

“or report, and to take no decision (except in matters of exceptional urgency) till that report is received. This practice was accurately adhered to by my predecessor in the case of Mr. Weare’s complaints. You consider that Colonel Weare should have been required to make his complaints through the usual channel; but this, in effect, was done. The complaints were sent back to his Commanding Officer, with instructions which obliged Colonel Weare either to withdraw or substantiate them: he chose the former alternative. But in any case, I do not see what more regular or effectual method could have been adopted to secure that truth should be ascertained and justice done.”

4. Colonel Weare’s complaints consisted of two points: 1st,—accusations against myself and my Government, and 2nd,—accusations against his Commanding Officer.

5. In so far as I was concerned (including my Government), his letters were taken to the Secretary of State for the Colonies; the complaints they contained were received by him. They were sent out to me. I was told that they were such as to demand full and immediate inquiry, and was expected to give a complete reply to them.

6. What passed between Mr. Weare and the Secretary of State for War, I do not know. I assume, because I am now told so, that Colonel Weare was informed that he must either substantiate or withdraw his complaints against his immediate Commanding Officer, but of this I had no knowledge at the time, and I feel sure that your Lordship will upon consideration agree that that was a matter with which I had nothing to do, and that it in no way affected the fact with which I was concerned—that Colonel Weare’s letters, in so far as they related to myself and my Government, had been received, and were at once referred to me for inquiry and explanation.

7. The regulations for the guidance of Her Majesty’s Colonial Service require that any letters complaining of the conduct of the Governor or Colonial Government shall be forwarded through the Governor, and it is stated that if this rule is not observed the letter will be returned to the writer for the purpose of being forwarded through the Governor.

8. If a person in the Colony may write such a letter as that which is alluded to in the Colonial Regulations, to some individual in England, and upon the person to whom it is written sending it or delivering it to the Secretary of State, then it is to be regarded as not falling within the regulations, it appears useless to have established such a rule, which anyone can so easily evade.

9. But great difficulties must in every case arise from the breach of such a regulation, in whatever manner this is effected.

10. In the case of Colonel Weare’s letter to his brother, had it been returned to the writer, as the regulation directs, he would have withdrawn it, and such accusations against myself and my Government would not have been put on record; if he had not withdrawn it, the Secretary of State, when I returned the letter, would have had full explanations regarding the several accusations contained in it, gaining all the information he required without doing a wrong to anyone. He would have stood in the true position of a judge, not of one who had taken up accusations, and who admitted that there was such ground of probability in them that inquiry must be made, and the accused persons put upon their defence.

11. If Colonel Weare intended his letter to be made public, in that case, by the course he pursued, he made it appear that the Governor and Local Authorities were so bad that it was useless to appeal to them; and that it was necessary to get indirectly at the Secretary of State, or the public, to have such great crimes brought to light; and with every deference to your Lordship’s Department, I think that the Secretary of State, by entertaining such accusations, so made to him, gave strong grounds for others to believe that such presumptions as those above stated rested upon some, at least, probable foundations.

12. If Colonel Weare did not intend the statement in his letters to reach the public, and they were hurried passionate expressions of an ill-judging and irritated man addressed under the seal of confidence to his brother, then the course pursued by the Secretary of State made an old and distinguished officer, against his will,