

The Morning Chronicle (London),
Tuesday, June 13, 1854

IMPERIAL PARLIAMENT.

HOUSE OF LORDS—MONDAY.

Their lordships met at five o'clock.

SINGAPORE.

The Earl of ALBEMARLE presented a petition from the Asiatic and European merchants, traders, and inhabitants of Singapore, praying that a resident professional judge be appointed to that settlement, and that certain other ameliorations in the administration of justice be introduced. Not more than twenty-five years ago Singapore consisted of a handful of Malay fishermen, who turned pirates whenever it was considered safe to do so; but now it had a thriving population of 70,000 souls, and its imports, which were nearly equal to its exports, amounted to £3,250,000. But while the trade and population of Singapore had increased to that extent, the judicial establishment had remained what it was, not only in 1829, but in 1807, and the principal prayer of the petitioners was, that the whole time and attention of a professional magistrate should be given to Singapore, instead of being divided among three settlements as at the present moment. The taxes of Singapore produced £55,000 a year, which was sufficient, not only to defray all the civil and military expenses of the settlement, but to leave a surplus. But that was not all. Singapore had likewise to pay a considerable sum annually for the support of convicts not belonging to the settlement. There was also a steam-ship of war, costing £3,800, for the suppression of piracy in the settlement. It was a question in which India, England, and every commercial country was concerned, and the burden ought to fall on the trade, and not upon one settlement. Mr. Crawford, a former governor of Singapore, had suggested a remedy for these grievances. He proposed two judges, one for Singapore and Malacca, at a salary of £4,500, and the other for Penang, at a salary of £3,500. He proposed also to exonerate the settlement from the governor's salary, and to do away with the steam vessel. That would leave for Singapore alone a fund of upwards of £10,000, and taking all the colonies together, the sum of £22,000. The noble earl concluded by saying he would confidently leave the consideration of this matter in the hands of the Government.

Earl GRANVILLE said the subject, which was rather a complicated one, was at present under the consideration of the Board of Trade.