The Claim of the Maltese to Self-Government," a letter from Mr. Savona to Sir Henry Holland, published as a pamphlet in London, 20th June, 1887.

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As the question of a new constitution for Malta is at present under consideration at the Colonial Office, a brief sketch of the more recent political history of the Island may be welcome to those who are interested in the relations of Great Britain and her Colonies, but who have no time to read the numerous blue books, debates, pamphlets, and journals, from which the facts must be obtained.

As a preliminary, it will be well to state, as briefly as possible, what defects have been pointed out in the Maltese Government and the remedies proposed for them. Fifty years ago (in October, 1836) Mr. John Austin and Sir George Cornwall Lewis were commissioned to enquire into the affairs of Malta, and, in 1838 and 1839, the results of their investigations were presented to Parliament in three bulky blue books, occupying some three hundred pages. On their recommendation, liberty of the press was established in the colony (Ordinance of 15th March, 1839); the Customs' Tariff was simplified—the principal alterations being a reduction in the number of articles subject to duty and the substitution of a fixed for a variable duty on grain (Ordinance of 3rd November, 1837); the policy “that in making appointments to offices under the Government of Malta, natives of the island ought generally “to be preferred to Englishmen” (report of 1838) was practically adopted and has been acted on since that date; and in accordance with their report of 27th April, 1838, public elementary schools were opened in the various casals (country villages) of Malta and Gozo, the only such schools in existence at the time of their visit being three, in Valletta, Senglea, and Gozo. Other important recommendations of theirs were not carried into effect. Thus they advised the disbandment of the Fencible regiment and its incorporation with the police (report of 10th January, 1838)—mainly because its duties then were rather civil than military, and were performed at an annual cost to the colony of some £12,600. The Government of the day decided to relieve the Fencibles of their police duties and to establish them as a permanent part of the garrison of Malta, and ultimately (although not until 1876), the contribution of the colony towards the cost of its defence, independently of the Governor's salary, was fixed at £5,000 per annum. As the civil duties of the Fencibles are now performed by the police, this does not, of course, imply an actual reduction of £7,600 in the annual charge on the colony. Sir Charles

Van Straubenzee pointed out in the debate of 28th February, 1877 however, that the Imperial Government had "taken away from the local treasury the whole burden of the pensions of the Royal Malta Fencible Artillery—there are about £3,500 of pensions only—" besides giving other relief. The Commissioners made numerous suggestions as to the administration of the charitable institutions and of the landed and other property belonging to the Government, from which a most inadequate rental was received. They advised an economical re-organization of the Civil Service, and stated that "a reform of the entire system of Maltese judicature and procedure is imperiously called for" (report of 8th April, 1838). These suggestions appear to have borne but little fruit, and the evils which they were intended to remedy were flourishing vigorously when, forty years later, new Commissioners were sent to Malta: Mr. Rowsell, whose report on taxation and expenditure was presented to Parliament in May, 1878; Sir Patrick Keenan, whose report on the educational system was published in 1879; and Sir Penrose Julian, whose report on the civil establishments was also published in 1879.

The central feature of Mr. Rowsell's report was its condemnation of the duty on grain. The revenue of Malta for 1876 amounted to £176,000, of which £53,253 was obtained from the grain duty. Mr. Rowsell shewed that this duty fell most heavily upon the poorer classes, estimating their contribution under this head at the rate of 10s. per head per annum, as against 5s. per head contributed by the wealthier classes. He contended that circumstances had greatly altered since the Commissioners of 1837 reported so strongly in favour of a continuance of the grain duty—mainly on the ground that, direct taxation being impossible in Malta, the only alternative was a series of duties upon articles of general consumption, the colony being too poor for taxes on luxuries to prove remunerative. Taking the whole taxation into account (there are no property or income taxes in Malta), Mr. Rowsell estimated the contribution of the poorer classes at 15s. 7d. per head, and of the richer classes at 10s. 10d. per head per annum. Analysing the expenditure of this revenue, Mr. Rowsell pointed out that during the eighteen years preceding 1877 "no less a sum than £173,939 has been spent out of revenue in the execution of works of which, no matter how great their utility, it may be said that the cost should have been met by special temporary taxes or by other means." Of this sum £16,792 had been spent on a new market, £48,035 on the theatre, £27,488 on the new cemetery, and £81,624 on harbour extension. It may be mentioned here that in the ten years ending 31st December, 1886, over £175,000 has been spent in a similar manner—including £7,442 for the reconstruction of the theatre (in the debate of 2nd April, 1877, Mr. Savona stated that not much less than £100,000 had been spent upon this theatre, and Sir Victor Houlton, Chief Secretary at that time, admitted its cost

at £63,000), £87,322 on water supply, £54,369 on drainage, £8,582 on dredgers for the harbours, £6,407 for repaving Strada Reale, £4,185 in redoubling the Marina gate, £1,000 on dwellings for the working-classes, and £5,476 on account of a proposed expenditure of £50,000 for a new hospital. Mr. Rowsell further remarked that the cost of lighting the towns and casals (about £6,000 per annum), of cleansing the streets (about £3,000 for 1886), and of paving and watching, was borne out of general funds instead of being met, as in other places, by local rates. In spite of what he called the "almost hysterical objection of the Maltese to direct "taxes of any kind" (the Commissioners of 1837 wrote that an attempt to substitute direct for indirect taxes in Malta would be followed by the most disastrous consequences) and also of the fact that "there are people who would not scruple to charge upon "the common fund of Malta and Gozo the cost of draining their "own houses in Valletta," Mr. Rowsell recommended the imposition of a house-tax to meet these local expenses, estimating its produce at £8,000 per annum. He proposed to reduce the expenditure on public works from its average of about £10,000 (during the last ten years it has averaged £17,500) to £5,000 per annum: he thought a saving of about £3,000 per annum might be effected in the Civil Establishments: that the income from the real property of the Government might be increased by from £3,250 to £5,000 per annum: and he contemplated the possible reduction by £2,000 per annum of the charge upon Maltese funds for the Governor's salary. He recommended the imposition of stamp duties upon bills of health, notarial acts, and other official documents, to produce about £2,500 per annum. Taking these various items into account, Mr. Rowsell considered that it would be possible to reduce the grain duty from 10s. to 2s. 6d. per salm, and ultimately to a simple registration charge of 1s. per salm. A salm of wheat produces 240 loaves of bread of $1\frac{3}{4}$ lbs. each, the size most commonly used in Malta, so that the duty amounted to just a halfpenny per loaf.

