

(B) (3)

X =

A very faint attempt to
present a coherent
picture instead of a
disorganized collection of
facts. /X

Soren Nettleton
17 years

[REDACTED]
Lord Fraser Junior High School
New Westminster, B.C.

How do the British come to be in India?

The King of England to-day, King George VI, is the Emperor of India, and India is one of the most valuable possessions of the British Crown. The first Britishers to land there were Drake and his explorers who returned to England with a cargo "worth a million dollars." Then, the rise in the price of pepper paved the way for Lancaster, who, furnished with many ships, helped greatly in the formation of the East India Company. Later as regular trade routes were established, fortresses and trading posts were constructed in India. When French and English rivalry broke out, the French led by the famous Governor-General Dupleix, - this action was suppressed by Clive, who is universally known for the Battle of Plassey, in which he crushed the remaining French forces. The idea of good government was given great consideration by Warren Hastings, who did almost as much for India as Clive. Next followed two more great Governors-General who, in their own individual policies did great things for India. That could be called "the final touch of power" was given to the British by Francis Hastings, at first a Governor-General who was later given the distinguishing rank of Marquis, with which he retired to leave India almost entirely in the hands of the British.

Drake, after trying in vain to find the western end of the North-West passage was forced back by bad weather and so determined to accomplish ^{something}, he decided to try to reach India. In the *Golden Hind* he left the Californian coast in July 1579 and headed across the Pacific in order to complete the circumnavigation of the globe, as well as to gain further commercial information. The Englishmen were cordially greeted by the inhabitants of the Spice Islands, where they landed, and were promised that if they would send a fleet out, to drive the Portuguese from India, that England could control all the coveted clove trade, and so establish a substantial financial business. As this was the object of every nation, to seize this trade from Portugal, the English were not surprised to find that, when Sir James Lancaster arrived in 1601, the Dutch had been ahead of him by 6 years, since 1595. However they obtained a rich cargo and this expedition made the majority of the English working classes very conscious of matters in India.

Most of the European trade, during the sixteenth century, was conducted with India, through the Portuguese, and later the Dutch. Like all monopolists, the Dutch attempted to fix the price of their commodities. In a sudden bound, in 1599, the price of pepper leapt from three shillings to eight shillings a pound. At this time, pepper was of much greater use than it is to-day. While to-day it is merely something "extra" and is

used as a garnish, then it was a necessity. It was used where we now use refrigerators as a preservative for food. Also, on occasions, it was used to flavour foods which had begun to spoil. As a result of this being a "part of their lives," the housewives of London were up in arms over the ridiculously expensive price. The anger of the people was aroused and they resolved that, come what may, they would go directly to India for their pepper. They would not pay the absurd price asked by the Dutch, so they joined together to form what was once called "The Governors and Company of Merchants of London, Trading into the East Indies," but since then, through fame and popularity has come to be known as "The East India Company." This company was successful and the establishment of regular trade routes as well as many fortresses for commercial purposes was undertaken.

While Britain and France were warring teeth at each other in the North-American colonies, they were also at grips over the trade of India. The Europeans who went to Asia for trade in the early part of the eighteenth century were very little concerned by what was going on in India. The Dutch had controlled most of the spice and cinnamon trade while the Portuguese still did some trade from Goa. However the most important exporting of Indian goods was conducted by the French and British companies, who because they traded the same articles, were in close competition. The English and

The west coast did not see much of the French there, but on the East coast the Englishmen at Fort St. George (Madras) were always rivals of the French at Pondicherry. About this time the great Mogul Empire, which had ruled over Northern India for nearly two hundred years was breaking down in disorder and European merchants had to, at times, defend themselves against attacks from the Indians. In 1730, an extremely efficient man, Joseph Dupleix became governor of the French fort at Chandernagore in Bengal, just when that region had broken away from the Mogul control and was very disturbed. He was considered most capable and appointed Governor at Pondicherry and given control of all French enterprises in India. Young and vigorous, he determined to make France the mistress of a great empire in India, and when war broke out between France and Britain, France sent out more ships than Britain could spare at that time. He saw his chance to gain for France some of the most valuable lands in India and he attacked and captured the city of Marathas in 1746.

