

Mr. Des Vœux has made a general attack on the Stipendiary Magistrates of the Colony as being deficient in education, as having risen from inferior positions, and as being dependant on the planters. I believe the attack to be wholly unmerited, and I am persuaded that the gentlemen who have earned their promotion by valuable services rendered to the Crown in less lucrative and less responsible situations in the Colony, will at least bear comparison with their more fortunate colleagues, who, like Mr. Des Vœux, have, while young and inexperienced, received their first appointments as Stipendiary Magistrates. Mr. Des Vœux has endeavoured to prejudice the Secretary of State against local appointments, and it may therefore be desirable that I should submit some reasons for my opinion that, as a rule, colonial claims should be recognized. In British Guiana, as in other tropical colonies, it is the practice for public officers, as it is for professional gentlemen and planters, to seek occasional changes of climate. This necessitates the making of a number of acting appointments. When the higher-paid functionaries, such as the Government Secretary, Comptroller of Customs, &c., obtain leave, their places have been usually supplied temporarily by Stipendiary Magistrates. So that on those occasions, as well as when Magistrates themselves obtain leave, acting appointments must be made. There has rarely, if ever, been a time, during my experience, when all the twelve Magistrates were engaged in the performance of their duties. The temporary Magistrates are, practically, on probation during these periods. If they fail to give satisfaction, they are quietly dropped; whereas, if they succeed, they will probably be re-employed. Persons of this class obtain, during their temporary incumbency, a knowledge of the local laws and practice, much greater than any inexperienced stranger can possess, and they moreover render services to the Crown, which constitute at least some claim to promotion when fitting opportunities occur. This is the class of officers that it is Mr. Des Vœux's special object to depreciate in paragraphs 21 and 22, and again in 64. I do not believe that it would be found possible to fill the acting