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, who was then Colonial Secretary, only partially adopted Mr. Rowsell's suggestions. In his letter of 4th May, 1878, to the Governor (Sir Charles Van Straubenzee) he recommended the reduction of the grain duty to 5s. per salm, a revision of the duties on beer, spirits, and wine, an increase in the dues on steamers and sailing ships and in store rents, the imposition of stamp duties, and an increase in the fees payable at the Lyceum and University. He estimated, as the result of these changes, the reduction of the rate of taxation on the lower classes from 15s. 7d. to 12s. 0 $\frac{3}{4}$ d. per head per annum.

As soon as these proposals were made public, there was great indignation in Valletta. On 15th May, 1878, a great crowd assembled in the Palace Square, and carrying a banner inscribed "Abasso il progetto Rowsell e Savona" proceeded to the houses in which Mr. Rowsell and Mr. Savona were supposed to be living,

hissing and making use of insulting language. They afterwards returned to the Square, when the Governor addressed them pleasantly. The crowd replied: "We want no taxes—let everything stand as at present." They next broke into the palace and penetrated as far as the corridor of the council-room, from which they were persuaded to retire on the Governor promising to embody their wishes in a special telegram to England. They wound up the day's proceedings by returning to Mr. Savona's residence, where they found him sitting in the balcony with his family, and overwhelmed him with vituperation (*Malta Times*, 18th May, 1878).

Such was the reply of the poor over-taxed population of Malta to the benevolent efforts of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Mr. Rowsell to relieve them of a part of their burdens. But those gentlemen had not only to bear the hostility of the ignorant mob. When Sir Michael's proposals were placed before the Council on April 30th, 1879, the Chief Secretary made a decidedly half-hearted speech in their support and, worse than all, Mr. Savona, the Free-trader *par excellence*, would have none of them unless the home Government would consent to pay £2,000 of the Governor's salary, to remit the Maltese contribution of £5,000 a-year towards military defence, and to give up the drawbacks allowed on articles supplied to the Army and Navy. Mr. Savona has since explained that his opposition was based upon the fact that the reduction or abolition of the grain duty was absolutely impossible without a corresponding reduction in expenditure, as it was quite hopeless to induce the people of Malta to assent to the imposition of any new taxes (except, perhaps, an increase in the duty of spirits) to replace the old ones. In his speech he made use of these remarkable words: "The bread tax is bad: it is infamous: it is iniquitous: and it ought to be repealed. But I am not in a hurry to have it repealed. I am willing to wait until the light shall shine on the minds of the people of these islands: until both rich and poor become acquainted with the real nature of this tax and see the injustice with which it presses on the poorer classes of the population." The Government were dismayed by the attitude of the elected members of the Council, and although the debate was adjourned to 2nd May, 1879, when the Chief Secretary introduced his proposals in an amended form, the attempt to reduce the grain duty had to be abandoned. The question of increasing the duty on spirits, &c., was not raised until May, 1881, when it became necessary, in the opinion of the Chief Secretary, to provide additional revenue to carry out a reorganization of the educational system. By that date Mr. Savona had been appointed Director of Education; but, although he spoke very strongly in support of the proposal, the elected members were unanimous in their opposition, and it had to be withdrawn. A similar fate befell the proposal to increase the fees payable by students in the Lyceum and University, introduced by Mr. Savona on the 4th May, 1881,

he himself having expressed disapproval of the suggestion in the debate of 30th April, 1879, when he was an elected member. Substantially, therefore, Mr. Rowsell's report has borne no fruit in Malta.

Almost the same may be said with regard to Sir Penrose Julyan's report. His recommendation that the Maltese contribution towards the Governor's salary should be reduced by £2,000 a year, was adopted on the appointment of Sir Lintorn Simmons to that position in June, 1884; but the saving to the Colony was minimised by the salary of the Chief Secretary being fixed at £1,600 instead of £1,000 as advised by Sir Penrose. Much remark was caused in Malta by the omission of certain paragraphs (Nos. 5 to 21) in the print of Sir Penrose's report, and some lively comments were made on the subject by Mr. De Cesare in the meeting of Council of 30th November, 1881. These paragraphs (see paragraph 324 of the report) dealt with changes in the management of the gardens attached to the Governor's summer residences of San Antonio and Verdala, which "ought to lead," wrote Sir Penrose, "to a saving of about £330 a-year." Nothing has been done in this direction. Sir Penrose made numerous suggestions as to the reorganization of the Civil Service, proposing that certain departments should be amalgamated and the staff of others reduced, whilst the salaries of the remaining officials might be increased. He estimated as the result of these changes "an annual saving of considerably more than £3,000 a-year under the head of salaries, in addition to the £2,000 towards the Governor's income, which I suggest should be contributed by the Imperial, instead of by the local, Government." From the plan, first adopted in 1881, of including all clerical salaries in a lump sum, it is impossible to compare the cost of each department under this head in 1886 with its cost in 1876. But, as the actual total under the head of "Establishments" in 1886 was £90,474 as compared with £75,443 in 1876, there has been an increase of £15,000, instead of a decrease of £5,000 a-year. The difference is partly accounted for by an increase of about £6,000 per annum for educational purposes; £1,400 for police uniforms, now included in "Establishments," but formerly charged under another head; and £1,000 for the cost of the post-office establishment, caused by its transfer from the Imperial to the local authorities, which was recommended by Sir Penrose but not carried out until 1st January, 1885. The remainder appears to have been employed in an improvement of the pay of the employés in every department of the Civil Service and of every rank from the Chief Justice down to the palace messenger. Such improvement as has been effected in this direction has been almost entirely at the instance, and with the most complete approval, of the elected members. They have always shewn themselves willing to be generous to the Government employés, although frequently hesitating to sanction the steps necessary to obtain funds

for the purpose. Sir Penrose wrote as follows with regard to the drawbacks allowed upon articles consumed by her Majesty's forces, amounting in 1876 to upwards of £6,000 : " I feel persuaded that it " would be no less just than politic on the part of her Majesty's " Government to relinquish all right to drawback without seeking " for any enlargement of the present military contribution." Her Majesty's Government have not as yet seen their way to surrender this portion of Malta's tribute money. Had the grain duty been abolished, the drawback would naturally have disappeared and in that case it is hardly likely that the home Government would have sought to increase the sum directly contributed by Malta for military purposes.

