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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Monday, 18th February, 1901.

Several other Members took and subscribed the Oath.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

THAMES AND SEVERN PROVISIONAL ORDER.

Bill to confirm an Order made by the Board of Trade, under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, for the transfer of the Thames and Severn Canal to the County Council of Gloucestershire; and for other purposes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gerald Balfour and Mr. Austen Chamberlain.

THAMES AND SEVERN PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

"To confirm an Order made by the Board of Trade, under the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888, for the transfer of the Thames and Severn Canal to the County Council of Gloucestershire; and for other purposes," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 1.]

PETITIONS.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ADULTS IN EVENING CLASSES).

Petitions for alteration of Law, from Bradford; Brighton and Preston; Llanelly; and Calverley; to lie on the Table.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1896.

Petitions for alteration of Law, from Little Hulton; Blean; and Hyde; to lie upon the Table.

PURE BEER.

Petitions for legislation, from Kington; Loughborough; Kimbolton; and Doncaster; to lie upon the Table.

SINGH, MAGAN.

Petition of Magan Singh, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY.

Petition from Hammersmith, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR.

Petition from Wickham Market, for cessation of farm-burning; to lie upon the Table.

Petition from Leominster, for termination; to lie upon the Table.

VIVISECTION.

Petition from Notting Hill, for prohibition; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

NATIONAL DEBT (SAVINGS BANK AND FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

Annual Account presented, for the period ended 20th November, 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 18.]

NATIONAL DEBT (MILITARY SAVINGS BANKS).

Account presented, of the Gross Amount of all Moneys received and paid by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt on account of the Fund for Military Savings Banks, from 19th September, 1845, to the 5th January, 1901 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 19.]

CIVIL SERVICES AND REVENUE DEPARTMENTS (APPROPRIATION ACCOUNTS).

Appropriation Accounts presented, for the year ending 31st March, 1900, together with the Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, and certain Reports upon Store Accounts [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

[No. 20.]

SARDINIAN LOAN.

Account presented, of the Total Sums issued out of the Consolidated Fund and advanced to His Majesty the King of Sardinia, and of the Sums received to 31st December, 1900, for Interest and Sinking Fund thereof [by Act]; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 21.]

MILK AND CREAM REGULATIONS.

Copy presented, of Minutes of Evidence taken before the Departmental Committee appointed by the Board of Agriculture to inquire and report upon the desirability of Regulations, under Section 4 of The Sale of Food and Drugs Act, 1899, for Milk and Cream, with Appendices and Index [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT.

Copy presented, of Amended Rules made by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, pursuant to the provisions of The Capital Punishment Amendment Act, 1868, for regulating the execution of Capital Sentences [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS (CONDITIONAL LICENCE).

Copy presented, of Licence granted to Mary Fox, a Convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the East End Refuge, Finchley [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

IRISH LAND COMMISSION (PROCEEDINGS).

Copy presented, of Return of Proceedings of the Commission during the month of October, 1900 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Copy presented, of Report of the State of the Finances of the University, made by the University Court, for the year to 31st August 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 22.]

Copy presented, of Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Edinburgh for the year 1899–1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 23.]

PAPERS LAID UPON THE TABLE BY THE CLERK OF THE HOUSE.

1. County Court Act, 1888, and Court of Judicature (Officers) Act, 1879.; Copy of Order made by the Lord Chancellor, dated 29th January, 1901, directing that the Registrar of the County Court of Devonshire, held at Plymouth and East Stone house, shall not practise as a solicitor, and that Section 20 of the Supreme Court of Judicature (Officers).

Act, 1879, shall not apply to the office of Registrar of the said County Court.

2. Building Societies.; Copy of Sixth Annual Report by the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies of the Proceedings of the Registrars under the Building Societies Acts, etc. [by Act]; to be printed. [No. 24.]

NAVAL EXPENDITURE AND MERCANTILE MARINE (GREAT BRITAIN, ETC.)

Return ordered, "showing aggregate Naval Expenditure on Seagoing Force;. Aggregate Revenue; Aggregate Tonnage of Mercantile Marine; Annual Clearances of Shipping in the Foreign Trade; Annual Clearances of Shipping in the Coasting Trade; Annual Value of Imports by Sea, including Bullion and Specie; and Annual Value of Exports by Sea, including Bullion and Specie, of various Countries, exclusive of China and South American Republics, but including British Self-governing Colonies, for the year 1900 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 380, of Session 2, 1900).";(Sir John Colomb.)

TRADE AND NAVIGATION.

Return ordered, "of Accounts relating; to Trade and Navigation of the United Kingdom for each month during the year 1901.;(Mr. Gerald Balfour.)

Return, in part, presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 25.]

ALIEN IMMIGRATION.

Return ordered, "of the number of, Aliens that arrived from the Continent at Ports in the United Kingdom in each month of the year 1901.";(Mr. Gerald Balfour.)

Return, in part, presented accordingly; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 26.]

COAL EXPORTS, ETC.

Return ordered, "giving for the year 1900 the Export of Coal from each Port, in the United Kingdom to each Country Abroad, together with a Summary Statement showing the Export of Coal from the principal districts of the United Kingdom to the principal groups of Foreign Countries; and also showing the quantity of Coal shipped at each Port in the United Kingdom for ships' use on Foreign Voyages during the same period (in continuation of. Parliamentary Paper, No. 125, of Session 1900).";(Mr. D. A. Thomas.)

QUESTIONS.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR;LORD ROBERTS AND "UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER."

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the telegram of 3rd June, 1900, published in Vol. II. South Africa Despatches from Lord Roberts in reply to General Buller, and stating that Lord Roberts's terms with the Transvaal Government are unconditional surrender, whether His Majesty's Government were informed prior to the sending of the telegram by the Commander-in-Chief of General Bidder's views, as expressed by him after his interview with General Botha, that about half the Transvaal forces then in the field were before him, and that he thought they were inclined to give in, and also of the terms mentioned by General Buller to the Boers, which terms were in his opinion suitable for the military situation to secure the surrender of the Boers, or if Lord Roberts acted on his own responsibility in this matter; and if no intimation of General Buller's views was at that time sent to His Majesty's Government, when was such intimation received, and was it taken into consideration.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): No communication was made to Her Majesty's Government, Lord Roberts acting under the general powers given to him. As regards the last paragraph of the question,

I think General Buller's despatch is dated 9th July, and probably, therefore, reached us in August.

POSITION OF SIR A. MILNER AND SIR W. HELY HUTCHINSON.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies what is the present position of Sir Alfred Milner and Sir Walter Hely Hutchinson respectively as regards the Governorship of Cape Colony and the High Commissionership of the two late Dutch Republics.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): Sir Alfred Milner

became Administrator of the Transvaal and of the Orange River Colony on the departure of Lord Roberts from South Africa, and remains Governor of the Cape Colony until Sir W. Hely Hutchinson assumes the Governorship of the Cape-Colony. Sir Alfred Milner will continue to be High Commissioner for South Africa, but his relations as such with the late-Dutch Republics necessarily lapsed with their annexation.

MR. JOHN ELLIS: Can the right hon. Gentleman say when it is likely that Sir W. Hely Hutchinson will assume the Governorship of the Cape Colony?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: No, Sir, I should be sorry to fix a date at this moment.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): When will Sir Alfred Milner proceed to Pretoria?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I cannot give the information at present.

SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTABULARY.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the South African Constabulary were embarked per steamship I "Aurania" on Friday for the front, without arms and uniform, and totally undrilled.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: These 900 men of the South African Constabulary, like other detachments of the force sent from this country, will be attested on their arrival, and will then be provided with arms and uniform, and will be trained under the personal superintendence of Major-General Baden-Powell. A certain number of them have already served in the Army and Militia. These, and all other arrangements in connection with this force, have been made in strict accordance with General Baden-Powell's wishes and requirements.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): What will be the total strength of the Constabulary force when this contingent arrives?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I cannot now state with certainty what the total number will be when this contingent arrives in South Africa, but of course the hon. Member is aware what the strength of the force is to be eventually. I believe that over 2,000 have been attested in this I country.

TYPHOID FEVER AMONG THE SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the number of cases of typhoid fever among the forces in South Africa, and the number of deaths for each of the months of October, November, and December, and also the total number of cases of typhoid fever from the beginning of the war to 31st December last, giving the number of deaths, and the number sent home as invalids.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The figures are approximately as follow; October, 568 cases, 98 deaths; November, 1,213

cases, 207 deaths; December, 1,665 cases, 286 deaths. The total number of Cases from the beginning of the war to December, 1900, is 19,101 and of deaths 4,233. The number of officers and men invalided for enteric fever who have arrived in England from the beginning of the war to December, 1900, is 10,975.

COLONIAL TROOPS IN SOUTH AFRICA ;TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the terms of the original engagements of Brabant's Horse and the other, colonial troops that have taken part in the South African War differed in any, and what, respect, and especially as to the duration of the engagements, from the terms of which the Imperial Yeomanry and the British Volunteers were engaged.

*MR. BRODRICK: The terms of service of the colonial contingents varied considerably, and were different to those of the Imperial Yeomanry and British Volunteers. It is not possible to give the full details in reply to a question. All have been treated according to their engagements.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS: But will the right hon. Gentleman lay on the Table of the House a statement of the different terms?

*MR. BRODRICK: I have made the only statement I can, but if the hon. Member wishes to know the particulars of each engagement I will see what can be done.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS: Is there any difference in the duration of the engagements?

*MR. BRODRICK: I have said that the terms vary.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): Do these people get better pay than the common or garden Tommy Atkins?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

IMPERIAL YEOMANRY.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether untrained men who have not hitherto formed part of the Yeomanry are accepted as Volunteers to the Imperial Yeomanry now proposed to be sent out to the war.

*MR. BRODRICK: All men accepted for the Imperial Yeomanry have to pass the riding and shooting tests previously imposed. They need not necessarily belong to the Yeomanry.

MILITIA RE-EMBODIMENT.

MR. WARNER (Staffordshire, Lichfield): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if it is proposed to re-embody some or all the Militia now not embodied.

MR. BRODRICK: I am not in a position at present to reply to this question.

ROYAL RESERVE REGIMENTS.

MR. WARNER: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if there is any scheme for continuing the existence of the Royal Reserve Regiments; and if he is aware that the delay in letting the men know whether they will be able to re-engage and the terms of re-engagement, is not only causing inconvenience to the men, but losing the services of many men who would otherwise have reengaged.

*MR. BRODRICK: A communication will be addressed to the men forthwith on this subject. An opportunity will be given to the men to re-engage on special terms for garrison duty. Any officer or non-commissioned officer who may not desire to return at once to civil life will be found temporary employment.

PURCHASES OF HOUSES FOR SOUTH AFRICA.

MR. PHILIPPS (Pembrokeshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can inform the House of the number of horses bought for the South African army since the war began, specifying the number bought in Great Britain and the number bought in other countries; what was the average purchase price in each country; and what are the official reports as to the comparative merits of the animals bought in each country.

*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westthoughton): The total number of horses and cobs purchased for South Africa between October, 1899, and 31st January, 1901, was as follows:;Great Britain and Ireland, 35,775 horses; 3,827 cobs. Other countries, 36,314 horses; 35,506 cobs. Of the former about 80 per cent. were sent to South Africa. The English and Irish were considered the best, and the next best were the American and Canadian. It is not considered expedient to state the prices.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will you give me the figures for Ireland and Great Britain separately instead of lumping them together?

*LORD STANLEY: I cannot give them offhand, but will see if I can get them.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he can state the number of troop horses purchased for the purpose of the South African war in Hungary, America, and Ireland respectively between 1st January and 31st December, 1900; and whether any agent was employed by the War Office during that period for the purchase of troop horses in the south of Ireland.

*LORD STANLEY: The figures are as follows:;Hungary, 7,000; America, United States, 21,000; Canada, 3,750; Ireland, 6,178. Of those bought in Ireland about 20 per cent, were for units at home. Colonel Hanford was the agent employed in Ireland during the period referred to, and he bought horses in all parts of the country.

SIR E. ASHMEAD)-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): Can the noble Lord state if in the American figures the horses from the Argentine are included?

*LORD STANLEY: No, these are not included, but I cannot say what numbers came from the Argentine.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: May I ask why preference was given to Hungary and America in view of the fact that Irish horses are the best in the world?

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): Can the noble Lord state what part of the war tax is paid in Hungary and America?

Another NATIONALIST MEMBER: And is it true that when the Irish Members opposed the War Vote an order was given that no more horses should be bought in Ireland?

[No answer was returned.]

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS;LORD ROBERTS AND GENERAL BOTHA.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether he can communicate to the House full details of all communications which passed between Lord Roberts and any of the Boer generals in reference to negotiations for the conclusion of peace, and a full statement of the causes which prevented the proposed meeting between Lord Roberts and General Botha in June last.

*LORD STANLEY: Yes, Sir, I will lay the correspondence to-day. I owe the hon. Gentleman and the House an apology, which I take the first opportunity of tendering. In answer to the honourable Member's question interjected during my speech on Friday, I inadvertently stated that I believed the negotiations were stopped owing to the demand for independence. I find on referring to papers, which I had not at hand, that although Lord Roberts endeavoured to meet General Botha's wishes as to an armistice, the arrangement fell through because the armistice proposed by the Boers was one which on military grounds it was impossible to accept.

ARMY CONTRACTS IN IRELAND.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if his attention has been called to the increasing complaints that the supplies for the troops in Ireland now largely consist of foreign materials, and that the number of local contractors is steadily diminishing; and whether he could furnish the House with any document showing who are the contractors to the Army in Ireland for all purposes and the nature and price of the materials supplied.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: At the same time may I ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he can state the proportion of foreign beef and mutton at present supplied to the troops stationed in Ireland; and whether, in view of the fact that cattle and sheep are produced in abundance in Ireland, and that Irish taxpayers contribute towards the maintenance of the Army, tenders will in future be inclusively for home fed meat.

*LORD STANLEY: I am not aware of any complaints as to supplies of foreign materials to the troops in Ireland, except as regards meat, nor am I aware that local contractors are diminishing in number. When local manufacture exists in Ireland every effort is made to encourage it as far as possible. It would cause much labour to furnish from all stations in Ireland a list of the contractors and their supplies. As regards the meat supply the whole question of supply throughout the United Kingdom is being considered.

MR. FLAVIN: May I ask how many Irish manufactured bicycles have been sent to South Africa?

CAPT. DONELAN: How much do the countries which supply these foreign goods contribute towards the maintenance of the Army?

MR. T. M. HEALY: The noble Lord has referred to the trouble it would involve to give us this information. That is the very reason I want the Return. I want to cause trouble. I wish to ask the noble Lord if he will direct his subordinates to go to the trouble of furnishing the information?

[No answer was returned to any of the questions.]

ARMY BEER CONTRACTS AT THE CURRAGH.

MR. PATRICK WHITE (Meath, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War why the contract for the supply of beer, porter, and stout to the regiments stationed at the Curragh, county Kildare, was not given to an Irish firm; and whether the Government has agreed to pay an English firm a price higher than that quoted by Irish breweries.

*LORD STANLEY: Discretion as to making contracts for the supply of malt liquor to the troops is vested in the General Officers Commanding Districts, who may

either make a district contract or allow commanding officers of units to make their own. There is no regulation under which canteen contracts are bound to be placed locally, and it is a fact that a considerable amount of Irish stout is sold in canteens in England. It is not proposed to question the manner in which the General Officer Commanding has used his discretion.

MR. PATRICK WHITE: Will the noble Lord answer the latter portion of the question?

*LORD STANLEY: I think I have. We do not propose to question the discretion of the commanding officer.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: Does the Irish beer supplied to soldiers contain no poison, and is that the reason you send for English beer?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MARRIED SOLDIERS' SEPARATION ALLOWANCES.

