The truth was, business couldn’t call the tune very well in empire.

The colonies weren’t ruled by a ruling class.

They were ruled by ruling castes –

- a military caste
- a paper-shuffler caste
- a business caste

And the sets didn’t work all that well together.

Business classes in the colonies and in London didn’t think alike and didn’t act alike.

Say you were at the top of business in London.

You’d be a rich man’s boy.

Eton, certainly.

The financial dynasties have Ancient Blood behind ‘em.

But now, there you are in Calcutta. The senior partners in the business houses...

They aren’t the British elite.

Eton? Most of them haven’t gone to the private {a.k.a. “public”} schools.

In the jute industry, they’re mostly Scots – not even English.
As for the Indian Civil Service – that’s very English indeed.

They look on businessmen as those “pesky boxwallahs.”

And the businessmen look on them as “little tin gods in Simla.”

Businessmen, they got no culture.

They don’t play cricket.

They haven’t got ANY relatives in DeBrett’s guide to the Peerage.

All they care about is money.

It’s just not English.
It’s ... it’s downright AMERICAN

As one head of the India government said:

“Personally I wouldn’t mind if every British businessman in India disappeared tomorrow.”

The business and civil service men don’t go to the same parties.

Each has his own clubs.

Who in Malaya wants to hobnob with rubber planters?
They’re Scotsmen.

They got hairy knees!

They don’t wear the proper linens.

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You go to Malaya in the 1940s. Who’s the top British business leader with ties back to London?

He’s Sir John Hay. He’s a Scot.
No, he didn’t go to the best schools.

He’s a descendant of nobody. He’s an ANCESTOR.

He was born poor and raised himself up.

Smart? No question. If you want a man who can talk rubber, he can do it.

But that’s all he can do.

He’s pushy, he’s grumpy, he’s difficult.

When he shows up at a government office, it’s always the same thing ....

Gimme, gimme, gimme
Grouch, grouch, grouch
Whine, whine, whine.

This guy’s a pest, and he’s sure not One of Us.

There’s not a person in the Government of Malaya who’d give him the time of day.\(^3\)

\(^3\) Nicholas J. White, “British Decolonization in the Twentieth Century,” 547.
How about the top dog in business in Iran?

No question about who THAT is. It’s Sir William Fraser.

He chairs Anglo-Iranian Oil company midcentury.

A razor-keen business men. Anyone can tell you that.

But by gum, when it comes to dealing and negotiating, he’s a Be Reasonable – Do It MY Way kind of guy.

He’s the last person the government would trust with delicate talks.⁴

Even when a businessman really WAS your Gentlemanly Capitalist kind –

Eton
all the right manners

A member of all the really posh clubs

Government figures weren’t all that likely to listen to him.

Because he knows BUSINESS. He doesn’t know the Territory.

He’s definitely out of his league.⁵

⁴ Nicholas J. White, “British Decolonization in the Twentieth Century,” 548.