The following is a comparative statement of the total expenditure of Malta in the years 1876 and 1886 (shillings and pence not being taken into account) :—

	EXPEN- DITURE IN 1876.	EXPEN- DITURE IN 1886.	INCREASE IN 1886.	DECREASE IN 1886.
Establishments	£75,443	£90,474	£15,031	—
Exclusive of Establishments	30,175	45,285	15,110	—
Pensions	9,250	13,738	4,488	—
Works and Buildings	18,785	73,687	54,902	—
Roads and Bridges	14,851	27,671	12,820	—
Rent	616	1,106	490	—
Interest	4,749	1,886	—	£2,863
Burthens	1,718	1,710	—	8
Drawbacks	3,471	3,225	—	246
Stationery	—	978	978	—
Transport	790	1,960	1,170	—
Military Expenditure	5,000	5,000	—	—
Miscellaneous Services	2,660	4,687	2,027	—
	£167,508	£271,407	£107,016	£3,117

Net increase of expenditure in 1886—£103,899.

It may be noted, in passing, that the expenditure under the head of "Works and Buildings" was quite abnormal in 1886, as it included £50,754 for the water supply, £25,014 having been spent on the same object in 1885, when the expenditure on works and buildings amounted in all to £41,076. The expenditure under that head, in 1883, was only £13,713, and in 1884, £16,015—in both cases less than the sum spent in 1876. A remarkable increase in the revenue under almost every head has alone enabled Malta to meet this heavily augmented expenditure without any increase in the rate or alteration in the nature of the taxation. The surplus amounted on 31st December, 1883, to £54,101, and had accumulated at 31st December, 1884, to £79,352, which was reduced at 31st December, 1885, to £66,400. The elected members had a strong objection to the investment of this surplus in Consols, and Dr. Naudi's resolution of 28th November, 1883, "Essere spediante che si sospenda

“ogni ulteriore investimento per conto del Governo nei fondi “pubblici della Gran Brettagna e che sia tosto proposta coll’ “approvazione del Consiglio la esecuzione delle opere pubbliche “richieste dal paese,” practically forced this large expenditure on the Government.

The following is a comparative statement of the revenue for 1876 and 1886 :—

	REVENUE IN 1876.	REVENUE IN 1886.	INCREASE IN 1886.	DECREASE IN 1886.
Customs	£115,492	£142,069	£26,577	—
Quarantine	532	393	—	£139
Land Revenue	13,904	15,340	1,436	—
Rents (excluding Land)	21,631	24,594	2,963	—
Licences	3,043	3,060	17	—
Fines and Forfeitures	5,748	5,628	—	120
Fees of Office	982	2,565	1,583	—
Reimbursements	1,568	3,113	1,545	—
Miscellaneous Receipts	75	540	465	—
Interest	7,709	13,980	6,271	—
Special Receipts	3,477	3,836	359	—
	174,161	215,118	41,216	259
Postage	128	8,635	8,507	—
	£174,289	£223,753	£49,723	£259

Excluding receipts for postage, there is thus an improvement in the revenue to the extent of £41,000 in the course of ten years, more than two-thirds of this increase being provided by the Customs’ duties, of which the following is a statement in detail :—

	RECEIVED IN 1876.	RECEIVED IN 1886.	INCREASE IN 1886.	DECREASE IN 1886.
Cattle	£4,320	£6,868	£2,548	—
Wheat	49,619	56,913	7,294	—
Other Grain	3,634	4,099	465	—
Potatoes	1,405	2,206	801	—
Pulse and Seeds	3,850	4,476	626	—
Oil	1,728	1,604	—	£124
Spirits... ..	11,428	19,786	8,358	—
Superior Wine	1,055	819	—	236
Inferior Wine	24,705	25,500	795	—
Beer	4,438	6,549	2,111	—
Vinegar	45	118	73	—
Tonnage Dues	7,496	10,960	3,464	—
Store Rent	1,769	2,171	402	—
	£115,492	£142,069	£26,937	£360

Net increase in the yield of Customs Duties in 1886—£26,577.

The population of Malta in 1876 was 149,270, and at 30th June, 1886, it was estimated at 155,516, being an increase of 6,246, or 4·18 per cent. The increase in the yield of the wheat duty during the ten years has been at the rate of 14·70 per cent, which would seem to show that increased prosperity enables the people to consume a much larger proportional amount of bread than in 1876. The increase in tonnage dues (46·21 per cent) represents a large extension of the means of livelihood to the labouring classes, who have also been greatly benefited by the large expenditure of the Maltese Government on public works, and by the enlargement of the dockyard undertaken by the Admiralty. Striking proofs of the improvement in the spending power of the poorer classes are to be found in the increase of 73·13 per cent in the yield of the spirit duties, and of 47·58 per cent in that of the beer duty. Contrasting these results with the trifling increase in the yield of the duty on inferior wine (3·21 per cent) it would appear that the poor drink less wine and much more spirits and malt liquor than they did ten years ago—whilst the increase in the yield of the cattle duty (at the rate of nearly 59 per cent) may be caused by a larger consumption of animal food than used to be customary amongst the vegetarian islanders. The increase of £4,399 in the revenue from land and other Government property (Mr. Rowsell estimated that it might be improved by from £3,250 to £5,000 per annum, and Sir Penrose Julyan made suggestions by which he thought it might be increased by £3,000 per annum) is all the more satisfactory from the fact that land and other property to the value of nearly £10,000 has been sold since 1876: the sum that had been realized from such sales and invested in consols up to that year being £31,974, whilst at 31st December, 1886, the amount was £41,763.

Notwithstanding the apparent increase in the prosperity of the poorer classes, the "large expenditure of the colony for charitable purposes—viz., £80 a-day," upon which Mr. Rowsell animadverted (although the total sum he named being £26,930, the expenditure would only amount to £76 10s. a-day) has been augmented to nearly £32,000, or about £87 a-day. Making the calculation in another way, the charitable expenditure in 1873 was at the rate of 3s. 7½d. per head of the population per annum; whilst, in 1886, it was at the rate of 4s. 1½d. per head per annum. Part of the increase is due to the transfer of the district medical officers from the police to the charitable department—their remuneration for 1886 being estimated at £1,920.