MR. PIRIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he will take into consideration the case of married soldiers serving in South Africa whose first period of enlistment had come to an end and whose discharge and admission into the Reserve would have taken place but for the war, with a view to granting separation allowance for their wives on the scale of that provided for the Reservists; and whether he is aware that there are many cases in which discharge had actually been sanctioned and yet stopped at the last moment, the hardship being great owing to many such men having married without leave in view of their then anticipated approaching discharge into the Reserve.

*LORD STANLEY: In cases where a soldier married without leave would have become a Reservist but for the war, it will be considered whether separation allowance can be issued by the Government. Every case must be dealt with on its merits.

SUNDAY PUBLICATION OF TELEGRAMS FROM THE SEAT OF WAR.

MR. POWER (Waterford, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, for what reason the Government have ceased to publish telegrams on Sundays at post offices giving information from South Africa, and to ask if they intend resuming the practice of publishing such telegrams during the continuance of the war.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): The Postmaster General was informed by the Secretary of State for War in October last that in view of the alteration in the position of affairs in South Africa, he considered that the practice of telegraphing information for exhibition in post offices on Sundays might reasonably be discontinued, and the Postmaster General has no knowledge of any intention to resume the practice.

MR. POWER: Did the military authorities cease the publication of the telegrams at the time the war was declared to be over?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: They ceased to publish them in October last.

ARMY VETERINARY DEPARTMENT.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is now in a position to state the decision arrived at with reference to the abolition of the prefix to the titles of the officers of the Army Veterinary Department.

*MR. BRODRICK: As the hon. Member has been informed on a previous occasion, it has been decided to await the conclusion of the war before making any changes that may be deemed necessary for this Department.

EASTER TRAININGS FOR VOLUNTEERS.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if, having regard to the order issued last week that no camp allowances will be granted as heretofore for the Easter training of Volunteers, he will cause to be notified without delay the regulations it is proposed to substitute, in order that regiments and individuals may make arrangements without delay for conforming thereto as far as practicable.

*MR. BRODRICK: The military authorities do not consider that the advantage gained by the short Easter training of Volunteers is sufficient to justify the issue of camp allowances. The general scheme of camp arrangements for the year is being carefully considered, and every effort will be made to issue regulations as early as possible.

DUBLIN ROYAL BARRACKS CONTRACT; REDDY'S CLAIM FOR COMPENSATION.

*MR. NANNETTI (Dublin, College Green): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been directed to the report of an action taken against a War Department contractor named Broderick, before the Recorder of Dublin, by a labourer named Reddy for damages under the Workmen's Compensation Act for injuries received while employed in the execution of contract work at the Royal Barracks; whether he is aware that Roddy swore at the trial that he was a labourer employed by Broderick to do plastering work at 18s. per week, while Broderick swore that his contract was for painting only; whether the employment of labourers at 18s. per week either on plastering or painting contracts for the War Department is in accordance with the terms of the Fair Wages Resolution of February, 1891; and whether he is aware that repeated complaints against this contractor have been made to the War Office within the past six months by the Amalgamated Painters' Society at Dublin with unsatisfactory results; and whether, in view of the fact that Broderick has secured the painting contracts for other military barracks in Ireland, the Department will undertake that these contracts shall be cancelled in the event of Broderick continuing to evade the terms of the Fair Wages Resolution.

*LORD STANLEY: The answer to the first and second paragraphs of the hon. Member's question is in the affirmative. The General Officer Commanding has been directed to make inquiries into the matter. War Department contracts require payment by the contractor of the wages current in the district. The position taken by this contractor in answer to the complaints referred to by the hon. Member has been that he has paid the full union rate of 8d. an hour to his painters, and a less rate to improvers, boys and lime-whiters. As regards the work which he is carrying out at other stations in Ireland, it has been ascertained by the General Officer Commanding that he is paying the men employed the usual rates current in the district.

*MR. NANNETTI asked a further question as to the number of improvers employed by this contractor.

*LORD STANLEY: I must ask for notice.

BELLEVILLE BOILERS.

MR. CHARLES WILSON (Hull, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether the Admiralty have recently given orders that four of His Majesty's vessels; viz., the "Encounter," the "Cornwall," the "Queen," and the "Prince of Wales," should be fitted with the Belleville water-tube boilers; and, if so, why this has been done pending the Report of the Committee of experts now inquiring into the matter, and when it is expected that such Report will be made.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The Admiralty policy in the matter of boilers was described in the Memorandum on Water - tube Boilers which was presented to Parliament, and in accordance with that policy the four ships named in the question were ordered to be fitted with the Belleville boiler; but in the event of the Report of the Committee indicating the necessity of a change in the type of boiler this decision will be reviewed in all cases where it may be found practicable. The "Challenger," the sister ship to the "Encounter," is being fitted with Babcock and Wilcox boilers for comparison with the Belleville boilers in the latter ship. Babcock and Wilcox boilers are also being fitted in the "Espiegle" and "Odin," and Niclausse boilers in the "Suffolk," sister ship to the "Cornwall," and in the "Merlin," for comparison with other ships of the same classes fitted with the Belleville boiler. The Committee have been requested to make an interim Report on any of the points referred to them, as soon as they have collected sufficient evidence or experimental proof to enable them to form a reliable opinion.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY (Yorkshire, Shipley): May I ask whether the Admiralty will request the Committee to make a trial of one of His Majesty's ships fitted with water-tube boilers for a whole ocean voyage; say, across the Atlantic; before they make their Report.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I cannot say what instructions have been given to the Committee on that point. I have no doubt whatever that a trial of ships under these conditions will be made, but I cannot give particulars as to the extent, or duration of the voyage.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY: But cannot the Admiralty request that an ocean voyage be made at full speed?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; That does not arise out of the question.

SIR FORTESCUE FLANNERY: I will put a question on the subject on Thursday.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Can the hon. Gentleman say when the order was given to fit these ships with Belleville boilers; by the late or present Board of Admiralty?

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The orders; were given in the ordinary routine when the orders for the ships were given.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Were some of them given by the late and some by the present Board?

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: Yes, Sir.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: Were any of the orders placed in Belfast, and if not, why not?

[No answer was returned.]

INDIAN FAMINE RELIEF.

MR. CAINE (Cornwall, Camborne): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he can give the total number of persons in receipt of famine relief in India.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): The number of persons in receipt of famine relief in India last week was 214,000, of whom 179,000 were in British districts and 35,000 in Native States.

EFFECTIVE STRENGTH OF MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT IN INDIA.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he can state what was the effective strength of noncommissioned officers and men of the British forces in India on 1st January, 1896; 1st January, 1897; 1st January, 1898; 1st January, 1899; 1st January, 1900; and 1st January, 1901.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The effective strength of non-commissioned officers and men of the British forces in India on the 1st January in each year from 1896 to 1901 was as follows: 1st January, 1896, 70,615; 1897, 70,400; 1898, 67,808; 1899, 68,578; 1900, 64,213; 1901, 58,702.

CAPTAIN NORTON: How many of the men now serving in India are serving beyond their terms of engagement?

LORD G. HAMILTON was understood to reply: A very considerable number; probably about 12,000.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he can state what was the strength in non-commissioned officers and men of the forces on the Indian establishment in India, British and native respectively, on 1st January, 1901.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The strength in non-commissioned officers and men of the forces on the Indian establishment in India on 1st January, 1901, was: British, 58,702; native, 127,666.

TROOPS EMPLOYED BEYOND THE FRONTIERS.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will state what number of British and native troops of the Indian Army are now being employed beyond the frontiers of India; and if he will lay upon the Table of the House a Return giving full particulars of such employment.

LORD G. HAMILTON: There are of the Indian establishment about 5,200 British troops in South Africa; about 300 British and about 16,300 native troops in China (including Hong Kong); about 1,500 native troops in the Mauritius; about 800 native troops in Singapore; about 2,100 British troops and about 800 natives in Ceylon; and about 600 native troops in Jubaland; making a total of 7,600 British troops and 20,000 native troops. I have no objection to a Return, but I do not think that it would add anything material to the information which I have given.

IMPERIAL GRANT IN AID OF INDIA OFFICE CHARGES.

MR. CAINE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he has yet considered the unanimous recommendation of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, as contained in Clause 364 of the Report, that a grant of £50,000 should be made by the Imperial Government in aid of the charge for the India Office; and, if so, how he proposes to deal with it.

LORD G. HAMILTON: The correspondence on the subject of the measures to be taken for the relief of Indian revenues, in consequence of the Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, has been laid before Parliament. It shows that the matter has been fully considered, and that His Majesty's Government have accepted in their entirety the recommendations of the Commission so far as the amount of relief to be received by India is concerned. As regards the heads under which that relief is given, they have in the main accepted the recommendations of the Commissioners, but on some points they have made other arrangements which appeared to be more convenient for administrative purposes. They do not propose to increase the total amount of relief which has been already agreed to, and which, as I have said, is the amount recommended by the Commission.

MR. CAINE: Did not the Commission recommend a grant in all of £;293,000, and have you not allotted less?

LORD G. HAMILTON: I am afraid they made an arithmetical mistake by substituting tens of rupees for pounds sterling. We have given actually about, £;4,000 more than they recommended.

MR. CAINE: But this particular £;50,000 has not been dealt with.

LORD G. HAMILTON: No, Sir.

MR. CAINE: And is the reason for not dealing with it the desire that it shall not appear on the yearly Estimates?

LORD G. HAMILTON: That is rather a matter of argument. The Commission suggested as an alternative that it should be put on the Consolidated Fund, in which case a discussion on it would be impossible.

PATAGONIA.

*MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the report of the Rev. D. Richards, chaplain of H.M.S. "Flora," on the condition of Welshmen in Patagonia has been received; whether it confirms the complaint of Mr. John Morley that his flocks and herds are being decimated by a gang of cattle thieves, who are in league with the police authorities and are favoured by Pedro P. Martinez, the chief of police; and whether Mr. Richards' report will be made public.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Viscount CRANBORNE, Rochester): The report of the chaplain of His Majesty's ship "Flora" has not been received in the Department. A report from the commander of that vessel on his visit to Chubut in June last was communicated by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and has already been laid before Parliament (by the Secretary of State for the Colonies), but no mention is made therein of Mr. Morley's case. A complaint from Mr. Morley himself has however been received from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Ayres, who has already made representations to the Argentine Government on the subject. These representations have, it appears, been well received. The exact result is not yet known, but Mr. Morley has acknowledged the steps taken on his behalf as valuable and efficacious.

BRITISH CONSULAR REPRESENTATION IN RUSSIA.

MR. NORMAN (Wolverhampton, S.): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether His

Majesty's Government has taken any steps, in view of the appointment of a Russian consul general to Bombay, to secure British consular representation at any point in the Russian Empire east of Batoum.

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: The Russian Government agreed in 1892 to the extension of the authority of the British Consul at Batoum to the Governments of Baku, Elizabetpol, Erivan, Tiflis, Kutais, and Tchernomoria, and it is understood that no objection would be raised by them to the appointment of a consular officer to reside at Tiflis should His Majesty's Government at any time find it desirable to make such an appointment. A British vice-consul has been appointed at Baku.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): Is it intended to appoint a consular officer for Tiflis?

VISCOUNT CRANBORNE asked for notice.

LEAD POISONING IN THE POTTERIES.

SIR CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to the fact that the official figures of cases of lead poisoning in the Potteries for 1900 show but slight diminution from those of 1899, and that in the months of April, July, August, October, and December the figures exceed those for the corresponding months of the previous year; and whether, in view of the failure of the Special Rules of 1898 to put a stop to lead poisoning, he is prepared to issue as special rules the whole of the recommendations which were contained in a Home Office circular to manufacturers dated 14th December 1899, and again submitted to them as proposed special rules in August 1900.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): I am aware that in the months of July, August, October, and December, 1900 (but not in April or in any other month), the reported cases of plumbism in the industry of china and earthenware making were more numerous than in the corresponding months of 1899, the totals being 71 and 50 respectively. But the net result for the year as a whole was a reduction from 249 in 1899 to 200 in 1900, and this

has followed upon a previous large reduction between 1898 and 1899. In answer to the second paragraph of the question I think the right hon. Baronet and the House may like to hear in some detail what is the present position of the matter. I have a few days ago formally proposed a set of new rules to the manufacturers following in the main the draft issued in August last but containing certain amendments which appeared to me necessary and reasonable. I might have proposed the rules in this form some time ago, but I have been in negotiation with the representatives of the manufacturers in hope of arriving at a settlement and avoiding arbitration, and I have found them ready to accept with a few slight modifications most of my proposals. On the proposed "standard of insolubility," however, a serious difference of opinion arose between the Government chemist and the manufacturers' expert advisers, and I have come to the conclusion that this difference I should be settled by arbitration. There are also points on which I am anxious that the workpeople should have an opportunity of stating their views before they are finally settled, and these will be dealt with on the arbitration, at which the workpeople are entitled to be represented.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: Arising out of the answer I should like to ask two questions; namely, whether the figures just given tally with those printed from month to month in the Labour Gazette; also whether the arbitration is to be on the rules as they were formerly or on the rules modified.

MR. RITCHIE: The rules have been referred to the arbitrator as they originally were, because this would give the workmen an opportunity of expressing their views before the arbitrator goes into the modification which the Home Office might think fit to suggest. I am not aware what the figures in the Labour Gazette are, but I will inquire and let the right hon. baronet know if there is any difference, and, if so, why.

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-on-Trent): Has there not been a diminution in the number of cases of lead poisoning reported, and have not those reported been less serious than formerly?

MR. RITCHIE: I believe that, generally, there has been a yearly reduction, but I cannot say to what extent without notice.

In answer to a query by another hon. Member, Mr. RITCHIE said that if only the modified rules had been referred to the arbitration it would have been impossible to hear the workmen on other points, and he therefore thought it better to let the whole thing go before the arbitrator and give the men an opportunity of expressing their views on any amendments which might be suggested by the manufacturers.

CARMARTHEN PRISON.

MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether any changes are contemplated in the arrangement of His Majesty's Prison, Carmarthen; and, if so, whether he will state the nature of the proposed changes and the reasons for them.

MR. RITCHIE: The answer is in the negative.

STATE INEBRIATE REFORMATORIES.

MR. HENRY HOBHOUSE (Somersetshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he has received various representations from county authorities urging the establishment of a State inebriate reformatory; and whether he is now prepared to make any statement on the subject.

MR. RITCHIE: Yes, Sir; I have received numerous representations such as my hon. friend suggests, and I am myself anxious that a State inebriate reformatory should be established. I am now in communication with the Treasury on the subject.

RAILWAYS (PREVENTION OF ACCIDENTS) ACT, 1900; RULES.

*MR. BELL (Derby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade what action, if any, he has taken to give effect to the Railways (Prevention of Accidents) Act, 1900, by making rules or orders to enforce compliance with the twelve clauses contained in the Schedule of the Act.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): Steps are being taken

to prepare and make rules under Section 1, Sub-section 1 of the Act referred to, and, in the meantime, I understand that the leading railway companies are themselves taking steps to minimise the effect of the dangerous operations

described in the Schedule.

AUTOMATIC COUPLINGS ON RAILWAYS.

*MR. BELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if he proposes to take any steps for the substitution of automatic or other couplings in the place of the present method of coupling goods and mineral vehicles on railways under the power conferred upon the Board of Trade in the Railways (Prevention of Accidents) Act, 1900.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am not in a position to make any statement on this question at present. It has not been lost sight of.

CHELSEA ELECTRIC SUPPLY COMPANY.

MR. STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Chelsea Electricity Supply Company are trying to force users of electricity at 100 volts to take 200 volts current by giving a preferential rate to users of 200 volts; and whether the giving of preferential rates by the company is within their power without the authority of the Board.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed that the Chelsea Electricity Supply Company, Limited, desire to change their standard pressure from 100 volts to 200 volts, and that, in order to induce consumers to take the higher pressure, they have given notice that after the 1st of July next consumers taking a supply at the lower pressure will be charged a rate higher than that to be charged for supply at the higher pressure. The higher rate is within the maximum price fixed by the Provisional Order, but whether the company are entitled to charge different rates to consumers supplied at different pressures is a legal question on which I am not prepared to express an opinion. I have no power to give or refuse sanction to the proposed charge.

