

ABSTRACT

The process, which will be examined in this study, was influenced by a number of different circumstances. Among these were the problem of labour, social relationships, and the legal and administrative machinery set up for the amelioration. The purpose of this work is to study the topic against the background of these interacting forces. It is my contention that the process was a failure, and that the aforementioned were contributory forces.

White slave owners in Trinidad saw themselves as superior to their coloured counterparts and naturally ^{as} superior also to the slaves. They resented the programme, which they considered an interference with their authority. Coloured proprietors resented their inferior status; but the outspoken showed signs of looking down on those less wealthy or educated within their own class. In their struggles for self-improvement, they wavered in their attitude to amelioration. Eventually they joined the white proprietors in protesting the final Order.

In many ways the machinery for carrying out this programme was defective. Very few of the officials could have been considered impartial; and the planters' hostility, at first concealed, was openly expressed towards the end of the period. In 1834 emancipation came to a slave owning populace who accepted it because they felt powerless to prevent it. They still sought labour. The laws

passed to implement emancipation showed the continued desire to keep the labourers under strict control. The authority which the individual planter lost was transferred to a Legislature and Judiciary still dominated by planters. The fear of servile insurrection lingered on to provide a motive for future policy.