It may be pointed out that over £1,000 a-year is spent in the relief and maintenance of distressed Maltese abroad—in Tunis, Egypt, &c.—and in paying their passage home.

With regard to the educational system of Malta, it is unnecessary, and would be tedious, to detail how many of Sir Patrick Keenan's eighty suggestions have been carried out. His recommendations as to administration have been partially adopted

by the appointment of a Director of Education and an Inspector of Schools ; but the professional Council which he recommended as an assistance to the Director of Education in the supervision and control of the entire educational system has not yet been constituted. The reorganization of the University has been carried out mainly upon the lines proposed by him, and the salaries of the professors have been increased, although not to the extent he recommended. The Lyceum has also been reorganized, even more thoroughly than he advised, for whilst he was willing that it should retain an elementary or preparatory department, the late Director of Education, with the approval of a special commission of distinguished Maltese gentlemen, has raised it entirely to the position of a secondary or intermediate school, contending that all elementary education should be obtained in the primary schools. A little has been done to improve the quality of the teachers in the primary schools and to increase their pay. Several teachers have been sent to England to be trained. School management committees have been formed throughout the Island ; but it must be admitted that the duties do not seem to be congenial to the inhabitants, who have not that passionate desire to help in the management of their local affairs, which is, perhaps, peculiarly British. It was hoped that the parish priests might have been willing to take some active share in supervising the discipline and the character of the teaching in the primary schools of their respective districts : but this hope has been disappointed.

It is the question of language that has put a stop to the most important educational reforms, and has in a great measure led to the present constitutional dead-lock. Sir Penrose Julyan, who was specially instructed to investigate the matter, wrote in his report as follows : " A great error was committed by the late Sir George Cornewall Lewis and Mr. John Austin . . . when they recommended that preference should be given to Italian over English in the educational and other establishments of the colony, on the plea that ' from its use as the language of trade throughout the Mediterranean and from the near neighbourhood of Malta to Italy and Sicily, the Italian language is far more useful to a Maltese than any other language, excepting his native tongue.' Experience has not justified that assumption. The trade of Malta with the Italian kingdom amounted, in 1877, to less than 2 per cent of its trade with all the rest of the world." In spite of the efforts of the Government to foster the study of Italian, he found that at the census of 1861 (the latest to which he had access), only one person in nine professed to speak, and only one in ten to be able to write, that language. He recommended that means should be taken to greatly improve the teaching of English in the primary schools and in the University, that it should be the sole language used in Government offices, whether for conversation or in official documents : that, by degrees, it should supersede the use of Italian

in the law courts, and that it should be the only language in which the proceedings of the Council of Government might be conducted or officially recorded. He spoke with satisfaction of the fact that, at the time of his visit to Malta, only one member of Council was not quite competent to speak in English. In the Council of 1886 Dr. Mizzi and his followers, although most of them, no doubt, quite competent to speak in English, made it a point of honour to deliver their speeches in Italian—with the exception of their English colleague, Mr. Cooper Kirton, who is probably not quite competent to speak in that language.

Sir Patrick Keenan fully endorsed the views of Sir Penrose Julyan, and supported them by evidence shewing conclusively that, in spite of the scant favour bestowed by the Government on the teaching of English, that language was making greater progress in Malta than Italian, and he attributed such progress mainly to commercial influences. He pointed out the differences of Maltese opinion on the language question—and his statement represents exactly the present position of the two parties: “One influential section deprecates in the most emphatic manner the cultivation of the Maltese language. Another section—pretty numerous and highly influential also—is enthusiastic in the expression of its opinion that not only should the Maltese be cultivated in the primary schools, but that philological attention should be devoted to the removal of its imperfections so that it may be elevated from its position as a mere dialect to the dignity of a language. This section of opinion, I should observe, comprises those who are the most ardent and thorough-going advocates for the extension of the English language; whilst, on the other hand, those who entertain the deprecatory views respecting the Maltese language—although at the same time professing a desire for the spread of English—are chiefly the vindicators of the system of Italian teaching in the schools, in the Lyceum, and in the University.” It may be remarked that in 1878 the leader of the anti-Maltese party was Sir Adrian Dingli, at that time Crown-Advocate, who had been regarded as practically the Prime Minister of successive Governors for a number of years. The pro-English party was led by Mr. Savona, the most prominent of the elected members, although his views, whether as to language or as to the repeal of the grain duty, were not shared by his colleagues in opposition to the Government.

Considering the impossibility of teaching the children in the primary schools both Italian and English in a satisfactory way during their necessarily short period of school-life, Sir Patrick Keenan recommended that “English only—taught through the medium of the Maltese,” should be the language taught until the pupils reached the third or fourth class, after which they might be allowed to take up Italian as an extra branch. This suggestion being adopted by the home Government, it was only natural that Mr

Savona should be appointed to the new office of Director of Education (7th June, 1880) to carry out the views he had so strenuously advocated, while Sir Adrian Dingli was removed from the excitement of political life by his appointment as Chief Justice of Malta, in November, 1880. The leadership of the anti-Maltese party now fell into the hands of Dr. Mizzi, who was first elected a member of the Council of Government (representing the Island of Gozo) in October, 1880, and from that time onwards educational reform became the policy of the Government, whilst the Opposition gloried in the name of anti-reformers and threw every obstacle in the way of the Government obtaining funds to carry out the suggestions of Sir Patrick Keenan. Thus, although the elected members professed themselves anxious to improve the position and pay of the teachers in the primary schools, they resisted all proposals to amend taxation so as to provide the funds necessary for that purpose, and, if it had not been for the remarkable improvement in the revenue of the colony, the Government would have been unable to do anything for this well-deserving class of public servants.