SINKING OF A DREDGER IN CORK HARBOUR.

CAPTAIN DOTNTELAN: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that a dredger bound to Japan from an English port capsized at the entrance to Cork Harbour in December last with the loss of all hands; and whether this craft was inspected and pronounced seaworthy; and, if so, by whom was this duty performed.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Yes, Sir; I am aware that the dredger referred to in the question was lost in heavy weather in December last, and I regret to say that twelve out of a crew of seventeen were lost. Before the vessel left port she was inspected by two Board of Trade surveyors, who saw no reason to object in any way to her construction or equipment. I am informed that she was also surveyed by one of the chief surveyors to Bureau Veritas, who reported her to be in a "completely seaworthy condition."

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Has a craft of this description ever before attempted to undertake such a long voyage?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am unable to say.

PREFERENTIAL RAILWAY RATES FOR FOREIGN FRUIT.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the railway rate for foreign fruit from Dover to London is 1s. 8d. per ton, whilst English fruit from Dover to London cost 12s 3d. per ton, and that the Railway and Shipping Conference average through rates

to Ireland upon the same system; whether the Board of Trade consider such an arrangement to constitute a preferential rate in favour of the foreign importer; and whether an inquiry will be made respecting the schedule of through rates, and a comparison instituted as to the mileage rate charged for the carriage of native produce throughout the United Kingdom.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir; I have no information which would justify me in accepting as correct the figures set out in the question of the hon. Member. The Board of Trade are always prepared to investigate any specific complaint under Section 31 of the Railway and Canal Traffic Act, 1888.

MR. FIELD: But will not the right hon. Gentleman seek information as to the specific complaint contained in my question?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I have asked the hon. Member to name specific cases. My present information is that his figures are not correct.

MR. FIELD: Will you answer the last paragraph of my question?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: There is no intention of making such an inquiry.

TRANSPORT OF LIVE STOCK FROM IRELAND TO GREAT BRITAIN.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the consignors of live stock from Ireland to Great Britain are compelled by the carrying companies to sign through consignment notes, which relieve the companies from the conditions of the Carriers Act; and whether he will cause inquiry to be made into this matter, with a view to safeguard the humane transit and speedy delivery of live stock from Ireland to Great Britain.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir, I am not aware that carrying companies in Ireland compel, or have any power to compel, consignors of live or any other stock to sign through consignment notes relieving the companies of liability; and I do not think any inquiry into the question of consignment notes necessary.

MR. FIELD: If evidence is produced to prove the facts stated in the question, will the right hon. Gentleman take steps in regard to the matter?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Any evidence produced to show the necessity for further steps will be duly considered.

ARSENICAL BEER POISONING.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether two more deaths from arsenical beer poisoning occurred in Crumpsall workhouse hospital quite recently.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): Two deaths from

arsenical poisoning occurred in the Crumpsall workhouse infirmary last week, and inquests were held on them on Friday. The cases were admitted to the infirmary on the 4th of December and the 18th of January respectively, but the medical officer of the infirmary reports that in each case the illness had been of several months duration.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Have any cases of poisoning been traced to the consumption of Irish beer?

[No answer was returned.]

QUEEN VICTORIA'S FUNERAL-FACILITIES FOR THE FOREIGN PRESS.

MR. WILLIAM ALLAN (Gateshead): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he

will explain why the facilities which were granted by the Admiralty to the fully accredited representatives of the foreign press to view the funeral obsequies of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria were refused by the military authorities on the passage of the cortege through London and at the service in St. George's Chapel, Windsor.

*LORD STANLEY: All representatives of the press who applied were informed by the General Officer Commanding the Home District that as the issue of passes was in the hands of the Commissioners of the Metropolitan Police, the applications should be addressed to them. No written application was received from any foreign press representatives. In regard to the service in St. George's Chapel the issue of permits was solely in the hands of the Court officials, to whom all applicants would be referred.

CROFTERS IN THE ISLAND OF BARRA.

MR. JOHN DEWAR (Inverness): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Secretary for Scotland has yet been able to come to a satisfactory arrangement with Lady Gordon Cathcart to provide land for the crofters and cottars in the island of Barra; and whether the report by Mr. M'Intyre, of the Crofters' Commission on the subject will be published.

*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): No arrangement has been concluded, but negotiations for the purchase of a portion of the island of Barra are in progress. If they are successful an announcement will be made so far as circumstances admit. It is not proposed to publish the report referred to.

SCOTTISH PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE

MR. RENSHAW (Renfrewshire, W.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, in the case of Provisional Orders applied for under the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which, in consequence of the decision of the Chairmen, will now be proceeded with as private Bills, it will be competent for county councils to petition in the usual way under the General Standing Orders applicable to private Bills before Parliament, as these county councils will not now have the opportunity of making a report, under Section 11 (3), which was the alternative method of procedure provided under the Act of 1899.

*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: I understand it will be competent to petition against those Bills in the usual way in terms of Standing Order 210.

MOVILLE PETTY SESSIONS BENCH.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the population of the Moville Petty Sessions, county Donegal, is three-fourths Roman Catholic, and if he will state the number of Roman Catholic magistrates in the petty sessions district and the number of non-Roman Catholic magistrates in said district, and if the Government will take steps to have the number of Roman Catholic magistrates increased in proportion to the number of Roman Catholics in said district.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): I have no means of verifying the statement in the first part of the question, but I have no reason to doubt its accuracy. Of the fourteen magistrates who attended the petty sessions one or more times during the past year, ten appear to be Protestants

and four Roman Catholics. Applications and recommendations for the Commission of the Peace are made to the Lieutenant of county, who transmits them, if he thinks them suitable, for the consideration of the Lord Chancellor.

RATING OF RAILWAYS AND LANDS IN IRELAND.

MR. CAREW (Meath, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been directed to the fact that complaints have been made by various local authorities in Ireland regarding the law by which rates leviable off railways and other lands are on only one-fourth of their net annual value; and whether he will consider the expediency of amending the law so as to make the liability of such property to rates similar to that of all real property in Ireland.

MR. WYNDHAM: Both in England and Ireland rates in urban districts on railways and certain lands are assessed on a proportion of their net annual value, save where exceptions are made by local Acts. In England this proportion is one-third, and in Ireland one-fourth. Complaints have been made in the matter by local authorities in Ireland, but the question is obviously of far-reaching importance, and there is much to be said on both sides. Any proposal to amend the law would, meet with strong opposition, and I cannot undertake to introduce legislation as suggested.

SUPPRESSED LEAGUE MEETING AT FOXFORD.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he can state how many police were brought into Foxford on the 1st January, 1901, and what was the total cost of police operations in connection with the suppression of the meeting announced to be held in Foxford on that day.

MR. WYNDHAM: The police force brought into Foxford on the occasion mentioned consisted of seven officers and 204 men. The expenses of this concentration amounted to £159, of which a sum of £5 will be charged to the local rates.

CASE OF LEWIS LOWRISON.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether a petition has been received in favour of the reduction of the sentence of six months' imprisonment, passed by the petty sessions on

Lewis Lowrison; whether he is aware that county court Judge Curran described this sentence as a savage sentence, and expressed his willingness to reduce it if, on appeal, a reduction were asked for; and whether, considering the offence, if technically an offence at all, was a trivial one, accused will now be liberated.

MR. WYNDHAM: I am unable to say whether this county court judge used the language attributed to him, but in any case, he confirmed the sentence on appeal. A memorial on behalf of the prisoner was received on Thursday last and is now under the consideration of the Lord Lieutenant, whose decision will be communicated in due course.

NEWMARKET (CORK) PETTY SESSIONS COURT.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether his attention has been called to proceedings before the petty session court at New market (county Cork) on 12th October last; will he state on what

grounds was a large number of police drafted into the town for the occasion; and from what source will the costs of this extra force be defrayed; and whether, in view of the peaceable condition of the locality, the constabulary authorities authorised the introduction of a large force of armed police.

MR. WYNDHAM: The authorities responsible for the peace of the district assembled a force of police for the preservation of order on the occasion. The police present were supplied from within the county, and consequently there will be no charge to local rates for their services.

CORK POLICE AT THE CITY ELECTION.

MR. FLYNN: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Deputy Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary applied for and received from the Cork Borough Council a sum of £;137 for extra constabulary employed during the recent city election; will he explain why, although this election was carried out in the most peaceable and orderly manner, the extra police were drafted into the city; also, why the Cork Corporation were not consulted with regard to bringing them in.

MR. WYNDHAM: The amount claimed from and paid by the Cork Borough Council in respect of the extra constabulary employed on the occasion referred to was £;68 18s. 6d. The election involved considerable local excitement, and it became necessary to augment the ordinary force of the city, which is not adequate to discharge abnormal duties on occasions of this kind. It has not been the practice to consult the Corporation in such matters. I may remind the hon. Member that the ordinary police work of Cork is performed entirely free to local rates.

MR. FLYNN: Who fixes the rates? Have the local authorities no right of appeal?

MR. WYNDHAM was understood to reply that the Constabulary authorities usually increased the force in times of excitement without consulting the local authorities, as they were responsible for the maintenance of order.

*MR. O'DOHERTY inquired how it happened to be the fact that Londonderry and Belfast alone, of all the other Irish cities, had to contribute towards maintenance of the ordinary police force, but the Speaker ruled it out of order.

THE RECENT "DAY OF GENERAL, MOURNING"; POLICE AND SHOPKEEPERS IN COUNTY WICK

MR. JAMES O'CONNOR (Wicklow W.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the traders of Carnew, county Wicklow, were compelled by an order of the police to keep their shops closed on Saturday, 2nd February; and, if so, upon whose authority did the police issue the order; and whether he is aware that the shopkeepers of adjoining towns, such as Shillelagh and Newtownbarry, were permitted to carry on their business on the day named without any interference on the part of the local police.

MR. WYNDHAM: The police at Carnew, as well as in the other towns mentioned, merely directed public attention to the Proclamation, and in no way interfered with the closing or opening of shops. At Carnew the traders closed, whereas in the other two places the shops remained open.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in Ireland directions by the police have to be looked upon as commands? Will he direct them to mind their own business in the future?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!
THE PORT OF DUBLIN.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Government will consider the advisability of recommending the appointment of a Viceregal Commission to consider the conditions and circumstances connected with the port of Dublin and to report thereon, with a view to legislation next session.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Port and Docks Board is, I believe, controlled by an Act passed so recently as in 1898. The expediency of appointing a Viceregal Commission at this stage in the Board's existence seems questionable. I will, however, look farther into the matter.

LONGFORD UNION NIGHT NURSE.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he will state the grounds upon which the Local Government Board have declined to sanction the appointment of a night nurse in Longford Union, although she had been pronounced fully qualified by training in the Union Infirmary under the personal supervision of the late Dr. Cochrane, F.R.C.S.I.; whether the Board did on a previous occasion agree to her appointment to same office, but Dr. Cochrane would not then agree; and whether the matter will now be dealt with and closed by her appointment.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Local Government Board declined to sanction the appointment of Miss Brown as night nurse in the workhouse infirmary on the ground that she did not possess the requisite qualifications for the office. The late Dr. Cochrane reported favourably on her in the capacity of wardmaid, but she has not undergone a proper course of training in a fully equipped hospital. There is no foundation for the statement in the second paragraph. The Board feel that for night-work the services of a fully qualified nurse are indispensable.

LABOURERS' COTTAGES IN THE BOYLE UNION.

MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can state when the Local Government Board propose to issue to the credit of the Boyle Board of Guardians the sum of £;252 13s. 3d., standing to their credit under the grant of £;40,000 voted by Parliament in 1890, seeing that the Union are now building 37 cottages under the Labourers Acts.

MR. WYNDHAM: Steps are now being taken with a view to the distribution of the unexpended balance of the grant in question, and the Boyle Guardians will receive the share to which they may be entitled under the regulations. I do not anticipate any great delay.

GRANTS-IN-AID IN IRELAND.

Mr. TULLY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Local Government Board and other responsible authorities will take steps to inform district councils and boards of guardians as to the various grants which they forward to county councils, and are placed to the credit of these district councils and unions; and whether, in future, notification will be sent to the district councils and unions when grants are forwarded to county councils.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Board will be happy to supply this information each year to any district council or board of guardians who may apply to them for it, but as these bodies have direct financial relations with the county councils they can obtain the information from the secretaries of these councils, and many of them, no doubt, would prefer to do so.

COMMISSION ON IRISH LOCAL TAXATION.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Report of the Commission on Irish Local Taxation has been printed; and whether he can state when it will be published.

MR. WYNDHAM: The hon. Member presumably refers to the Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation generally. My right hon. friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department stated last Friday that it was impossible to fix a date for the publication of the Report, which is now under consideration.

ST. MEL CATHEDRAL

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he will furnish a copy of the correspondence between the Board of Works and the Church representative body on the subject of the preservation of the ruins of the ancient Cathedral Church of St. Mel, at Ardagh, county Longford.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: I think the hon. Member is under a misapprehension. There is no correspondence on this matter.

SUNDAY POSTAL DELIVERY AT COOLARTY.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether any complaints have reached his Department as to the failure to supply a Sunday delivery of letters from Edge worthstown to Coolarty viâ Lisryan; and whether such service will now be given; and also whether a collection box will be erected at Spring park for the purpose of facilitating the families resident in the vicinity to avail themselves of the services of the rural carrier.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: No complaint appears to have been received respecting the failure of the Post Office to provide a delivery of letters on Sundays at Coolarty, but inquiry shall be made whether it is practicable to afford the desired delivery, and also a wall letter box at Springpark, and the result shall be communicated to the hon. Member.

MOHILL AND FARNAUGHT POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. TULLY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the attention of the Post Office authorities has been directed to the inconvenience caused to the residents in the district between Mohill and Farnaught, in South Leitrim, owing to the postman who makes the house to house delivery not remaining in Farnaught sufficiently long each evening to enable residents to despatch replies on the same day to letters which they receive; and will he state what steps will be taken to remedy this inconvenience.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The Postmaster General has received no representation that inconvenience is caused to residents at Mohill and Farnaught under the

present postal arrangements; but inquiry shall be made with the view to ascertain if an improvement is warranted.