Among the prisoners was a man, Robert Clive, who was to become a figure in the holding of British colonies in India. In Bengal, the Nawab who had governed with peace and prosperity died, and was succeeded by a man, of

extremely weak character who oppressed the people. He gave up the good government of his uncle, and consequently, most of his uncle's ministers fled, as did the townspeople but 146 Englishmen could not escape and were imprisoned in the "Black Hole of Calcutta." When the news of this horrible capture reached Clive, he had just returned from England. He was put in command of every able man who could be spared from Madras and urged to recover Calcutta as soon as possible. Early in January, 1757, the fort was bombarded both from the ships in the river, by Clive on the land and it was soon forced to surrender. Clive attacked the French at ^{Chandernagore} after the outbreak of war and the Nawab leader assisted the French. Clive realized that Calcutta would be safe only when a better Nawab was ruler. In the middle of June, 1757, the Battle of Plassey, one of the most famous battles in history, was on. It was one of the most decisive victories ever ~~got~~ won, for it marked the extraordinary change of the East India Company from a mere group of traders into the effective successors of the Great Moguls, who left behind them a tradition, that the British were proud to carry on.

While Clive was working out his plans as to how he would manage

his new conquest, a fresh struggle arose in the south. Dupleix, sent home in disgrace, had a very clever lieutenant, the Marquis de Bussy, who he left in charge of Arcac. Also, a new leader, the Comte de Lally, came from France in 1758, with reinforcements. Despising the Indians, however, he went to work in the wrong way, although he took Fort Saint David. He quarrelled with the Company's merchants and abandoned Dupleix's scheme for getting assistance from the Indian princes against the English, so he recalled Bussy and concentrated his efforts on trying to take Madras. His attempt was in vain, and this failure marked the beginning of the end, for after that every French post was destroyed and the Nizam of Hyderabad entered into a treaty against the French. The last French forces were defeated at Wandewash and Lally returned to England in 1760 for arrest. He returned to India, however, in 1765 to settle a revolution.

By this time people were beginning to think of government and a very important man at this stage was Warren Hastings. He came to India in 1750, employed in the secretariat of the East India Company at Calcutta. After proving great ability

as an organizer, he was appointed, in 1774, the first Governor-General in India. It was he who laid the foundations for the present system of administration in the empire. He was a great example to the Indian people, although later, back in England, he was impeached, tried, for nine years, and acquitted by the House of Lords for various wrongdoings performed in previous years. Another Governor-General of significance was Cornwallis, who was noted more for his interest in making matters run smoothly rather than interest in expansion. However, the next Governor-General again held a great interest for expansion - Lord Wellesley. His chief accomplishment was the amiable relations he set up with the Marathas. Still later, in 1813 Francis Hastings was appointed Governor-General and in 1816 he received the distinguished title of "Marquis of Hastings." He resigned this office, however, in 1824, after practically perfecting the British Dominion.

So, this addition of India to the already Great British Empire, is an example of the everlasting British teamwork. Drake and Lancaster led the parade, breaking the ice for others by establishing friendly relations with the natives of India, and by founding the first valuable spice trade routes. Close in his great work,

helped to keep these trade routes, especially from the French. The defeat of Dupleix and the victorious Battle of Plassey maintained an important foothold in the winning of India for Britain's Empire, and the next steps were those taken by men interested in government. Warren Hastings was one of the most efficient Governor-Generals and was followed up by Cornwallis and Wellesley, also Governor-Generals. Then, another Hastings, who made himself famous by his work in India was the Marquis of Hastings, who put the finishing touches on the almost perfect government. All these famous individuals and happenings are welded together into one big story - of how the British came to be in India.