The debates of Council during the last six years are filled with wrangles on the language question, and with attacks upon the late Director of Education, who is treated by Dr. Mizzi and his followers as a kind of Satanic incarnation of the anti-Italian theory. One of the earliest and most bitter of these attacks was made on 30th November, 1881, under cover of a self-denying ordinance, moved by Dr. Mizzi to this effect: "Che nessun membro elettivo del Consiglio, presente e futuro, possa mai, nè durante la sua carica nè dopo terminato il suo mandato, per tutta la sua vita, ottenere alcun impiego di Governo di qualsiasi sorta, alcun appalto, alcuna decorazione o distintivo onorifico, o titolo, alcuna concessione di beni sia rustici sia urbani, nemmeno con titolo di locazione, enfiteusi, o compra, nè dal Governo locale nè dal Governo Imperiale, nè direttamente nè indirettamente, o per mezzo di persone interposte." Then, as to language, Dr. Mizzi demanded on 19th April, 1882, "che mi si spieghi in Italiano od in Maltese ciò ha detto il Principal Segretario. Io ho diritto di aver spiegazione di ciò che si dice," and followed this up on 26th April, 1882, by a resolution, which was not seconded, "Che . . . è un diritto di ogni membro elettivo del Consiglio di avere interpretazione in lingua Italiana o in lingua Maltese dei discorsi che altri membri facessero in lingua Inglese."

The resignation of Sir Antonio Micallef, in May, 1882, afforded an opportunity for initiating that policy of throwing contempt upon the Council of Government, which has been carried out so thoroughly since. It began with the candidature for the vacant seat of Francesco Chiappara, "an individual devoid of instruction and incapable of conversing intelligibly in any language but his own" (*Malta Times*, 30th September, 1882), and on the election of this candidate, Dr. Mizzi resigned his seat, "believing that he had been insulted in his honour and dignity by having for a colleague a man of Chiappara's

“character” (*Portafoglio Maltese*, translated in *Malta Times* of 1st July, 1882). Dr. Mizzi then did everything in his power to promote, and succeeded in securing, the election as his own successor of another “ridiculous” candidate—Antonio Baldacchino—“the organist, that is to say the blower of the bellows, in some church on the other side of the water” (*Malta Times*, 28th October, 1882). Thereupon five of the elected members at once resigned, and on 19th December, 1882, the Governor dissolved the Council.

The question as to the extent to which the elected members should be allowed to control expenditure was then referred to Lord Derby, Colonial Secretary at that date. On 19th September, 1864, Lord (then Mr.) Cardwell gave instructions that “no vote of money should be passed against the majority of the elected members, except under any special circumstances in which the public interests or credit are seriously at stake.” This had been superseded to some extent by Lord Carnarvon’s despatches of 15th and 30th March, 1876, in the latter of which his Lordship declared “that assuming it to be in the opinion of the Secretary of State right and necessary in any case to carry any particular resolution by the vote of the official members, the absence or presence of one of those members is really immaterial, as the majority of votes would still remain with the Government.” These words being interpreted by the elected members to mean that the Government might at any moment, at their own discretion, over-ride the vote of the representatives of the people, caused quite a ferment in Malta, which was but partially allayed by Lord Derby’s temperate despatch of 8th March, 1883, in which he increased and defined the control of the elected members over expenditure by giving directions that “if the matter is of local interest only, and no increase of expenditure which appears to (the Governor) to be beyond the means of the colony is involved,” action should be taken in accordance with the vote of the unofficial members.

Since March, 1883, the Maltese Government has been particularly careful to consult the susceptibilities of the elected members. In April of that year a step was taken which had long been urged upon the Colonial Office, most emphatically by Mr. Savona. The Hon. W. Hely Hutchinson, an able and experienced civilian administrator, was appointed Chief Secretary, the title of Civil Lieutenant-Governor being bestowed upon him in June, 1884, on the accession to the Governorship of Sir Lintorn Simmons. The administration of Sir Lintorn Simmons and the public conduct of his Lieutenant-Governor have met with the approval of all parties in the Island and the most violent opponents of the Government admit that during the last four years much more has been done for the benefit of the colony than in any like period within memory. (This is particularly acknowledged in Count Strickland della Catena’s letter to the *London Times* of 14th September, 1886.) During this administration, the drainage works have been extended and completed and

the water supply of the Island has been completely remodelled, at great cost, no doubt, but without having recourse to new taxation, that horror of the Maltese. The attention of the Government has always been alive to any public necessity, and one of its most successful and popular undertakings, carried out under the immediate direction and supervision of the Lieutenant-Governor, was the collection and realization of the vast number of Sicilian dollars in the possession of the Maltese when the Italian Government demonetised those coins in October, 1885. It may be remarked, by the way, that the blue book giving an account of that transaction is most entertaining reading, and furnishes indisputable evidence of the Lieutenant-Governor's energy and capacity. It appears that, had the Maltese been left to realize the coins by their individual exertions, they might have been unable to obtain more than 3s. 6d. per dollar, the price which local money-changers were willing to give, whereas the task being undertaken by Government, they were enabled to receive 4s. per dollar, after all expenses of the realization were paid. The number of dollars deposited for conversion was 1,842,530 by 2,325 depositors. The collection began on 30th November, 1885, and the distribution of the proceeds was finally completed on 3rd April, 1886. To prevent hardship to the poorer depositors, the Government made advances on their deposit-receipts, pending the process of conversion, at the rate of 3s. 11d. per dollar.

It is only when asking money for educational purposes that the present administration has had any difficulty with the elected members of Council, and on that matter the resistance has been most obdurate. By her Majesty's Letters Patent of 2nd March, 1883, the suffrage was extended to all persons who had either paid or received rent at the rate of £6 per annum for six clear months previous to registration, the result being an enormous increase in the number of electors.* In a letter to Lord Derby, dated 31st May, 1883, the Governor, Sir A. Borton, drew attention to the fact that not more than 3,500 of the 10,627 voters on the revised electoral list were able to read or write, and requested that an Order in Council might be passed to enable sworn officials to assist illiterate voters in the exercise of the franchise. Such an order was accordingly passed on 19th July, 1883, and its main provisions were ultimately embodied in the new electoral law, promulgated on 1st March, 1886. The first general election on the extended suffrage, on 15th October, 1883, resulted in the return, by large majorities, of Dr. Mizzi and six other members pledged to oppose the extension of the teaching of English, although only a small proportion of the electors voted. One of the earliest complaints of the newly-elected members (Dr. Mizzi, 7th November,

* NOTE.—Mr. Rowsell stated, in a note to his report of 1877, that the electors then numbered 2,570. He added: "I much doubt if, in their present condition the rest of the adult male population are fit to have the franchise; but their interests, none the less, remain without direct representation."