THE ROYAL DECLARATION AGAINST ROMAN CATHOLICISM.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) had on the Paper the following question: To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether His Majesty's Government intend to take any steps to eliminate from His Majesty's Coronation Oath that portion which describes the religion of His Majesty's Catholic subjects as idolatrous and superstitious. In putting the question the hon. Member said the Oath referred to was not the Coronation Oath, but the Oath taken by His Majesty in opening Parliament.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, Sir, the hon. Gentleman is quite right. It is not an oath, but a statement, and the statement was made on the opening of Parliament, and will, of course, not have to be repeated at the coronation.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether the statement to which he refers was not, as a matter of fact, in the nature of an oath?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I thought it was more properly described as a statement ;a statutory declaration.*

* By the Statute I William & Mary, Session 2, cap. 2 ("For declaring the Rights and Liberties of the Subject and settling the Succession of the Crown") it was in section 10 enacted that the Monarch should "on the first day of the meeting of the first Parliament next after his or her coming to the Throne…make subscribe and audibly repeat the: Declaration mentioned in the Statute made in the thirtieth year of the reign of Charles II., intituled 'An Act for the more effectual preserving the King's person and Government, by disabling papists from sitting in either House of Parliament.'" The last mentioned Act clearly distinguishes "Oath" and "Declaration." By Section 2, Peers and Members of the House of Commons are to "take the several Oaths of Allegiance and

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: May I ask the right hon. Gentleman whether it is not true that in making this statement His Majesty kissed the Bible and actually took an oath; and, further, I would ask him whether any steps are to be taken to secure that in future this Oath shall not be taken by His Majesty?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am no particular admirer of the form of words used in the Declaration. But the hon. Gentleman will see that the practical question is passed, and it will not arise again, we hope, for many long years to come.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: The question is not whether it is a practical question. Is it not true that millions of His Majesty's subjects in every part of the Empire regard this Oath as wantonly insulting?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope that is not the case.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Arising out of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman, I beg respectfully to point out that as long as this Oath is in existence and His Majesty swears that Catholics are idolatrous, I for one will oppose His Majesty's salary.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: Is it proposed to continue to pay out of public Supremacy," "and make subscribe and audibly repeat this Declaration following: ' I do solemnly and sincerely in the presence of God profess testify and declare

that I do believe that in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper there is not any transubstantiation of the elements of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ at or after the consecration thereof by any person whatsoever; and that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint and the sacrifice of the mass as they are now used in the Church of Rome are superstitious and idolatrous, and I do solemnly in the presence of God profess testify and declare that I do make this declaration and every part thereof in the plain and ordinary sense of the words read unto me, as they are commonly understood by English Protestants, without any evasion, equivocation or mental reservation whatsoever, and without any dispensation already granted me for this purpose by the Pope or any other authority or person whatsoever, or without any hope of any such dispensation from any person or authority whatsoever, or without thinking that I am or can be acquitted before God or man or absolved of this declaration or any part thereof although the Pope or any other person or persons or power whatsoever should dispense with or annul the same, or declare that it was null or void from the beginning."";ED.]

funds the ministers of the Catholic Church to act as chaplains;

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; That has nothing to do with the question.

MR. FLAVIN: Does the Declaration mean that the Catholics of the United Kingdom;

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; The hon. Gentleman is absolutely irregular. He is asking what a Declaration means. That is a question of law or opinion.

MR. FLAVIN: I was asking a question arising out of the answer of the right hon. Gentleman.

*MR. SPEAKER: I have endeavoured to explain to the hon. Gentleman that it is out of order.

MR. FLAVIN: As a matter of fact, I did not ask any question at all.

CHINA AND THE ALLIED POWERS; SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Ministers of the Allied Powers in Peking are pressing that four high officials of the Chinese Government should be ordered to commit suicide.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: No. The action of the Powers is confined to urging upon the Chinese Government the imposition of the death penalty in the case of certain officials chiefly responsible for the recent outrages.

MR. DILLON: Have the Ministers intimated to the Chinese Government that they will accept suicide as a substitute for the death penalty?

[No answer was given.]

MR. DILLON: Will the noble Lord not deign to give me an answer?

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: As the hon. Gentleman is aware, my right hon. friend the Leader of the House has already stated that there is an understanding that the Under Secretary shall not answer supplementary questions.

MR. DILLON: I should like to ask you, Mr. Speaker, a question of privilege. I wish to ask whether it is not a breach of the privileges of this House for the Leader of the House to forbid a Minister to reply to the question of an hon. Member?

*MR. SPEAKER: It is a matter for the Minister who is asked the question to answer it or decline to answer it on public grounds, as he thinks fit. What

those public grounds are, whether they are sufficient or not, must be a question for him and the other members of the Ministry.

MR. DILLON: That, Sir, is not the question I desire to put to you, but whether it is not a matter for the discretion of the Minister himself; whether it is in accordance with the practices and privileges of this House for any one Minister to forbid another Minister to answer the question of an hon. Member of the House instead of leaving it to the discretion of the Minister himself.

*MR. SPEAKER: That is not a matter for me to decide. I cannot say that it is a breach of the privileges of the House. If the House chooses to pass a resolution condemning such a practice, that is a matter for the House. If the head of a Department or the Leader of the House says that it is not in the public interest that such a course should be taken it is not a matter that the Speaker can deal with. It is a matter for the House.

MR. DILLON: May I ask whether I shall be at liberty to raise a question of privilege now or immediately after questions?

*MR. SPEAKER: It is not a question of privilege.

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-on-Trent): May I ask whether it has not been the custom in this House for a Minister to answer a question fully when it has been properly brought before him?

*MR. SPEAKER: Certainly not, if the Minister says he declines on grounds which are always assumed to be, unless the contrary is stated, the grounds of public convenience.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): May I ask whether we are to understand from your ruling just given that in each case of a question put to a Minister, the Minister, if he declines to answer, is bound to state that he declines to answer that specific question on grounds of public policy?

*MR. SPEAKER: I certainly should not feel myself bound to call on him to state that in answer to each particular question, if a general statement had been already made.

MR. DILLON: Arising out of your last answer, Mr. Speaker, what I complained of was that the Minister on this occasion did not refuse to answer me on any public grounds. He refused to answer me on the specific ground that the First Lord of the Treasury had laid it down as a principle that the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs was not to reply to supplementary questions. I desire, with your permission, to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether that dictum would apply to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, if we were blessed with such an institution as that in this House?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; This matter cannot be carried on by debate in form of question and answer across the floor of the House. If the hon. Member has reason to complain of the action of the Government he must take the usual course.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: May I ask if this trouble has not arisen because the Government is too largely dominated by one family?

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I would ask you whether until very recently; until, I think, in the case of the right hon. Gentleman who is now Secretary for War; when an intimation was made that a change should be made in

the practice of this House, it has not always been understood that when a great Department of the State like the Department for Foreign Affairs is not represented in this House by the principal and head of that Department, but by a subordinate member of that Department, that subordinate member, who is the only representative in this House of that Department, is bound to act in the same manner and answer questions in the same manner as if he were the principal and head of that Department, and that that is the only security for this House having that information to which it would be entitled if the head of that Department were here.

*MR. SPEAKER: I must respectfully decline to be drawn into an argument upon a matter between the House and the Government. I think I should be doing wrong if I were to express opinions about the conduct of the Government except in matters which strictly arise out of questions of order and privilege.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS;(SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS.)

MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT

Mr. DILLON, Member for East Mayo, rose in his place and asked leave to move the adjournment of the House for the purpose of discussing a definite matter of urgent public importance;namely, "the refusal of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to answer a question put by an honourable Member of this House, and his statement that he based that refusal on the general prohibition of the Leader of the House"; but the pleasure of the House not having been signified, Mr. SPEAKER called on those Members who supported the motion to rise in their places, and not less than forty Members having accordingly risen;

MR. DILLON: It will take very few words for me to explain the grounds on which I venture to submit this motion to the House. For the last two or three years there has been evidence of a growing desire on the part of Ministers to treat this House with scant courtesy, especially in regard to information on foreign affairs. The first ground on which I submit this motion is one which, I think, will commend itself to all Members, irrespective of party affiliations;namely, that the Members of the House of Commons, who have to vote the supplies without which the foreign affairs of the country could not be carried on for an hour, are entitled at least to the same amount of information and the same courtesy as are accorded to Members of the House of Lords. I affirm without fear of contradiction that for three years, by a departure from the unbroken tradition and constitutional practice of this country, Members of this House who desired information as to the foreign policy of the Government have been obliged to wait until the next day, when

they were able to read the statement of that policy given in the House of Lords.

And yet we are the House, after all, on whom the existence of the Government and the conduct of their foreign policy depend. A new departure was taken at the beginning of the year before last;a departure without precedent in the history of any legislative assembly in the world;when one night, to the astonishment of everyone, and I venture to affirm, though I have not inquired in regard to it, without intimation to the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the House;who, if he acted in accordance with the best traditions of the House, ought to be guardian of the liberties and privileges of every Member;announced, in his

insinuating and agreeable voice, as if he was saying something that would be welcomed by everybody, that, in consequence of embarrassing questions, he had given directions that the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs should not be at liberty for the future to answer any supplementary questions.* I supposed the meaning of that was that such supplementary questions should be referred to his superior in the House of Lords. There is a great constitutional question involved in this matter. If the House of Commons assents to this new gag it will inevitably take a back seat in influencing the foreign policy of the country. No Ministry which requires to be relieved from the unpleasant criticism of the House of Commons will ever put a Foreign Minister in this House when it can muzzle hon. Members here by putting him in the House of Lords it is the right of the House of Commons to obtain from the representative of the Foreign Office in this House the same amount of information as if he were at the head of that Office. What is the position taken up by the Leader of the House and the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs? It has been the recognised custom from time immemorial that a Minister is always at liberty to exercise his discretion with regard to supplementary questions, and, while maintaining a civil and decent demeanour, even with regard to ques-

* Refer to The Parliamentary Debates [Fourth iSeries], Vol. lxvi., page 114. tions on the Paper. But he must exercise that discretion on the merits of the individual question. Any Minister is at liberty to say "The state of public affairs is such that I do not consider it advisable to answer the question at the present moment," and there is hardly a night during the session that that position is not taken up with regard to some Parliamentary matter. When, however, the First Lord of the Treasury, with reference to the merits of the question, assumes a right; to which he has no more claim than a private Member of the House; to tell one of his Ministers, who is not his subordinate, but who is responsible directly to the House and not through the right hon. Gentleman, that he shall not answer any supplementary questions, I say we are face to face with a most revolutionary departure from all previous precedents, and one which may cause the utter destruction of the privilege of questioning in this House. Another ground upon which I attach the utmost importance to this new practice is that you must scrutinise every departure from old practice not on the merits of the departure itself, but on the question of how far the principle may be drawn. What may be the result if we yield to this new claim? This year the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is forbidden to answer supplementary questions. Next year he may be forbidden to answer any questions whatever. What is the difference in essence? If the Leader of the House has this right with regard to supplementary questions, how can we deny his right to say to the Under Secretary of State, "I think it desirable that you shall not answer any questions at all Members of the House of Commons can wait until next day and read Lord Salisbury's speech and get the information there." And if the rule apply to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, why not to the Irish Secretary? What is the difference? Some people think we Irish belong to the domain of foreign affairs. We are accustomed to be called "rebels" and "traitors." I see no logical argument by which we could resist the claim of the

Leader of the House, if this departure were acquiesced in without protest, to forbid the Irish Secretary to answer any questions whatever. All he would have to say would be that the interests of public order and good government in Ireland would be best served by stopping the heckling and annoyance to which the Irish Secretary was subjected. In this claim is involved the right to take away one of the most valuable privileges which distinguish the House of Commons from any other assembly. Questions are one of the main means by which we can call the Executive Government of the country to account. If the First Lord of the Treasury is entitled by his simple ipse dixit to muzzle the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he is entitled on the same ground to muzzle every Minister on the Treasury Bench and to sweep away the privilege of asking questions altogether. Great constitutional questions are involved, and the House of Commons will be very badly advised if they consent without a strong protest to this great invasion of their rights. I have ventured to move this motion because I think a precedent like this ought not to be allowed to pass sub silentio, and that such a serious step in the degradation of the House of Commons ought at the earliest opportunity to be brought to notice. I beg to move.

*MR. BLAKE (Longford, S.): I rise to second the motion. The general custom of questions is one of the highest importance and value, and one of the principal privileges in the custom is that of putting supplementary questions. A single question put on the Paper may receive an inadequate, ambiguous, or evasive answer, or one provocative of further inquiry, and if you have not the power of questioning a Minister with reference to that which he has answered there is at once created for him the opportunity and the temptation to be more evasive or reticent, and to evade and avoid the subject of inquiry even more than is at present the case. Suppose this rule applied to all subjects, and that to every supplementary question we were told, "No, no further Questions to-day; put it on the Paper." You put it on the Paper; again there is evasion or the suggestion of something lacking, and again you are told to put any additional question on the Paper. The power of questions would be no longer anything substantial, but a mockery. Yet that which would be intolerable as a general proposition is said to be not merely tolerable but proper with reference to a most important branch of the questioning power; that relating to foreign affairs. I readily admit that with reference to foreign affairs there will arise more frequently than with regard to almost any other domain of questions the necessity for the power of saying "public interest demands that I should abstain from replying." Nobody proposes to interfere with that discretion; but why in the world should not the Minister in this domain, just as much as in any other, with reference to supplementary questions be allowed to answer if he thinks fit? If the subject be delicate and important, and he is not seised in advance of the material for a proper reply, why should he not say, as many a Minister has to say, "I am not in a position to answer now, therefore put it down"? But to lay down a general rule that, whatever answer the Minister may give, no matter how evasive, unsatisfactory, or provocative of further inquiry, this House should be muzzled, and should not be

entitled to say one word upon it, is to render a sham and a delusion the power of questioning with reference to the very subject in which the highest interests are involved, and in regard to which it is of the greatest consequence that the House of Commons should retain or resume its just power.

Motion made, and Question proposed,;"That this House do now adjourn.";(Mr. Dillon.)

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There was a good deal that surprised me in the course of the speeches to which we have just-listened, as well as in the course of that somewhat irregular fire of questions which preceded them. In the first place, let me point out that the hon. Gentleman the Member for East Mayo is now raising as a question of urgent public importance a matter which has been the practice for now more than two years. This is a new Parliament, and I presume there are a good many Gentlemen present who have not been long in the House, and I am sure that, listening to what has

occurred to-day, they would suppose that I had given an absolute direction to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs; but that is a most inaccurate view of the history of this question. I believe this rule was laid down for the first time some two years or two years and a half ago, not on the irresponsible will of any one Minister, but after careful consideration and discussion by the Government as a whole. Therefore, so far from this being a new practice the House has been accustomed to it for at least two years or two years and a half.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): But we never accepted it, and we always resented it.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not looking into the heart of my hon. friend. He may always have resented it, but I do not recollect any speech of his on the subject. But it has been the practice for two years, and therefore for a Member of the House to say that it is an innovation;a recent innovation;is, I think, altogether to violate the true accuracy of historical statement. But that is an unimportant point. The really important point is not whether the precedent is new or immemorial in its character, but whether in itself it tends to the dignity of the House and the safety of the country; and after careful reflection we have come to the conclusion that the practice of cross-examining the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and expecting him to answer questions on the spur of the moment in this House is an inexpedient practice, because we see that it is impossible, if such a practice is to prevail, to carry on the difficult and delicate negotiations in which an Empire of this magnitude is constantly involved. The hon. Gentleman has made two statements which I venture to say are wholly unsupported by the facts. He talks as if this practice of cross-examining Ministers was the old practice of the House. It is nothing of the kind. It is a new practice. In the course of my own Parliamentary recollections;[An HON. MEMBER: The Fourth Party initiated it.] Even in the course of my Parliamentary recollections it has steadily grown. I do not know whether it is or is not an advantage to the House. That

is not the point I am discussing. What I am venturing to point out to the House is that the practice is a comparatively new one in Parliamentary history.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): I think the right hon. Gentleman is mistaken. Does

he not himself recollect that any Member on asking a question and not getting a satisfactory answer could make a speech, and if complaint was made he always said, "I will conclude with a motion"?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: How does that traverse the statement I made that this practice of putting a series of supplementary questions to three-fourths of the questions put upon the Paper is a new practice? I had no notice that this question was to be raised, and therefore I have not been able to make an elaborate investigation; but I asked an hon. friend to bring me in a Hansard for 1865, a year chosen at random, and from that year I take a week, also chosen at random. This is the result. On Monday, June 26th, 1865, there were two questions put and no supplementaries. On Tuesday, the 27th, no questions were put, and of course, there were no supplementaries. On Wednesday, the 28th, again there were no questions put. On Thursday, the 29th, three questions were put, and no supplementaries: and on Friday, the 30th, five questions were put, and no supplementaries.

MR. COGHILL (Stoke-upon-Trent): Was Supply closed in those days?

*MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Members must not interrupt in this irregular way.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I do not know whether the hon. Gentleman thinks it was also the practice in those days for Members to interrupt a speaker with a series of argumentative questions of this kind. I do know, however, that the practice of which I speak is a comparatively new practice, and nobody who knows the constitution of the House will deny it. I am sure the right hon. Gentleman opposite will agree to the historical accuracy of the statement I have made that the practice is a new one.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: That is perfectly true; but it is the result of hon. Members having been shut out of other opportunities of asking questions and bringing forward motions.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The right hon. Gentleman's point is this; that formerly on Tuesdays and Fridays liberty was given to private Members to bring forward special questions; but those questions were brought forward with ample notice to the Minister who had to deal with them. He had ample notice. He could consult his colleagues and his chief. There was ample time for consideration, and no danger could occur. It may be that the modern habit is due to this curtailment, this inevitable and, as I think, unfortunate curtailment of Members' opportunities; but will the House please mark the point I am now going to make? I do not complain of this practice, if kept within reasonable limits, with regard to any member of the Government, except the member responsible for foreign affairs. The hon. Member for East Mayo, who moved the adjournment, drew an appalling picture of a future in which the Irish Chief Secretary would be relieved from the wholesome process of cross-examination. When I was Chief Secretary I had a good many questions put to me, and I should have been very sorry that the power of putting and answering any questions should not have existed.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Then why deny the same privilege to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Surely my own friends might allow me to finish my statement

without interruption. I should have been the last person when I was at the Irish Office to complain of the practice; and I am sure my hon. friend who is now Chief Secretary feels in the same way; because it does give an opportunity for stating a grievance, for replying to a grievance, and for showing that a grievance has not real foundation at all. Indeed, I do not believe you could carry on the work of government smoothly without the power of asking and answering questions. If a certain modification be adopted in this process of cross-examination without notice, I think that, on the whole, it is a practice which has a great deal to be said for it in regard to the general domestic business of the country, But you come to an entirely different position of affairs when you are dealing with the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Recollect how you are playing with fire in this matter. I remember being told, I believe on very good authority, that one of the ablest and most dexterous predecessors of my noble friend as Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs had on three occasions in one fortnight to request the gentlemen in the Press Gallery to modify the wording of some answers he had given to supplementary questions lest they should produce some unfortunate impression in the Chancelleries of other Powers. Every despatch which is sent to a foreign Government, and every telegram which contains instructions to foreign Ministers, is carefully drafted; every word of it is weighed, considered, and reconsidered, and it is perhaps submitted to the Cabinet before it is sent. And yet you ask the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, or the Secretary if he be in this House, to say on the spur of the moment, without notice, without previous consideration, that which in its effects may be as dangerous as any formal communication by telegram or despatch. Is not that an impossible responsibility to throw upon the Under Secretary? The hon. Gentleman who seconded the motion is of opinion that it is sufficient protection for the Under Secretary to be able to say that he must ask for notice of the question, as he cannot answer it at the moment. Does not everybody know that the cases are common in which silence alone amounts to an answer, and that a refusal to reply gives rise to rumours and conjectures of the most dangerous and damaging description? How is it possible to obviate that great danger except by some general rule? If the Under Secretary can say as a general rule that notice must be given of supplementary questions, then no evil interpretation, no erroneous or dangerous construction, can be given to his silence. But if you take that rule away you leave the House, the diplomatic gallery, the newspapers here, the newspapers of foreign countries, to put their own interpretation on that silence. And do you not think that consequences, not damaging to the Government, not damaging to the Under Secretary himself, but damaging to the nation as a whole, and, it may be, even to the peace of Europe, may result from the reckless use of this power of Ministerial cross-examination? The hon. Gentleman who moved this motion said that the House was by this rule deprived of privileges enjoyed by every other representative Assembly in the world. I venture to say there is not another representative Assembly in the world which allows such licence and latitude in questions on foreign affairs as are allowed in this House of Commons. Other Assemblies know well how difficult and delicate is the path of the Minister for

Foreign Affairs, what pitfalls there are to the right and left of him; they know the jealousies that must be guarded against, the susceptibilities that must always be considered; and therefore they are far too wise not to fence round with every kind of precaution intervention in debate on foreign affairs on the part of individual members of those Assemblies, who, in pursuit of their own particular panaceas, may lead on a Minister to make a statement the effects of which would be not only far-reaching in point of extent, stretching, it might be, to the uttermost ends of the earth, and producing consequences that might take years or generations to remedy;

MR. DILLON: The right hon. Gentleman has misunderstood what I said. I did not say that the right hon. Gentleman sought to deprive this House of privileges which were exercised by other Assemblies. On the contrary, I said we were being deprived of privileges which distinguished this House from every other House.

MR A. J. BALFOUR: I had misunderstood the right hon. Gentleman, and I am sorry for it. At all events, his interruption is sufficient evidence that in carrying out this rule, which has been in operation for two years, we are following at a distance a practice which every other House has found necessary in the national and patriotic interest. I

would not lift a finger to relieve either myself or any of my colleagues of a responsibility which affected merely the Government, or merely the party, or merely the domestic controversies in which we are from time to time engaged. We are here to deal with these controversies and to make the best case we can for ourselves and our party. But when we leave these domestic squabbles, when we come into the debatable area of foreign policy, then I do most earnestly beg the House not to press the Government to answer hastily and at random questions put by Gentlemen who, from the nature of the case may not know what they are doing, or what spark they are applying to what magazine, or may not be aware what international explosion they may be provoking. I am well convinced that if the House will endorse, as I hope they will, the action we have taken in this matter, they will endorse it not with the view of saving the Ministry, or the party, or any individuals on this bench, but in the full consciousness that the man who speaks at this Table for the Foreign Office is a man who has upon his shoulders already sufficient responsibility to make it most unwise to throw upon him the additional burden of expressing on the spur of the moment with absolute accuracy the facts of some difficult point of foreign policy. That can only be done by laying down that general rule which we have adopted, and I earnestly trust that the House will support us in maintaining it.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): The right hon. Gentleman has addressed to the House an ingenious, an earnest and in some parts even an impassioned argument-, which is, unfortunately, vitiated by the fact that it is irrelevant to the question at issue. The right hon. Gentleman has said that the habit, not of asking supplementary questions, but the habit of asking questions at all has greatly increased. But he had to admit, in answer to the interruption of my right hon friend near me, that that is largely due to the shutting to Members of the House of other means of obtaining information. Then we come to the point of supplementary questions. The right hon. Gentleman ignored one

great protection we have against the wanton use of supplementary questions, which is the presence in the chair of the Speaker, whose duty it is; and I am bound to say, Sir, that you even in a more signal degree than your predecessor have discharged this duty; to prevent the practice of asking supplementary questions from developing into anything like abuse. I venture to say, Sir, that since we have had the advantage of your presiding over our deliberations a great improvement has taken place in this respect. Then I would point out that supplementary questions which are addressed to any Minister can always be dealt with by that Minister, if he is not in a position to answer them, by the simple process of asking for notice. It so happens that we are speaking with considerable authority on the point, because I have sitting near me no fewer than three Gentlemen; my noble friend the Member for the Cricklade Division of Wiltshire, my right hon. friend the Member for South Aberdeen, and the hon. Baronet the Member for Berwick; who have all filled the office of Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Some of them I would specify in particular my noble friend the Member for Cricklade; filled that position at a time when I do not think there was any lack of desire on the part of hon. Gentlemen opposite to extract information. Indeed, I do not think I am doing any wrong to those who took part in the proceedings in saying that it would not have aggravated them very seriously if their questions had had the effect of embarrassing the Government. I refer to the Parliament of 1880. I think, if the right hon. Gentleman exercises his mind, that even he at the back of his memory may find some trace of the proceedings to which I refer. The right hon. Gentleman said that this is now an established custom of the House: that the House has agreed to this means of curbing the desire of Members for information, and of sheltering the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I can only say that at the very opening of this Parliament, on 6th December, I openly protested against the continuance of this practice, and said that it reduced the privilege of asking questions to a farce. If the House will allow me, I will quote a sentence or two which I used on that occasion. I said; "Let me give expression of a hope that there will not be continued the curious rule, originated by the right hon. Gentleman opposite, and novel to the House, of restricting the number of questions that can be put to the representative of that Department. I cannot understand why any such rule should exist, and if it has been assented to in the House of Commons it is simply because the House has been too astonished at it to bring the Government to book. The right hon. Gentleman and I the other day expressed our perfect confidence that Mr. Speaker would be able to conduct all our proceedings with perfect order, and in nothing has Mr. Speaker been more energetic and successful than in the preventing of unnecessary questions. Let us trust to him to prevent anything exceeding the points of ordinary propriety, but do not let us have this spectacle again, which reduces questions really to a farce, of allowing the representative of a Government Department to sit dumb in the presence of a number of questioners."* What is it we complain of? We make no complaint on the ground that supplementary questions ought to be allowed without limit. We admit that Mr. Speaker is acting in the interests of the House if he stops the incessant use of supplementary

questions. I am not sure that this, being so serious a matter, ought not to be left, if not entirely, almost entirely, in the hands of the Leader of the House, the chief member of the Government. Let him, or in other cases the Minister principally concerned, say to the House, "It is to the public interest that this particular question should not be answered." Has there ever been a case where the House of Commons has refused such an appeal? Then we come to the point of the Minister being able to plead that he is not instructed, or that he would like -the matter being delicate time to consider the actual terms of the answer he would give. Has that ever been refused by the House of Commons, or grumbled against by the House of Commons? No, Sir. We are not in the habit of so treating Ministers and public affairs. But that is not the ease we have to deal with. The case we have to deal with is a general edict which has been passed by the Leader of the House that on no occasion and under no circumstances is this par-

* See The Parliamentary Debates; [Fourth Series], Vol. lxxxviii., page 120; Mr. Balfour's reply, page 122.

ticular Under Secretary to answer any supplementary question. And the consequence is this. An hon. Member addresses a question to a Minister and receives a cut-and-dried answer, or an answer that may be no answer at all; which sometimes happens; or he receives an ambiguous answer, which is very often the case. And yet when the hon. Member gets up and asks the Minister, "Did you mean Yes or did you mean No when you gave me that reply?" the Under Secretary is to sit and smile and shake his head, but dare not get up. Why, Sir, the thing is ludicrous. Let the right hon. Gentleman take off this absurd embargo, and I will answer for it; not on my own authority but from my knowledge of the House of Commons; that there will be no inconvenience to him, nor to the Government, nor to the Under Secretary, nor to the public interest. The House of Commons knows perfectly well the delicate nature of negotiations, and it will make allowances to this extent, that it will concede the time to give a deliberate and well-considered answer. The right hon. Gentleman says it is too much to expect that an Under Secretary on the spur of the moment should be prepared to answer the most delicate questions. But Under Secretaries, even the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, have to make speeches without special preparation or notice. He has to take part to-night in the debate on China; he will be asked a good many questions, I daresay, and he will have to answer them. He has no notice given to him what the nature of those questions will be. There must be some answer to them. Yet this is the poor helpless official who has to be hedged round with this artificial protection, which is, I say, against all precedent in the House of Commons and against the general interests of public life in this country. And there is another point. If we are not to get information as fully as we should like from the Under Secretary it must be got, I suppose, from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. But we are not allowed in this House to refer to what passes in the other House of Parliament, and therefore this channel is provided for us, and an excellent channel no doubt it might be, an ample one for us and also one which can be used without any prejudice to the Government or the country.

*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I am sorry not to be able to agree with the Leader of

the House and the Leader of my Party. I think this is a very important constitutional question, and that the House will, perhaps; at least hon. Members on this side will; be liable to be misled by what I admit to be the very weighty and effective appeal made by the First Lord of the Treasury. The value of questions, especially under the present rules of the House, is very great. The rights of independent Members have been steadily encroached upon for a long period of time, and, although I speak as a private and independent Member, yet I have had some experience of the House of Commons. Having had the honour of a seat in it for twenty-one years, I venture to say that most of the valuable measures that have passed the House have been, in the first case, introduced by private Members. In the old times, as the right hon. the Member for West Monmouth has pointed out, it was always open to members to rise, ask a question, make a speech, and conclude with a motion. These rights have been taken away from us and, instead, we retain only the power of asking questions. Now, what is the advantage of that? Not only do we obtain on occasions most important information, but the time of the House is greatly saved; for if it were not for this power Members would be driven to move the adjournment every night of the week in order to obtain the necessary information. What is the argument of the Government in opposing the views of hon. Members opposite? The argument is that this is a public danger. But why has it not been a public danger for the past twenty-five years? Is it to be pretended by the Leader of the House that my noble friend the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, or the late Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, now Minister for War, are, or were, less able to answer questions with wisdom and safety than the right hon. Baronet the Member for Forest of Dean or the noble Lord the Member for the Cricklade Division? I well remem-

ber when these right hon. Gentlemen held the office of Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs they were bombarded with questions night after night. [HON. MEMBERS: Hear, hear;] Yes, Sir, and rightly and wisely bombarded with questions, because I maintain that the interests of the country were upheld by these questions and many foreign dangers were averted by the use of questions. But is it to be contended that these right hon. Gentlemen were more able to deal with such questions than the noble Lord now on the Treasury Bench? It is, of course, a *reductio ad absurdum* when that point is put fairly. If this order is enforced, then there can only be one answer to it; we must have the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in this House. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition was perfectly justified in stating that the power of questioning the Minister for Foreign Affairs was never used by private Members in the face of an appeal from the Minister not to pursue a particular question because it was against public interest or that notice should be given of the question. I hope, therefore, the First Lord of the Treasury will withdraw this order, which is more like the ukase or trade of despotic governments than the practice of a free Parliament. He may safely leave it to the good sense of the Members and the intelligence of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs to deal with questions as they arise.

SIR CHARLES DILKE did not know what the Leader of the House meant when he spoke

of the practice of asking supplementary questions as a recent growth. If he referred to the practice since 1865 he might as well quote the Parliamentary Register of the last century. There had been an entirely changed state of things since 1865. Hardly any questions at all were asked previous to that time, and it was in 1882 that the practice of asking supplementary questions in foreign affairs first began. Members whose experience went back to that period, when the hon. Member who had just sat down, Lord R. Churchill, Sir H. Drummond-Wolff, and the present-Leader of the House (though in a much less degree) took an active part in the proceedings and in putting questions, would remember that the practice of asking supplementary questions in foreign affairs was never so rife as it was in 1882, when he held the office of Under Secretary, down till 1885. In this matter everything depended on the tact which was exercised. No doubt a Minister in answering a question might do a great deal of harm, but no one would suggest that the hon. Baronet the Member for Berwick or the present Viceroy of India were persons who from want of time had answered questions which were believed to be unwise. The patriotism of the House was never more conspicuously shown than in the manner in which it helped Ministers responsible for foreign affairs, and in refraining from putting questions which were believed to be dangerous. Many hon. Members would remember how during the discussions on the Venezuelan question the House of Commons abstained from putting dangerous questions, and he was convinced that this was a course of action which it would always follow. The House would also assent to the suggestion that in the case of a difficult question opportunity should be given to consult the Secretary of State upon the wording of a certain answer. But at present the Under Secretary was placed in a humiliating and almost ridiculous position. He was placed in a position which weakened his office in the House of Commons, and he was deprived of that authority which he would naturally wish to exert with the House and his colleagues.

*MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said that what appeared to him an unconstitutional doctrine had been propounded under which a distinction was sought to be drawn between the head of a Department and the Minister representing it in the House of Commons, and it had been contended that it was desirable that an Under Secretary should have an opportunity of communicating with his chief before giving an answer to a particular question. This contention, in his judgment, struck at the root of Ministerial responsibility. He well remembered being told by Mr. Disraeli when he was Under Secretary, "You are responsible in this House for your Department if you are in a difficulty come to me"; and no doubt the present Under Secretary could be trusted in the same way as Mr. Disraeli trusted his Under Secretaries. It seemed to him that the Government had shut the door after the horse had gone. It might be true that the Viceroy of India did from time to time give answers which occasionally startled his colleagues, but the practice followed by that Minister seemed to have led to an embargo being placed on his successors. He hoped, however, that the ukase of his right hon. friend would not be pressed further, as he had no doubt that his noble friend could be fully trusted to observe all necessary discretion. In fact, the only complaint he had to make with regard to

the present representation of the Foreign Office in that House was that the present Under Secretary, being one of the best of their independent Members, had been stolen from them. He thought that Ministerial responsibility would receive a shock if the Under Secretary could not be trusted according to his own discretion, which he must always be allowed to exercise, to decide what were the questions he was justified in answering at once, and what were, the questions of which notice must be given.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I am extremely glad that the hon. Member for East Mayo has brought this question before the House, and I think the House of Commons is under an obligation to him for so doing. It would be impossible for us to exaggerate the importance which attaches to this matter. The effect of this new rule that has been made is another step in the campaign which has been going on for a considerable time to deprive private Members of all opportunity of discussion and of obtaining information. Indeed, the object of the movement seems to be to gag the House and to degrade it. It is true that the practice with reference to questions has changed, but that change is the result of the deprivation of all opportunity on the part of private Members to discuss subjects on other occasions and to obtain information in other ways. The inevitable result of decreasing the opportunities of discussion by private Members has been to force them to increase the number of questions. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House has entirely misrepresented, if I may say so without offence, the real point taken by the hon. Member for East Mayo. No one denies that it must remain always in the discretion of the Minister for Foreign Affairs to decline in the public interest to answer certain questions. No one denies that there may be many questions addressed to the Under Secretary which he cannot answer without consulting his chief. No one denies that these occasions may constantly occur, and certainly I have never heard any complaint made by any Member of the House when such an answer was given. The Leader of the House, forsooth, says that if the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs replies either that the question ought not to be answered in the public interest, or that he must refer it for information to his chief, he may thereby create a wrong impression in foreign countries. If the supplementary question is one which he cannot answer in the public interest, that will be proved when it is put down on the Paper as a question. If it is a question which he cannot answer because he must refer it to his chief for information, he will be forced to answer it when he has got the information, and the complaint we make is that the Under Foreign Secretary in this House should be a mere dummy, that he should come here with his mouth closed and not be allowed to answer any question. As the Leader of the Opposition pointed out, questions of the most innocent and necessary character may have to be asked as the result of a misunderstanding of an answer which has been given. But it is proposed that there is to be a hard and fast rule that under no conceivable circumstances is the Under Secretary of State to be allowed to answer any supplementary question at all. That is an absurd position to put a Minister in. After all, Ministerial responsibility is Ministerial responsibility to the House of Commons. The House of Commons is, after all, the ruling body in this country,

and it is not only humiliating that the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs should be put in the position that he dare not and cannot, even if his judgment tells him otherwise, answer a supplementary question, but it is degrading the House of Commons, and is certainly another step in what I believe is a deliberate campaign which has been going on for a number of years, the object of which is to deprive this House of proper opportunities of discussion and obtaining information, and a desire to gag the House of Commons. It is a question affecting the rights of the House of Commons. It is surely a strange thing in matters of this sort, upon which we are told the safety of the Empire depends, to find a sharp division between the two Front Benches. Why, if this practice, which has existed so many years, was really injurious to the safety of the Empire, was it never found out until two years ago? This practice has been going on during the twenty years I have been in the House. How is it that those who were responsible for the late government, and who in the ordinary course of events will some day or other be responsible for the government again, took a different view and believed that the practice which prevailed up to two years ago was not injurious to the safety of the Empire? I think my hon. friend deserves the thanks of the House and of the people of the country for having brought this question forward, and I confess it is a source of satisfaction to me that it is one of the Irish party who has come forward to heap coals of fire upon the heads of the English House of Commons by taking this stand in defence of its liberties, its independence, and its rights.

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said, the question really to be considered was: What is in the public interest? Supposing the proposal of the hon. Member for East Mayo were adopted, no really substantial change would be effected. The answers to the questions would still be refused. The only thing that would happen would be a change in the form in which the refusal was given. The responsibility for the refusal would be laid not on the inconvenience of the questions, but on the rigidity of a rule. He did not think that that would be a change for the better. The present system at any rate got rid of the possibility of the misconstruction of silence; and it was in consequence of that misconstruction that men of the most highly trained minds, finding themselves in the face of an increasing volume of business, arguments, and complexity in foreign affairs, had arrived at the conclusion that the answering of these supplementary questions was one which could not be endured any longer, as being fraught with danger to the State. This practice had been arrived at for the protection of private character, and why should it not be adopted where the national interest was concerned? It had been laid down from the Chair that no supplementary questions could be asked imputing anything to an absent man or a private individual, because of the injustice of asking questions under circumstances which prevented their being answered. Was the protection given to private character not to be given to the national interest? The protection of the Chair, upon which the House was asked to rely, was one which was regarded with constantly increasing dislike and diffidence. How was discretion with respect to the right to put supplementary questions to be

exercised by the Chair, and the Chair alone, without dragging the Chair into questions of public policy as distinguished from questions of order and procedure, and thereby degrading the Chair itself?

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES: My right hon. friend who has just sat down has entirely confused the matter before the House. He has been dealing with the advisability or in advisability of putting supplementary questions. The House is dealing with the advisability or inadvisability of having these questions answered. That is quite another question. He forgets that at this moment the right of putting the question exists. What is denied; all that is denied; is the right of getting an answer. Questions are constantly being put to which no answers are given. What my right hon. friend the First Lord says is that when you put supplementary questions to the Under Secretary and no answer is given, the silence itself will be the answer. But that is so now. I have myself repeatedly put questions to which silence was the answer. My right hon. friend who was until recently Under Secretary

for Foreign Affairs will remember that on one occasion I asked if the Foreign Office was absolutely ignorant of everything, and his answer was silence; from which the House drew the natural inference. I wish to join in the appeal of my right hon. friend below the gangway that the First Lord of the Treasury should reconsider his non possumus attitude on this subject. The question is really very important. We have been deprived; I am not complaining of it at the present moment; we have in the public interest been deprived in this House of numerous opportunities for bringing matters before the House which previously existed. As a matter of fact, we have practically only left to us now questions, the Estimates, and Amendments to the Address, which is, of course, an opportunity to be taken in extremities; such an extremity to which I myself have been reduced. There are the Estimates, and when these are under discussion the Under Secretary is bound to answer question after question. He has no protection there. If the First Lord is going to throw a shield over him with regard to questions put at the commencement of public business, what about the questions that are showered at him on the Estimates? There is no gag there. No relief is given to the poor noble Lord in that respect. Why, surely the thing has gone too far or not far enough. If you are going to forbid the answering of supplementary questions before five o'clock you must forbid him answering them from five to twelve o'clock, and I think he will be pleased at that. Questions are constantly being answered; inadvertently, no doubt; so that the answer is either unintelligible or ambiguous. The answers are often so ambiguous that it is impossible to comprehend their full scope and purpose, unless they are to some extent explained in replies to supplementary questions. The former Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs felt himself compelled to reply to supplementary questions.

MR. BRODRICK: The only occasions on which I answered supplementary questions were occasions when it was alleged that I had not fully answered the question on the Paper

*MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I thank the right hon. Gentleman for his testimony, which has proved what I have stated. I said that an answer might be ambiguous or insufficient, and might necessarily require an answer to a supplementary

question. My right hon. friend is honest enough to admit that he, has given them. My point is that an answer may be so manifestly incomplete or ambiguous, or, for some reason, so incomprehensible as to absolutely require that a supplementary question should be asked. The First Lord of the Treasury gives as a reason for maintaining this entirely new order with respect to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs that it is two years old. I say that two years is a very small time in the history of a House like this. For hundreds of years elucidatory questions have been answered, and we have had only two years' experience of this order, which is there fore very modern indeed. But why cannot the First Lord leave it to the discretion of the Under Secretary himself? Why cannot he leave him to say, as in the case of every other Minister on that bench, "I want notice of the question," or "I must in the public interest decline to reply," or, as we have seen tonight, to make neither of these answers but sit still in his seat This new order did not exist during the tenure of office of Lord Curzon, or that of any but one previous Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I do not know why it has been imposed on the noble Lord. It seems to me to be a most unmerited reflection; most especially on the noble Lord who has been brought into the Government to strengthen it. Why should he be told that he is not to answer supplementary questions when Lord Curzon was allowed to do so? Is it to be suggested that you can trust a Curzon and not a; not the noble Lord? The Under Secretary of State in this House is the only medium by which we can get any knowledge whatever of foreign affairs, and to say to him that he is not to answer supplementary questions, and that he cannot be trusted, is to my mind to say that he is not fit for his post. I must say that I believe he is fit for his post. I believe that he is perfectly capable of taking care of himself; quite as capable as Lord Curzon. Let me remind the Leader of the House that it was precisely in answering supplementary questions that Lord Curzon made his great reputation. It was not in answers that he brought down from the Foreign Secretary in another place; it was in those which by his quickness, readiness, and brilliancy he invented himself in the face of this House. I am perfectly convinced that my noble friend is capable of the same thing. Why should he be prohibited from making here the great reputation which led another noble Lord to the Viceroyalty of India? I think it perfectly cruel of the First Lord to maintain in conference and in concert, as he tells us, with the rest of the cruel Ministry this shocking prohibition that is placed on the noble Lord. But this is really a very serious matter. I regret that it has been brought forward in such a shape as this, for this motion for adjournment raises a false issue. But this is another illustration of the necessity of questions. The matter has been brought forward on a motion for the adjournment of the House, because it could not be brought forward in any other way. Would my right hon. friend have given us a day for this question? Not he. [Laughter.] He laughs. It is a matter for merriment; I think on the contrary that it is precisely one of those matters on which not only the liberties and the rights but the very efficacy of this House depends. It seems to me that unless this House is to have the opportunity of raising matters by the questioning of Ministers for information its use will be very nearly disappearing. Therefore I

join in the appeal to my right hon. friend to reconsider the situation, and to see if he cannot give us some hope that now at least the noble Lord will have his muzzle taken off, and be enabled to answer supplementary questions with that ease and fluency which distinguished his predecessor.

SIR EDWARD GREY (Northumberland, Berwick): This question has already been considered from more than one point of view, but I think there is one element which might be eliminated from the discussion. That is the point of view of the interest of the Chair. I do not see how the interest of the Chair, which, was used as an argument by the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Hallam Division of Sheffield, is really germane to the matter. As I understand, both you, Sir, and your predecessors have controlled supplementary questions solely on the ground of whether they arose out of the answer given by the Minister or whether they came within the rules of the House. The control of the questions addressed to the Foreign Office, in so far as it is exercised on these grounds, places no strain upon the Chair which does not rest upon it in dealing with questions addressed to other Departments. In fact, I understood you, Sir, when the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean was speaking, to deprecate any idea that the authority of the Chair was exercised on the ground of public policy. The question of public policy surely must rest with Ministers. Let us consider this matter from the points of view of the public interest and of the convenience of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Those, I think, are the only two things which are really germane. The public interest is by far the more important, and I only notice the other because no one could have been in the position of Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs without being conscious of certain inconveniences. There are, no doubt, certain inconveniences in regard to questions, especially in regard to questions addressed to the Foreign Office; but, if alterations are to be made, this is not the one I should have chosen from the point of view either of convenience of the Under Secretary to the Foreign Office or of the public interest. The real inconvenience which I found when I was at the Foreign Office was not supplementary questions; it was the question at short notice. It was the question which appeared on the Paper in the morning and which was to be asked in the House in the afternoon that undoubtedly caused inconvenience in the Office. One was unwilling, as the question was on the Paper, not to attempt to answer it. But I think there are certain inconveniences and sometimes, perhaps, danger likely to result from the attempt to get the information up in the Office at a few hours notice, and the giving of an answer, a written answer in most cases, which could not be modified afterwards and which, if important facts had been overlooked or considerations had not been thoroughly discussed in the Office, might lead to danger afterwards. The answering of questions at five minutes or a day's notice, I think, is the real inconvenience, but that does not require any rule, because if it is explained to Members they will always give longer notice. The real inconvenience and the real danger lies in that fact, because if due notice had been given the Under Secretary would come down having got up the subject thoroughly. We have been debating this matter rather as if any question addressed to the Foreign Office

might be asked without notice. That cannot be done now. It must be a supplementary question germane to the subject, and if the Under Secretary has had ample notice of the question which appears on the Paper then, I think, his familiarity with the subject will be such as should enable him to answer the supplementary question, if it is a simple one, on the spot, or to decide whether danger lurked in the question. I think that, when a question appears on the Paper and the Under Secretary is considering what answer he is going to give, the knowledge that it is desirable to avoid supplementary questions, or to anticipate them, is undoubtedly an element in making the original answer as clear and as full as possible. I believe that, in the public interest, what the House ought to do is to insist upon, or at all events in every way to encourage, the giving of long notice of the original question to the Under Secretary, in order that he may be fully prepared on the whole subject. If that is done I do not believe that any danger lurks in the asking of supplementary questions. Some things connected with the Foreign Office, no doubt, are exceedingly difficult to deal with and require much consideration. Take, for instance, what is happening in China, where many Powers are concerned in concert. I can quite understand that there any answer to supplementary questions might be a very risky matter. But take the administration of Uganda, Any question addressed to the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs upon that subject is as purely a departmental question as any question that is addressed to the War Office or any other Government office. There are quite a large number of questions addressed to the Foreign Office which deal with matters as purely departmental as those addressed to Ministers representing other offices, and yet this alteration is to apply to the whole of the questions. I think it is an unnecessarily rigid rule. The Under Secretary has to run in this House a very severe gauntlet from time to time, but the most severe is not in answering supplementary questions; it is in the debate on a Vote on Account. He cannot always have warning of everything that is to be raised. Things occur to hon. Members in the debate, and questions come up covering the whole range of foreign affairs. The Under Secretary then not only has to give answers, but he has to deal with these questions exhaustively in debate, and sometimes with the most important of them without any opportunity of preparation. With the most important, of course, he ought to be familiar, but he cannot have time to prepare any speech on those particular subjects on these particular occasions; and I think that the Under Secretary who is capable of getting up on a Vote on Account and of dealing seriously with the whole subject of foreign affairs in unprepared speeches is capable of deciding on the spur of the moment whether it is advisable to answer or not a question on a matter which he has already prepared in the office. There can be only one justification for this rule, and that is if the House had pressed questions without notice upon the Under Secretary. But the House never does so. When it asks questions, especially in connection with the Foreign Office, the House has always had the good sense and the patriotism to recognise that, if the Under Secretary asks for further notice, that must be accepted as final. It has always so accepted it, and over and over again, before this rule came into force, Under Secretaries have continually asked for further notice of supplementary

questions, even when they arose out of the answer given to the main question. If that is so, and as all in the House are reluctant to increase and multiply restrictions more than is absolutely necessary, I do think, considering the temper which the House has always shown in previous years, it would have been better in this matter to rely upon the discretion of the Under Secretary to ask for further notice when the question was inconvenient or where the answer was to his mind doubtful. I am sure that the Government might have relied now, as they have always done in previous years, upon the good sense and the patriotism of the House, especially in connection with foreign affairs, not to press those questions.

MR. BRODRICK: I do not desire to trouble the House at any length, but as two of those who have held the position of Under Secretary to the Foreign Office have given their experience, and as my experience in this respect has been a peculiar one, perhaps I might be allowed to say a few words. I should honestly have been glad to have been able to agree with what has fallen from the hon. Baronet opposite. The hon. Baronet has treated this question as if the House had a record so admirable with regard to its treatment of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs that no possible cause could exist for the change which my right hon. friend the Leader of the House has made. That is not only not the fact, but I venture to say it is the exact reverse of the fact. Take the experience of my noble friend Lord Curzon. The House, the hon. Baronet said, had never pressed questions on the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs without notice. I say, without fear of contradiction, in the presence of those who recollect the circumstances, and after frequent conferences on this very subject with Lord Curzon, who was the last man in this House to complain of any attack upon him, and who had, as everybody knows, an adroitness and ability to meet attack which caused him rather to court it than to shirk it, that that is not so. I was rather amused to hear my hon. friend the Member for King's Lynn pay Lord Curzon the high tribute that he did a few minutes ago, and I felt inclined, when I remember the way in which he used to allude to Lord Curzon's answers to supplementary questions, to ask, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" For now, what he used to term insolence is brilliancy, and all the morasses into which I remember my hon. friend used to take such credit to himself for having immersed Lord Curzon are now referred to by him as avenues to the highest distinction. I cannot help recalling this fact, that when the question of Crete was under discussion Lord Curzon, who had never complained, and who was not one of those who thought that supplementary questions should be altogether abolished, because he was himself rather fond of the game, told me that on one occasion he had fifteen questions addressed to him, and that to each of them there were one or two supplementary questions. Although he felt, over and over again, that he should not be pressed in the public interest, he was pressed by speaker after speaker, until at last you, Sir, intervened and preserved him from further questions.

