Between the 1890s and 1916 the struggle for control of the modes of patronage system was Central to the development of provincial politics. Naturally some members of the western educated community were better able than others to make connections at the right places: and those who failed were likely to try as hard as they could to shift those who had succeeded. Moreover, the peculiar, almost conspiratorial, nature of political life in Madras City led to the formation of specialised political groupings designed to extract and distribute patronage. One of the most celebrated of these groupings was popularly known as "the Mylapore Clique" after the suburb in which most of its prominent members lived. It was composed, across our period, of a succession of lawyers and administrators who were on close personal terms, who met regularly in each other's houses, put forward the same demands in Congress, the Press and on the streets and aided each other in seeking office. Each generation in Mylapore picked its successor and brought it up through its favour. In the late 1880s we could take its leaders to be V.Bashyam Aiyengar, S. Subramania Iyer and R.Raghunatha Rao (R.Raghunatha Rao a Maratha Brahman from Tanjore district was a career civil servant who became Deputy Collector of Madras City and Dewan of Baroda. T.Madhava Rao, a Dewan of Mysore was his cousin. T.Ananda Rao, also a Dewan of Mysore and R.Ramachandra Rao, a Collector and later a Secretary of the Education Department, were his nephews). By the turn of the century their apostolic successor V.Krishnaswamy Iyer was in command, following his death, his old school friend P.S.Sivaswami Iyer and close legal and
University Associates G.A. Natesan and L.A. Govindaraghava Iyer achieved prominence and were joined at the time of the First World War, by C.P. Ramaswami Iyer. (The informal yet impenetrable character of the Mylapore Clique can be seen in the description which Sivaswami Iyer gave of Mylapore at his arrival in the City. See K.A. Wilakanta Sastri A Great Liberal, Speeches and Writings of Sir P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer Speeches and Writings of Sir P.S. Sivaswami Aiyer (Bombay) 1965, p.254).

Behind this leadership group came a bewildering collection of lawyers, teachers, bureaucrats and journalists, tied together by personal contact and the hope of rewards. The organisation of the clique was loose; personal and career rivalries could split it at a moment's notice and disappointed courtiers could move quickly into opposition to it. In general however it may be said to have represented at any given time those who were most successful at the delicate game of capturing Government favour.

Permanently in opposition to the Mylapore clique, and attracting to their flag at various times many old but disappointed Mylaporeans were a group known to contemporaries as the "Egmore Clique". They were even less homogeneous than, and indeed, existed only as a counterweight to, Mylapore. At the centre of the clique sat C. Sankaran Nair whose own personal system of influence was of course exactly of the same type as that operated by the leaders of Mylapore. The reasons for his disaffection were several: There was professional rivalry between himself and the men of Mylapore; his own connections in the European bureaucracy had been different from those of Mylapore; as a Malayali he was culturally isolated
in a Tamil City during a period when cultural contacts often led to political contacts. In collaboration with him were men who had failed to make much headway with the Mylapore bosses and whose alternative connections were weak. Most prominent among them was Kasturi Ranga Iyengar whose brother (a senior Government servant in 1880s and 1890s) had quarrelled with the Mylaporeans and during the militant Congress agitation, had been ridiculed by them as a British puppet. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar who had qualified as a Vakil in 1884 had been unable to build a legal practice in the city and had spent nearly a decade in the mofussil. He returned to the City in 1894, but once again found himself starved of valuable cases, which fell into the pockets of the Mylaporeans, and was forced to give up the law for journalism (V.K. Narasimhan, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar p.23-24, V.K.N. Kasturi Srinivasan, (Bombay 1969) p.7. A typical example of what it meant to be 'out' in City Politics can be seen in the fact that although Kasturi Ranga Iyengar several times stood for election to the Senate, he was always beaten by a "Mylaporean." He was understandably resentful of the men who held back his career. A third Egmore leader was T. Rangachari, from the same village in Tanjore as Kasturi Ranga Iyengar. Although regarded as one of the most able lawyers of his generation, he could secure relatively few of the plums of civil litigation and concentrated his attention on the much less lucrative criminal bar. (T. Rangachari rarely appears on the list of vakils retained in major High Court civil cases. In 1924 at the height of his career, he was earning only Rs.40,000 p.a. compared to the Rs.2,40,000 of the leader of the Madras bar. K. Srinivasa Iyengar, See Home Public File 953 of 1924 N.A.I.).
Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and T. Rangachari certainly had contacts, familial and otherwise, with the Central mechanisms of Government, the law and Education, and picked up Mylaporeans who were spun off by factional conflict, but their influence and importance were less pervasive. Examples of the rivalry between Egmore and Mylapore litter the history of Madras politics. Even in 1880s when personal feuds were more usually subordinated to common ends, C. Sankaran Nair had clasped with V. Bashyam Iyengar and S. Subramania Iyer in a most acrimonious debate in the Madras Vakils' Association over the place of barristers in the appeals court. This had led to a long and bitter correspondence in the press. The 1894 Congress was nearly wrecked by faction. There was a fight between Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and the Mylaporeans P. R. Sundara Iyer and V. C. Desikachari over the printing and distribution of tickets. T. Rangachari and P. R. Sundara Iyer quarrelled over the membership of the Subjects Committee, and after the Congress Session, S. Subramania Iyer resigned from the Executive Committee, accusing some of its members of malpractices; the general purposes Committee refused to meet T. Rangachari's claims for expenses, and the Hindu newspaper which was already near to the Egmore clique, was accused of presenting a false bill. The internecine strife continued unabated in the succeeding years. When it was rumoured that Sankaran Nair was to be made an Executive Councillor, petitions of protest arrived at the Judicial Department from Mylapore. In 1905 Sankaran Nair, Kasturi Ranga Iyengar and T. Rangachari joined forces to buy the Hindu, which had reached bankruptcy, and used it to denounce the antics of Mylapore in general and V. Krishnaswami Iyer in particular.