1883), was that the franchise had been extended by the Imperial Government without taking the wishes of the Maltese into account, as, he said, "quasi tutti i membri (elettivi) si erano espressi nel senso che questa franchigia avrebbe dovuto essere estesa in modo da dare il voto più alla classe intelligente che alla possidente."

On 31st October, 1883, Dr. Mizzi raised a discussion upon the delivery in English of the University lectures on International Law remarking—"noi vediamo continuamente succedere passi per giungere a questo risultato della sostituzione dell' Inglese all' Italiano nelle scuole; nel Foro e anche nel Consiglio." On 21st November, 1883, a proposal in the estimates to expend £52 upon new sign-boards for the primary schools led to a lengthy and acrimonious debate as to whether the inscriptions should be in English or Italian. This led to a discussion on the Maltese language, Dr. Mizzi contending that "Il Maltese non è lingua ma dialetto," the contrary being maintained by the Director of Education in learned speeches. In the course of the debate, Dr. Mizzi's English colleague, Mr. Cooper Kirton remarked—"It is no use trying to force English upon the people, but if it be turned to the wall until all this ill-feeling has passed, the probability is that in a year or two the elected members will be the first to desire its retroversion." The vote was ultimately withdrawn. In the next sitting of the Council (28th November, 1883) the Crown-Advocate introduced an Ordinance to establish a post office in the Island, when the elected members requested him to repeat his speech in Italian, as they could not clearly understand English. "Noi siamo Maltesi," said Dr. Roncali, "la nostra lingua è l'Italiana da tempi antichissimi e continua ad esserlo fino al dì d'oggi." A vote for £466, rent of primary schools, and all other votes relating to the education department were opposed on 19th December, 1883, and had to be withdrawn—the opposition on that occasion being embittered by the fact that special primers had been prepared and introduced into the schools for the purpose of teaching English, through Maltese, in accordance with Sir Patrick Keenan's suggestion.

Reference having again been made to the Colonial Office, the elected members were greatly exasperated by Lord Derby's despatch of 18th December, 1883, in which his Lordship remarked: "Only a fourth of the total number of electors voted (at the general election in October) and in these circumstances her Majesty's Government feel much doubt whether they would be justified as regards the reforms already introduced in accepting to any extent the proposals of the elected members of the Council," and he proceeded to say that her Majesty's Government were "not prepared to withdraw from the people of Malta the advantages which have been brought within their reach by the recent arrangements for facilitating the study of English." In the sitting of the Council of 9th January, 1884, the Lieutenant-Governor, in a firm but temperate speech, declared the intentions of the Government as to the

language question, their decision being based upon Lord Derby's despatch. "We cannot undertake to make any change in the language of the Council," said Mr. Hely Hutchinson, "or accede to the demand that explanations of ordinances should be delivered in Italian, nor can we comply with the suggestion that official members should speak Italian." And further: "We cannot consent to allow the teaching of Maltese in the primary schools to be discontinued, nor Italian to be made the fundamental language of education in the schools." The Lieutenant-Governor's speech was followed by a prolonged and acrimonious debate, which terminated on 11th January, 1884, by seven of the elected members handing in their resignations and leaving the Council chamber, when the educational votes were passed in their absence. The election to fill the vacant seats was held in the end of May, 1884, and resulted in the return of the seven members who had resigned, more than twice the number of votes polled for them in the preceding October having been recorded in their favour.

In the new assembly the language war went on more merrily than ever. On 14th January, 1885, a discussion was raised on the use of the phonetic alphabet in the spelling of the names of places in Government advertisements; next week Mr. Cooper Kirton proposed that, to avoid the use of the phonetic alphabet, the spelling of the names of places should follow a map published after the ordnance survey of 1857, when the Director of Education had little difficulty in turning to ridicule the inconsistent spelling of the map in question, and the proposal was withdrawn. On 18th March, 1885, Dr. Naudi moved: "Che non si debba fare uso dell' alfabeto fonetico nelle denominazioni, in dialetto maltese, di qualunque parte di queste isole; e che tale denominazioni si scrivano come usavasi prima della introduzione malaugurata del detto alfabeto." On a division, the votes were equal, and the President reserved his casting-vote until 27th May, when he gave it against Dr. Naudi's resolution. The discussion on the phonetic alphabet was followed on 18th March, 1885, by a debate on the educational system. Dr. Roncali moved that "qualunque statuto regolamento e programma concernenti la disciplina e l'insegnamento primario liceale ed universitario debbano essere stabiliti per atto legislativo," and also that "il Consiglio faccia un indirizzo al Presidente come Capo de Governo perchè nomini una commissione speciale per la formazione di un progetto da essere prima sottomesso al Consiglio e poi proposto in forma di Ordinanza." These resolutions were ultimately rejected, on 30th March, by the President's casting vote. The education estimates came on for discussion on 13th May, 1885, and were opposed, en bloc, by the elected members. On this occasion Dr. Mizzi used the much-quoted expression with regard to the teaching of his native language: "La lingua Maltese è la maledizione del paese." On a division the votes were equal, and the President deciding that the question was one in which public

interest and credit were seriously at stake, gave his casting vote in favour of the expenditure. Dr. Naudi contended that the matter was only of local concern, and said: "l'amministrazione dei beni nostri, il modo di spendere la nostra moneta per i bisogni nostri sono questioni locali sulle quali dobbiamo noi soli, membri elettivi, avere controllo. Se non è così, si abolisca il Consiglio e si tolga questo apparato di sistema costituzionale, che in sostanza non serve, come esiste in oggi, che a creare malumore e scontento nella popolazione." On 20th May, 1885, Dr. Mizzi moved the omission from the estimate for works and buildings of all sums relating to the education department, including, as the Lieutenant-Governor pointed out, the amount necessary to lay in gas and make other arrangements for opening night schools in response to a petition signed by nine hundred working-men, but the amendment was rejected.