MR. DILLON: How could he be pressed by speaker after speaker?

MR. BRODRICK: By question after question; and this inquisition went on sometimes for ten minutes on a single question, and that at a moment when a single slip

might have had a serious effect on the conduct of negotiations on diplomatic questions. I wish to call the attention of the House, above all, to the experience of the last two years. If this restriction had acted either unfairly or had been resented by the House at large, surely it must have had one of two effects during the last two years; either it must have led to a large increase of the number of questions put on a subsequent day, or it must have led to the exercise of the undoubted right of Members who were not satisfied of moving the adjournment of the House. I was Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs during at least as exciting a period in regard to China as we have had on any question during recent years, and I did not answer supplemental questions, though I did endeavour to give to important questions the fullest and clearest answer, to which I think the House is entitled. The proof of the pudding is in the eating.

I had less

questions during that vexed period on China than any other Under Secretary ever had in much less troublous times; and as regards adjournments, I will undertake to say that a study of Hansard will show that since 1880 motions for the adjournment of the House were never fewer than during the time that I was unable to answer supplementary questions as Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. These are not uninteresting facts which bear on the present situation. May I say one word more? This matter has been treated as if it were a question simply appertaining to this House. I do not think my right hon. friend's argument on public grounds has altogether received the force which ought to be attached to it. I have had an opportunity of knowing, not only what was the feeling of our Ambassadors abroad with regard to this change, but also what was the feeling of foreign Ministers who are friendly to this country; and it is a curious fact that, although I have never introduced the subject, nearly all of our Ambassadors, and in several instances Ministers of Powers friendly to this country, have congratulated me on the change, and have informed me how greatly it had simplified their duties.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: They would wish that there should be no questions at all.

MR. BRODRICK: Of course there must be questions. That is inevitable. If a question appears on the Paper in the morning, there is time for deliberation, but it is an absurdity to suppose, in these days, that you can safely put a chance question to an Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. I can give instances in which an expression which was taken back the next moment has been telegraphed all over Europe. I do not think that you can compare any other office to this.

MR. DILLON: I compare the Colonial Office to it.

MR. BRODRICK: I will take an instance of the Colonial Office. My noble friend happened to misquote a despatch in the hurry of a reply to the hon. Gentleman. What harm did he do by mis-

quoting this despatch? The correction was made to-day. It was not a diplomatic question immediately pressing, and it is not at all likely that harm would be done. That remark could not be made in regard to the negotiations going on in China. In every Chancellery in Europe a misquotation of that kind would be taken up. We should hear of it in the negotiations in Peking, and we should probably hear of it in every capital in Europe. Obviously, when you are dealing with

foreign affairs you are dealing with much more delicate questions, and in regard to which a slip is much more difficult to recall. An hon. Member has said that we wait until the House of Lords has spoken. I do not think you will find a single occasion in the last two years in which a statement was made in the House of Lords which was not simultaneously made in this House. It is not a matter of supplementary questions. It is only a question whether any hon. Member chooses, at the time a question is put in the House of Lords, to put down a question here. I know by experience how varied are the questions which are brought before us in Committee of Supply, but I would say that it happened to me, over and over again, to have an opportunity of consulting my right hon. friend the First Lord of the Treasury, or of deciding in the hour or two which intervenes between the speech and the reply whether it is desirable or not to touch on a particular topic. Everybody knows that in the brief interval which takes place between a question and the time of reply deliberation is impossible. It is because I think that we ought to have in this House, in the public interest, something like the protection which is afforded in the House of Lords, and in every other Assembly throughout the world, that I trust the House will continue this most salutary reform, which has long been desired by all connected with foreign affairs, and which, I think, in its justice and in its expediency, as well as in its working, it is desirable to continue.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I think it is singularly appropriate that this debate should have arisen upon a motion which arose out of the question of the suicide of certain Ministers of State. Certainly, if the position taken up by the Government is not receded from, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in this House will be degraded to the position of an automaton in which a phonograph is concealed. Ministers themselves have frequently been asked to introduce the innovation of printing their answers to questions on the Paper, but they have always refused; for their own protection, as they have said; but now the Government have declared that all the Minister for Foreign Affairs will do is to give his answer, and nothing more is to be extracted from him. The right hon. Gentleman who has just spoken said that this innovation was greatly approved of by the Ambassador to the Sultan of Turkey. I have no doubt that by the Sublime Porte this innovation is very hopefully regarded, because it will greatly lessen the number of supplementary questions as to the exact numbers of Armenians who are massacred at any time. There is no doubt that the Sublime Porte fully recognises the importance of the change; but is it by arguments of that description that a rule of this kind is to be recommended to the free House of Commons and the free people whom we are supposed to represent? Let me put another point. It is admitted by the speeches of the right hon. Gentleman and the hon. Member for the Hallam Division of Sheffield that an important, serious, and momentous change has been made in the rules of the House of Commons. Whenever before were the rules of the House of Commons changed except by Standing or Sessional Order? If hitherto there has been a right in a Member to put a supplementary question and you take away that right, can the right of any Member of this House be taken away except by formal and recorded rule? Now, for the first time, we are told that the Prime Minister or the First Lord of the

Treasury can of his own motion, by a mere Ministerial order, make a permanent and momentous change in the practice of the House of Commons. We acknowledge, Sir, that the Chair can do that. The Chair is the representative of the House of Commons at large, and it is your duty and privilege to protect the rights of the minority of this House. But who is it that seeks to make this change in the rules of the House? It

is the dominant party, and the dominant party are doing this, it is said, in the interests of the country, but admittedly against the interest and the wish of the minority. Never in the experience of the oldest Member of the House has an occasion arisen when a Minister in the British Cabinet; whether by decision in Cabinet or how we know not; has come and said, "On my own motion I will make in the immemorial practice of the House a change, and give you no opportunity of discussing it." The closure was nothing to this. I remember well that when the closure was proposed in 1882, Mr. Gladstone devoted the entire of a winter session to the matter, and the first rule took, I believe, eighteen nights debate, of which, I think, the present First Lord of the Treasury occupied the most part. But now, on this important question affecting the relations of this country, the right hon. Gentleman thinks he can make a muzzling order simply upon his own ipse dixit. It is said that foreign affairs are peculiarly sacrosanct, that there is some special reason for dealing with them in a particular manner. If so, all the more necessity for this rule being considered by the House of Commons at large. What has hitherto been the position of the Opposition? I have always understood that when foreign affairs were in question they were regarded by the Front Opposition Bench as being, so to speak, extra-territorialised; they were supposed to be something not exactly in the arena of party debate. Even when the Fourth Party existed we all remember very well that Sir Stafford Northcote, Mr. Cross, and those of that day never gave any encouragement to the incursions of the noble Lord and his efficient friends who distinguished themselves in the attacks on the foreign policy of Mr. Gladstone, the reason of that being that it had been the practice of the Front Opposition Bench to regard foreign politics as a matter upon which both sides were at one. I would ask, have the Front Opposition Bench consented to this arrangement? Have they been consulted about the matter? I remember very well when the right hon. Gentleman the Member for West Monmouth was Leader of this House, supported as he was by a

large contingent of Irish Members, who were chafing very much under what we supposed to be the obstruction of that time to Irish measures; again and again we protested against the extraordinary latitude which we conceived he allowed to the then Opposition. What was always the reply we received? That he considered the position of Leader of the House of Commons to be far more important than that of a member of the Government, as he had the interests of the House of Commons as a whole to consider, and therefore he refused in any way to tamper with what he conceived to be the prerogatives of the Opposition. If, therefore, foreign affairs be, so to speak, a ruled-off paddock in which we should fear to tread, why has not a rule of this kind, if it is to be made, been submitted to the Gentlemen on the Front Opposition Bench who have had Ministerial experience,

and who we must assume, at all events, are as anxious and as zealous for the rights and interest of the foreign policy of this country as are Members on the other side of the House? We find man after man who has held this office getting up and stating that there was no necessity for this rule. The fact of the matter is either that Foreign Secretaries in the past were too smart or else present Foreign Secretaries are too stupid. Anyone who knows the noble Lord and his distinguished career in this House would be very sorry to make that reflection upon him, because we all know his great ability. Equally we were told on the highest authority that Lord Curzon has gone off in a blaze of glory to India, although he did not do so without having been first created an Irish Peer. Why is it that the affairs of the Foreign Office have attached to them that special importance which entitles them to this singular treatment? What are the facts? When the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition was the Secretary to the Admiralty, and when the British Fleet was sent to Besika Bay, the whole question of foreign affairs was discussed practically as a Navy question. You could then get at the Foreign Office by asking questions about the Navy. Take the Army, for instance. Again and again if there is a question of the mobilisation of troops and despatching men abroad, can we not get the information we require about them by asking questions from the Army officials? If this goes on it will be necessary also to prevent these questions being asked from the Gentlemen connected with the Army and Navy. Therefore it seems to me that the rule of the right hon. Gentleman has wholly and entirely broken down. What do we see in recent years? The most important questions in recent years, apart from China, have been questions affecting not the Foreign Office but the Colonial Office. Has anyone ever seen the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Colonies so reticent as to be unwilling to answer a supplementary question? Why, Sir, on the contrary, he revels in it, and it does appear to me that it is upon questions affecting the Colonial Office that, to a very great extent, the foreign policy of England has turned. Take the question of the number of troops in South Africa. Does that question not trench upon the Foreign Office? Does the state of war in South Africa not affect your interests in China? Are the whole interests of the Empire not so interlaced and interlocked that any question may become a foreign, colonial, Army or a Navy question? I think I have demonstrated by this fact the absurdity of limiting the muzzle to the replies of the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Why, the whole pack will have to be muzzled, and not the leading dog. I therefore think that the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government should reconsider the position that he has taken up in this matter. For myself, I do not think that, except in regard to the Armenians, I have ever put a question to the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in my life. I do not think, with that exception, that I have ever made a speech on foreign affairs, and, practically speaking, I take no interest in any country except Ireland. Therefore, I do not think that I am at all likely to infringe any privilege accorded on this question; but it does seem to me that the Government have, in order to check a particular evil, adopted a cure which is far worse than the disease. My ex-

perience of the right hon. Gentleman at the head of the Government is that there is no one who is more anxious to recognise the rights of hon. Members as a whole than he is. I believe that this debate has arisen because the noble Lord seemed to have put this matter too bluntly, or, if he will allow me to say so without offence, because he blurted out too suddenly a rule which he would have done well to have embellished with more dialectic ornamentation. That being my feeling, I think that the debate will do good, and in the end we shall see the rule fall into what an American orator once called "innocuous desuetude."

*MR. DAVID MACIVER (Liverpool, Kirkdale) said he had had the advantage of perusing a speech made in Lancashire the other day by the hon. Member for Waterford (Mr. John Redmond), the Leader of the Irish party, which clearly foreshadowed the proceedings of to-day. The hon. Member spoke of the union which now existed amongst Irish Members, whose new-found harmony had made itself so conspicuous that day, and which had shown itself so successful in impeding the business. The hon. Member for Waterford told his Lancashire friends that, although the good old days of obstruction had passed away, the Irish Members were now prepared to produce practically the same result by every one of them; as he described it; "taking an intelligent interest in public affairs. That was the new name for obstruction and he (Mr. MacIver) had to congratulate the hon. Member for Waterford upon the complete success with which he had, as it were, "drawn a red herring across the track" of Parliamentary progress. He must be a proud man to-day, to have made the Front Opposition Bench follow so humbly at his heels. Everybody know that the debate was only intended to waste time. He (Mr. MacIver) suggested that it should now cease, as everything which could usefully be said upon the actual subject which was before them had already been said by the Leader of the House.

MR. BARTLEY: I should like to say one or two words on this matter, and I appeal to the Leader of the House to

reconsider the very strong position he has taken up on this subject. I think the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for War was somewhat unfortunate, He said that if we did not get a proper answer to a supplementary question we could have resort to moving the adjournment of the House. I think it is very unfortunate to suggest such an arrangement, because it is a very awkward one, which leads to a great waste of time, and it should not have been suggested as a remedy for this comparatively small evil. The right hon. Gentleman also suggested that this is the practice adopted in foreign parliaments; but if there is one thing that suggests to me that we are on the wrong tack it is that foreign countries seem to approve of this action. I do not think that in this matter we should take a leaf from other countries, for the very strength of this country has been built up by the free and independent discussion of all these great subjects. I resent the idea that foreign affairs should be considered so sacred and secret that they cannot be answered in the House of Commons. If the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs is competent for his position, he is quite competent to decide whether any question should be asked or answered in the House of Commons. I think the whole principle is a very small one. If he is competent to hold that great position it is insulting him to suggest that he is

not fit to decide whether a supplementary question is an important one or one which he should answer, or decide whether the answer should be postponed to another day. I do think that this practice of making the Government of the country rather too slavishly dependent upon one or two Ministers is a growing evil. I have always said that it is an evil not to have independence of opinion in the various Ministers of the Crown, and if even the small supplementary questions have to be deferred to consult the head of the Department, it is an act of slavish dependence which has never been the means of making Ministers great in this country. In regard to the noble Lord himself, I am sure that we all feel that he is perfectly competent to answer these questions, and I think the best plan would be for him to make a point of settling this question himself. I am quite sure he can do this if he will make it a point to go into the question himself, and, like Lord Curzon and all those who have preceded him, claim the right to decide these questions for himself. As a matter of principle I think that we, as private Members, who have so few privileges left, are bound to protest against this growing evil.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS said he believed that a rule of this kind, if adhered to, would work more against the Government than it would help hon. Members on the other side. It was too much for them to expect that the rule would only apply when the Conservatives were in office, for no doubt when his right hon. friends on the Front Opposition Bench came into office they would take advantage of the rule, which would tell very much more against the Conservative Members than it did against the Opposition, for the simple reason that greater interest in the Foreign Office and foreign affairs was taken by hon. Members on the Conservative side than by hon. Members on the Liberal side of the House. As a rule they expected to have more questions put from the Opposition side than from the Ministerialists, but if an examination were made of the number of questions put it would be found that at least 60 per cent of them in regard to general matters came from the Opposition side of the House. If the number of questions relating to the Foreign Office and foreign affairs was ascertained he ventured to say that even in this House, while the Conservatives were in office and in power, it would be found that the large majority of questions on foreign matters came from Members on the Conservative side of the House, which showed that greater interest was taken on the other side of the House in Foreign Office questions than on this side of the House. Therefore, if the muzzle was put upon private Members he ventured to point out that it would affect hon. Members opposite very much more than the Opposition. If the House acquiesced in this rule he was afraid that it might eventually spread to other departments. He quite agreed with what was said by the Leader of the Irish party that this was only another step in the

increasing practice of diminishing the rights of Members of the House. That had been the policy in the past of the Government, and it would be in the future, and it would be found eventually that the arguments which had just been addressed to the House with respect to foreign questions would also be applied to domestic questions. If this muzzle was put on matters affecting the Post Office, he had no doubt that the Postmaster General would come down to that House and say that

the permanent officials were unanimously of the opinion that the system had worked beautifully, and that it was to the advantage of the State that supplementary questions should not be put upon Post Office business. And so, eventually, the rule might be applied to every department of the State.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich) said he believed that as a rule the Under Secretaries of the Foreign Office were quite as competent as any other Ministers, but no Ministers were infallible. It was a peculiarity, however, attaching to the administration of the Foreign Office that an indiscretion there would be likely to do very much more harm than if it were committed anywhere else, and that was really the whole matter. They were told that the Opposition were so patriotic that they would never use any advantage of that kind or press a question which it would be against the public interest to answer. How silly and idle were such pretences, which nobody practised and which nobody believed in. Every Opposition, when they saw a party advantage in a question, were always inclined to press the Government hard whenever they had the opportunity. He did not blame the Opposition for doing that, because that was what they were there for, but the danger was that in the peculiar region of Foreign Affairs a little indiscretion on the part of a

AYES.

