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Evolution of the New Constitution

The stages of the evolution of the new Constitution of Ceylon were marked by six documents:—

1. The Declaration of His Majesty's Government in May, 1943,¹ which must be read in the light of the Ministers' interpretation of it.²
2. The Draft Constitution prepared by the Ministers and published in September, 1944.³
3. Mr. D. S. Senanayake's Memorandum to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in July, 1945.⁴
4. The Report of the Soulbury Commission published in London in September, 1945.⁵
5. The White Paper on Constitutional Reform in Ceylon issued by His Majesty's Government in October, 1945.⁶
6. The Ceylon (Constitution) Order-in-Council, 1946.⁷

(i) *The Declaration of 1943:*

As is customary with such documents, the Declaration of 1943 was issued without any kind of explanation, written or oral. It was a bare statement of policy preceded by a preamble reciting the Declaration of 1941 and asserting that it was in the general interest to give greater precision to that Declaration by removing any doubts. There never were any doubts about the Declaration of 1941; the Declaration of 1943 did not give greater precision to it;

1. Sessional Paper XVII of 1943, pp. 3-4.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.
3. Sessional Paper XIV of 1944.
4. This document has not been published because it contained references to confidential matter. A full account has been published in *Ceylon's Path to Freedom*.
5. Cmd. 6677.
6. Cmd. 6690.
7. *Ceylon Government Gazette Extraordinary*, No. 9554, 1946.

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