On 20th January, 1886, when the succeeding estimates were discussed, the elected members were able to prevent the expenditure of £2,000 towards building a school at Hamrun, a district in which it was urgently required. The following week, 27th January, 1886, Dr. Mizzi moved the omission from the estimates of £600, rent for primary schools, but the vote was carried. In the course of the discussion, the Director of Education asked: "Where and when has the population of Malta and Gozo condemned the system of instruction which is being pursued? If we go to the primary schools we find them full to overflowing. As to the Lyceum, last year there were more than 200 applicants for admission, and for want of room we could only admit 60. . . . There were 52 applicants for admission (to the University) in September last, of whom only 31 were admitted." The elected members succeeded in defeating a vote for £26 to pay the salaries of teachers for a night school which the Government proposed to establish at Zabbar, in response to a petition signed by 222 inhabitants of that district, many of the petitioners being employed in the Government dockyard, and wishing to learn English to help them in their employment. Said Dr. Mizzi, somewhat heartlessly: "Si dovrebbe pensare ad istituire scuole tecniche e non già ad insegnare l'Inglese a persone con un piede nella tomba." On 24th February, 1886, the elected members refused to sanction the payment of £12 as fees to examiners in the Faculty of Medicine at the University.

The discussion of the "Water Ordinance" occupied a great part of the meetings of Council in 1886. Dr. Mizzi strenuously opposed its provisions, but was unable to carry his colleagues with him. He was usually the sole supporter of his own amendments, although occasionally Canon Agius voted with him. Finally, he decided to return to the tactics of 1882. He and Canon Agius resigned their seats at the Council, and promoted, to the best of their ability, the return of Giuseppe Camilleri ("universally known to be most infamous

“and most contemptible”—*Malta Times*, 2nd October, 1886), and Salvatore Galea (a “harmless though most ridiculous individual,”—*Malta Times*, 16th October, 1886), who were elected by large majorities on 27th September, 1886. Thereupon five of the other elected members resigned, leaving only Mr. Cooper Kirton to sit with the new “ridiculous” and “infamous” representatives of the people. The estimates for 1887 were submitted to this council of three, and, in the space of twenty minutes, over £200,000 was voted for the year’s expenditure without a word of discussion. Dr. Mizzi could not have secured a more striking illustration of the uselessness and unreality of the functions of the existing Council. The election of five new members took place on 17th February, 1887, when Dr. Mizzi, Count Strickland, and their nominees were returned without opposition, and three of them immediately resigned, “as a protest,” rendering still another election necessary. By his alliance with Count Strickland della Catena (a young member of the Maltese nobility, who has not yet completed his University career), Dr. Mizzi pledged himself to abstain for the future from the “infamous” and “ridiculous” mode of action; and this alliance gave him the opportunity of placing his views before the Colonial Secretary, for which purpose he went to England last winter. (The rhapsodies of his organ, the *Malta*, over his courage and self-sacrifice in facing the perils of so long a voyage and so rigorous a climate—all for the sake of his country—were very amusing). After seeing him and Count Strickland, the Colonial Secretary requested the Governor and Crown-Advocate of Malta to proceed to England to discuss this much-vexed question. The result of their interview and of the action of Earl de la Warr in the House of Lords, was Sir Henry Holland’s despatch of 16th April, 1887, containing the suggestions of her Majesty’s Government “for the purpose of giving the representatives of the people a fuller “and more definite control over the public expenditure.” It is not necessary to describe those suggestions in detail, as, when published in the *Malta Government Gazette* of 7th May, they were received with such universal disapproval, by the representatives of every shade of opinion in the Island, that no attempt is likely to be made towards carrying them into effect. On May 14th, the Director of Education, Mr. Savona, resigned his post on the ground of dissatisfaction with Sir Henry Holland’s proposals and with the attitude of the present administration of Malta towards educational questions. He forthwith proceeded to England, and on June 20th published a letter, addressed to the Colonial Secretary, in which he expounded his own views as to the reform of the Maltese constitution, and gave a vivid description of the evils suffered by the islanders under the present system of government. The suggestions contained in this able and vigorous letter will, no doubt, have the careful attention of the Government when they prepare the new constitution which they have pledged themselves to provide.

As the sole object of this pamphlet is to give an accurate and condensed history of the political movements in Malta during the last ten years, this is not the place to make any suggestions for the solution of the constitutional difficulty. It may not be amiss, however, to point out the various views that will have to be considered by the Colonial Secretary before he can arrive at a decision on so serious a subject.

Englishmen, of whichever party, have naturally much sympathy with a leader of the opposition like the late Director of Education whose objects—such as the reduction of expenditure, the equalisation of taxation, the extension and improvement of education—were approved by successive Secretaries of State, whether Conservative or Liberal, and were plainly for the advantage of the population of Malta, however blind the ignorant electors might be to their benefits. It is much more difficult for Englishmen to understand such an opposition as that of Dr. Mizzi, which apparently aims at nothing but substituting the teaching of Italian for that of English in the public educational establishments, when all evidence shows that the greatest public advantage would arise from an extension of the knowledge of English.

In the struggle with obscurantism, the benevolent reformer will often think with a sigh of the methods of despotism in introducing changes for which public opinion is not yet ripe. The "Giornale della presa di Malta e Gozo dalla Repubblica Francese" of Baron Azopardi, published by the Malta Government press in 1836, contains a remarkable series of proclamations which might form a model for such a reformer. The Islands were surrendered to Bonaparte on 12th June, 1798, the convention being signed on board the French frigate "L'Orient." The same evening Bonaparte landed and took up his quarters at the Palazzo Parisio, now occupied as the general post office. By his first proclamation, dated 13th June, he placed the government of Malta in the hands of a commission of nine, to be nominated by the General Commanding-in-Chief. The first duty of this commission was to reorganise the courts of civil and criminal law on a plan as nearly similar as possible to that existing in France. The Islands were divided into cantons, each of which was to be administered by a council of five members and a justice of the peace, the latter being nominated by the commission of nine. Valletta was divided into two municipalities and named "The City of Malta." All property of the Grand Master and Knights of St. John was declared to belong to the French Republic. The entire control of the police was vested in the Commander-in-Chief. On 16th June he issued four proclamations: the first established a National Guard, describing its uniform and duties in full detail; the second ordered every inhabitant of the Islands to wear a tricolour cockade, and forbade the use of the French national costume without permission from the Commander-in-Chief, declared equality of rights

amongst the inhabitants, abolished slavery, prohibited the use of armorial bearings and titles of nobility, dissolved the Order of St. John—all in the space of a very few lines; the third ordered a general disarmament, but authorised the continuance of the volunteer organization—assimilated the sanitary laws of Malta to those of Marseilles—ordered the formation of a body of thirty *volunteers* to be chosen from the richest Maltese families—gave the Commander-in-Chief power to select from those families such boys as he pleased to be educated at Paris in the schools of the Republic, their parents paying 600 francs for their travelling expenses, and making them an annual allowance of 800 francs—gave the superior naval officer power to select six boys from those families for service and training in the fleet of the Republic—the various uniforms to be worn being carefully described; the fourth decreed the expulsion of all foreign priests, forbade anyone under thirty to take the priestly vow, prohibited the creation of any new priests until all existing priests were employed, restricted the number of convents in the Island to one of each order. Article XII of the third proclamation is worth quoting entire: “Come l’educazione interessa principalmente la prosperità e la sicurezza pubblica, i parenti dei figli che saranno scelti e che rifiuteranno saranno condannati a pagare mille scudi di pena.” Five proclamations were issued on 18th June. The first defined the duties of the commission of nine and of the Commander-in-Chief. The second established a new system of taxation to produce an annual revenue of 720,000 francs, 600,000 francs to be paid into the military chest, and the remaining 120,000 to be devoted to the expenses of administration; the inhabitants were ordered to pay for the cleansing of the town and the maintenance of the police and light-houses; the water supply was to be paid for out of ship-dues, tolls were to be levied for the maintenance of the roads, the hospital and the post-office were to be reorganized, &c., &c. The third ordered the establishment of fifteen primary schools in Malta and Gozo, in which the pupils were to be taught to read and write in French, and to be instructed in the principles of arithmetic, pilotage, morals, and the French Constitution; the teachers were to be lodged at the public expense in a house with a garden, their salaries being fixed at 1,000 francs for those in the city, and 800 francs for those in the casals; a central school was to be formed with a library, museums of antiquities and natural history, a botanical garden, and an observatory attached to it; and Government property was to be sold to the value of 300,000 francs to provide the necessary funds. By the fourth, further sales of Government property were ordered to produce 300,000 francs for payment of the creditors of the Grand Master and 300,000 francs as a subvention to the garrison and the fleet; whilst out of the revenue of the suppressed convents, a sum of 40,000 francs per annum was appropriated to the hospital. The fifth established civil marriage, ordered the administration of the

Sacrament gratis, and forbade recourse to the Pope or any foreign prince in matters of religion or justice. Thus, as Baron Azopardi says, Bonaparte established "fra lo spazio di sei giorni nuovi leggi "e nuovi cambiamenti con cui rovesciò interamente tutto il sistema "del governo passato," and when he left Malta on June 19th, "sembrò allora di sua opera soddisfatto."

However, much as one may long sometimes to be able to create a model constitution by a few strokes of the pen, in the Bonaparte fashion, the time for such simple modes of procedure has passed. Public opinion, and not a statesman's view of what is right or wrong, is now permitted to guide the course of constitutional governments. As has been shown above, the Colonial Office assumed Mr. Savona to represent the opinion of Malta in 1877 with regard to taxation, education, and civil service reform: his views on those subjects were confirmed and adopted by the three Special Commissioners who were sent to the Island (at a cost to the Maltese revenue of £1,380) to report upon them, and the home Government did its best to carry them into effect, entrusting Mr. Savona with an important office for the purpose. But the Maltese electors have proved to be opposed to every one of the proposed reforms—except the improvement in the pay of the members of the Civil Service. The poorer classes are quite content to continue paying a halfpenny tax on every loaf of bread they eat rather than that a land or house-tax should be imposed to provide for the comforts and even luxuries of the middle classes; they are content to remain in such dense ignorance that it is almost impossible to find a postman or a policeman who can read or write or speak either English or Italian. Under a restricted suffrage a majority of "anti-Savonian" "anti-Riformista" members were elected to the Council, and when Lord Derby quadrupled the electorate the result was still the same. It is true that only a small proportion of the electorate takes any interest whatever in political questions, and it may be that, were the colony divided into eight (or more) electoral divisions instead of two, the Savonian, reforming party might be able to secure one or two seats on the elected bench. The petitions in favour of the opening of night schools, and the crowded condition of the existing schools, show that a considerable number of the working-classes in various districts appreciate, and wish to obtain, a knowledge of English, and it would seem, therefore, extremely unfair to allow the "anti-riformista" party to deprive them of such limited opportunities for learning that language as they at present possess. Were complete control over local legislation and expenditure entrusted to the majority of the elected members at the present time, the result would almost certainly be calamitous from an enlightened point of view. The placing of Dr. Mizzi in power would probably involve the return to a barbarous system of education, the suppression of the teaching of English, perhaps the closing of the schools. Of

course, even such disasters as these would not dismay those who believe in the law of progress, who have faith that, in the course of time, even if after long and wearisome delay, the advantages of education will come to be appreciated by the people, and that when such advantages are sought for from below, rather than forced on from above, their effects will be far more beneficent and far-reaching.

An important section of opinion which will have to be taken into account by the Government, is that of the English official classes which is, perhaps, best expressed in these words taken from the Governor's despatch of 24th December, 1886 : "The Government must retain in its hands the ultimate power of shaping the local legislation according to its will. This power will be seldom, if ever, exercised : but it must be retained, having regard to the fact that the sole value of Malta as a British possession is that it is a fortress and naval station in a commanding position in the Mediterranean, whilst it has a large garrison of 5,000 men always present in the fortified towns, with a permanent civil population of over 56,000." It is impossible to live long in Malta without hearing many complaints from officers in the army and navy as to the injustice suffered by British soldiers and sailors in the Maltese courts, where all the proceedings are conducted in Italian, so that the prisoners cannot understand the charges brought against them and are consequently unable to properly defend themselves. Cases of this description cause the official classes to dread the effect upon English residents in Malta of granting absolute powers of legislation and taxation to the representatives of the people. They contend that the large abstentions from voting at the elections shew that the majority of the Maltese do not desire any alteration in the constitution and will be thoroughly satisfied with a benevolent and judicious English administration which will give the utmost consideration to local opinion and refrain from forcing forward unpopular reforms.

Here this sketch must end. It is earnestly to be hoped that the Colonial Secretary may devise a scheme which will put an end to the unseemly proceedings of recent years. Since the interests of all inhabitants of the colony must really be identical so far as local matters are concerned, some means may surely be found of reconciling their wishes and aspirations. Should Sir Henry Holland be able to settle this long-standing difficulty satisfactorily, he will not be reckoned amongst the least of the benefactors of Malta.