Abraham, William (Cork,N.E.
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Brown,George M. (Edinburgh)
Allen, CharlesP.(Glouc.Stroud
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Ambrose, Robert
Bell, Richard
Bryce, Bight Hon. James
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
Black, Alexander William
Burke, E. Haviland-
Ascquith,Rt.Hn.HerbertHenry
Blake, Edward
Burns, John
Atherley-Jones, L.
Boland, John
Burt, Thomas
Barlow, John Emmott
Bowles, T. G. (King's Lynn)
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Boyle, James
Caine, William Sproston
Bartley, George C. T.
Brand, Hon Arthur G.
Caldwell, James

Minister in regard to a question or an answer might produce a national calamity. In the British Museum or the Bodleian Library they were not allowed to use matches. Still, they might argue that they were all perfectly competent to use matches and strike them all over the building without danger. The reason for such a regulation in the British Museum or the Bodleian Library was not because those buildings were more likely to be burned by the indiscreet use of matches than any other public institution, but because if they were burned it would amount to a national catastrophe. And that was the case with the subject under discussion. The object of the rule in this House was clear and straightforward, and undoubtedly it would guard the national interest of the country against aggressive indiscretion on the part of the Opposition, and the defensive indiscretion of a Minister. What consideration would an Opposition exercise in such a matter? The Cabinet made a rule two years ago, and they based it on grounds of public policy. No one believed that it was based upon any other ground. The Government put forward this rule, and now consideration for the national well-being was to be brushed aside by the Opposition, and entirely lost sight of, in order to secure a party advantage. They should not delude themselves by supposing that an Opposition would be so patriotic that they would not always take advantage of this. He earnestly hoped that the Government would, in the interests of the country, be supported in this matter. If ever there was an occasion on which the House of Commons ought to rise above partisan motives it was this occasion, and in the national interest he made this appeal.

Question put.

The House divided::Ayes, 204; Noes, 249. (Division List No. 2.)

Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)

Jacoby, James Alfred

Paulton, James Mellor

Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.

Jameson, Major J. Eustace

Perks, Robert William

Carew, James Laurence

Joicey, Sir James

Pickard, Benjamin

Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton

Jones, David Brynmor(Sw'nsea

Pirie, Duncan V.

Causton, Richard Knight

Jones, William(Carnarvonsh.)

Power, Patrick Joseph

Cawley, Frederick

Jordan, Jeremiah

Price, Robert John

Channing, Francis Allston

Joyce, Michael

Rea, Russell

Clancy, John Joseph

Kearley, Hudson E.
Reckitt, Harold James
Cogan, Denis J.
Kennedy, Patrick James
Reddy, M.
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Kinloch, Sir John George S.
Redmond, John E.(Waterford)
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Labouchere, Henry
Redmond, William (Clare)
Craig, Robert Hunter
Lambert, George
Reid,SirR.Threshie (Dumfries
Crean, Eugene
Langley, Batty
Rickett, J. Compton
Cremer, William Randal
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Crombie, John William
Leamy, Edmund
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Cullinan, J.
Leese,Sir Joseph F. (Accrington
Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
Daly, James
Leigh, Sir Joseph (Stockport)
Roche, John
Dalziel, James Henry
Leng, Sir John
Russell, T. W.
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)
Lewis, John Herbert
Schwann, Charles E.
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
Lloyd-George, David
Scott, Chas.Prestwich(Leigh)
Donelan, Captain A.
Lough, Thomas
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)
Doogan, P. C.
Lowther, Rt. Hon J. (Kent)
Shipman, Dr. John
Douglas, Chas. M. (Lanark)
Lundon, W.

Sinclair, Capt. J. (Forfarshire)
Duffy, William J.
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
Smith, Samuel (Flint)
Duncan, James H.
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Dunn, Sir William
M'Arthur, William(Cornwall)
Soares, Ernest J.
Edwards, Frank
M'Fadden, Edward
Spencer, Rt. Hn C. R(Northants
Elibank, Master of
M'Govern, T.
Strachey, Edward
Emmott, Alfred
M'Hugh, Patrick A.
Sullivan, Donal
Evans, Samuel T.
M'Kenna, Reginald
Taylor, Theodore Cooke
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, North)
Tennant, Harold John
Farrell, James Patrick
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
Thomas, Abel(Carmarthen,E.)
Fenwick, Charles
Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe
Thomas, David A. (Merthyr)
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
Mather, William
Thomas,F.Freeman-(Hastings
Ffrench, Peter
Mooney, John J.
Thomas J A (Glamorgan,Gower
Field, William
Morgan, J. Lloyd(Carmarthen
Thompson,E. C. (Monaghan,N.
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
Morton, Edw. J.C. (Devonport)
Thomson. F. W. (York, W.R.)
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Murnaghan, George
Tomkinson, James

Flynn, James Christopher
Murphy, J.
Trevelyan, Charles Philips
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Tully, Jasper
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Newnes, Sir George
Ure, Alexander
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.
Nolan, Col John P.(Galway,N.
Wallace, Robert
Grant, Corrie
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
Walton, J. Lawson (Leeds, S.)
Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
Norman, Henry
Walton, Joseph (Barnsley)
Griffith, Ellis J.
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T
Gurdon, Sir Wm. Brampton
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
Wason, Eugene(Clackmannan
Haldane, Richard Burdon
O'Brien,Kendal (Tipper'y Mid.
White, George (Norfolk)
Hammond, John
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Harcourt, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm.
O'Connor, James(Wicklow, W.
White, Patrick(Meath,North)
Hardie, J. K. (Merthyr Tydvil
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
Whiteley, Geo. (York, W.R.)
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
O'Doherty, William
Whiteley, J. H. (Halifax)
Harwood, George
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Hayden, John Patrick
O'Dowd, John
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-

O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Hayter, Rt. Hn. Sir Arthur D.
O'Kelly, J. (Roscommon, N.)
Wodehouse, Hon. A. (Essex)
Healy, Timothy Michael
O'Malley, William
Young, Samuel (Cavan, East)
Helme, Nerval Watson
O'Mara, James
Yoxall, James Henry
Hemphill, Rt. Hn. Charles H.
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
TELLERS FOR THE AYES;
Hobhouse, C. E.H.(Bristol,E.)
O'Shee, James John
Mr. Dillon and Mr. John
Holland, William Henry
Palmer, George Wm(Reading)
Ellis.
NOES.
Acland-Hood,Capt. Sir Alex.F.
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Bowles,Capt. H. F.(Middlesex)
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Balfour. Rt Hn Gerald W. (Leeds
Brassey, Albert
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Balfour,Maj.K.R.(Christchch.
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Archdale, Edward Mervyn
Banbury, Frederick George
Brown, Alexander H. (Shropsh.
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M.H.(Bristol
Bull, William James
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Beckett, Ernest William
Bullard, Sir Harry
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Bignold A.
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Bailey, James (Walworth)
Bigwood, James
Carlile, William Walter
Bain, Colonel James Robert

Blundell, Colonel Henry
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lanes.)
Baird, John George Alexander
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-
Cavendish, V. C. W.(Derb'shire
Baldwin, Alfred
Bousfield, William Robert
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Cecil, Lord Hugh(Greenwich
Hogg, Lindsay
Pretymann, Ernest George
Chamberlain,Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.)
Hope, J. F. (SheffieldBrightside
Purvis, Robert
Chamberlain, J. Austen(Worc'r
Horner, Frederick William
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry
Radcliffe, R. F.
Chapman, Edward
Hoult, Joseph
Randles, John S.
Charrington, Spencer
Howard, J. (Mid'x, Tottenham
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Hozier, Hon. James Hy. Cecil
Reid, James (Greenock)
Clare, Octavius Leigh
Hudson, George Bickersteth
Remnant, James Farquharson
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H.A.E.
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
Renshaw, Charles Bine
Coddington, Sir William
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
Rentoul, James Alexander
Colomb, Sir John Charles R.
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Ridley, Hon. M W. (Stalybridge)
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Ridley, S. F. (Bethnal Green)
Corbett, T L (Down, North)
Kennaway.Rt.Hon.SirJohnH.

Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Charles T.
Cranborne, Viscount
Kenyon, James (Lanes., Bury)
Ropner, Colonel Robert
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop)
Round, James
Cust, Henry John C.
Keswick, William
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford.
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Kimber, Henry
Sassoon, Sir Edward Albert
Dewar, T. R. (Tower Hamlets)
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Saunderson, Rt. Hon. Col. E. J.
Dickinson, Hubert Edmond
Laurie, Lieut.-General
Seely, Charles Hilton (Linc'n)
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Lawrence, William F.
Seton-Karr, Henry
Dimsdale, Sir Joseph Cockfield
Lawson, John Grant
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Dorington, Sir John Edward
Lecky, Rt. Hon. Wm. Edw. H.
Shaw-Stewart, M. H. (Renfrew)
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-
Lee, Capt A. H. (Hants, Fareham)
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Duke, Edward Henry
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Sinclair, Louis (Romford)
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Leigh-Bennett, Henry Carrie
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, E.)
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir Wm. H.
Leighton, Stanley
Smith, H. C. (North'mb. Tyns'de)
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N. S.
Smith, J. Parker (Lanarks.)
Faber, George Denison
Long, Col. C. W. (Evesham)
Smith, Hon. W. F. D. (Strand)

Fardell, Sir T. George
Long, Rt. Hon. W. (Bristol,S.
Spear, John Ward
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Ed.
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Spencer, E. (W. Bromwich)
Fergusson, Rt. HnSirJ (Manc'r)
Lowe, Francis William
Stanley, Edward J.(Somerset)
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Lowther, C. (Cumb., Eskdale)
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
Finch, George H.
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Stewart, Sir Mk. J.M'Taggart
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Lucas, Col Francis(Lowestoft)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Jn. M.
Fisher, William Hayes
Lucas,Reginald J. (Portsmouth
Stone, Sir Benjamin
Fison, Frederick William
Macartney.Rt. Hn. WGEllison
Stroyan, John
FitzGerald, Sir R. Penrose-
Macdona, John Cumming
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Fitzroy.Hn. Edward Algernon
MacIver, David (Liverpool)
Talbot,Rt.Hn.J.G.(OxfdUni.
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Maconochie, A. W.
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Flower, Ernest
M'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool
Thornton, Percy M.
Forster, Henry William
M'Calmont, Col. J. (Antrim,E.
Tomlinson, Wm. Ed w. Murray
Foster, Sir M (London Univ.)
M'Iver, Sir Lewis (Edinbro',W
Tufnell, Col. Edward
Garfit, William
Manners, Lord Cecil
Valentia, Viscount
Gibbs,Hn.A.G.H(CityofLond.

Maple, Sir John Blundell
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H. (Sheffield)
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (Elgin & Nairn)
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.
Vincent, Sir Edgar (Exeter)
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Maxwell, W. J. (Dumfriesshire)
Walker, Col. William Hall
Gordon, Maj. Evans- (T'r H'ml'ts)
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Warr, Augustus Frederick
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim
Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
Wason, John C. (Orkney)
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Webb, Colonel William G.
Greene, Sir E. W. (Bury St. Ed.)
Midward, Colonel Victor
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C. E. (Taunton)
Greene, W. Raymond- (Cambs.)
Mitchell, William
Wharton, Rt. Hon. John Lloyd
Grenfell, William Henry
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Whiteley, H. (Ashton-under-Lyne)
Gretton, John
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Guest, Hon. Ivor Churchill
Moore, William (Antrim, N.)
Wilson, A. Stanley (York, E. R.)
Guthrie, Walter Murray
More, Robt. Jasper (Shropsh.)
Wilson, John (Falkirk)
Hain, Edward
Morgan, D. J. (Walthamstow)
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Hall, Edward Marshall
Morris, Hon. Martin Henry F.
Wilson, J. W. (Worcestersh, N.)
Halsey, Thomas Frederick
Morton, Arthur H. A. (Deptford)

Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)
Hamilton, RtHnLordG(Mid'x
Mount, William Arthur
Wodehouse, Rt Hn E.R.(Bath)
Hamilton,Marqof(L'nd'nderry
Murray, Rt Hn AGraham (Bute
Wortley, Rt. Hon.C.B. Stuart-
Hardy,Laurence(K'nt,Ashf'rd
Myers, William Henry
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Newdigate, Francis Alex.
Wylie, Alexander
Harris, F Leverton(Tynemouth
Nicholson, William Graham
Wyndham, George
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
Haslett, Sir James Horner
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Hay, Hon. Claude George
Palmer, Walter (Salisbury)
Heath, A. Howard (Hanley)
Peel, Hon. William Robert W.
TELLERS FOR THE NOES;
Helder, Augustus
Pemberton, John S. G.
Sir William Walrond and
Henderson, Alexander
Penn, John
Mr. Anstruther.
Hermon-Hodge, Robt. Trotter
Percy, Earl
Higginbottom, S. W.
Pierpoint, Robert
Hoare, Ed. Brodie (Hampstead)
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Hoare, Sir Samuel (Norwich)
Plummer, Walter R.
Hobhouse, Henry (Somerset,E.
Powell, Sir, Francis Sharp
NEW WRITS.

Ordered, That in all cases where the seat of any Member has been declared void on the ground of Corrupt Practices or Illegal Practices no Motion for the issue of a new Writ shall be made without two clear days' previous notice on the

Notice Paper of the House, and that such Notice be considered before the Orders of the Day and Notices of Motions. ;(Sir William Walrond.)

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HIS MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.

[THIRD DAY'S DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [14th February], "That an humble Address be presented to his Majesty, as followeth;:

"Most Gracious Sovereign,

"We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.";(Mr. Forster.)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Viscount CRANBORNE, Rochester): I think perhaps the attitude of diffidence with which an Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs often addresses the House of Commons may probably be considered to be not unnaturally increased upon the present occasion. There has been such a bright light thrown upon him during the last hour or two, and attention has been called in so prominent a degree to the extreme delicacy of his functions, that I feel that everything which I say on the present occasion will be watched by hon. Gentlemen with an extra amount of care, and that I ought to arrange my observations accordingly. Permit me to say in the first place that I very much regret, if I may say so with great respect, the discussion which has just come to an end; because foreign affairs ought to be conducted, as far as possible, in a peaceful atmosphere, as far removed as may be from the polemical condition which has recently characterised the House; and I hope nothing I shall say will prolong that polemical condition of the atmosphere. May I also say, if the hon. Member for East Mayo will give me his attention for a moment, that I particularly regret that any observation of mine should have seemed to him in the least discourteous at an earlier period of our proceedings.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): The noble Lord is quite mistaken. I was very much obliged to him for his observations, for they enabled me to move my motion. I had no quarrel with the noble Lord; on the contrary, he gave me an opportunity of raising the question.

* VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I am obliged to the hon. Gentleman. I am sorry that I was brought into conflict with him. But I think the debate which has just closed may have this effect; for my part, I shall take the very greatest care, in the drawing of the answers to questions in this House, that they may be as full as they possibly can be consistently with the public interest, and I shall never forget, what I never have forgotten since I have been a Member of this House, the absolute right of the House of Commons to have all the information which it is in the power of a Minister to give.

When the House adjourned on Friday night I was venturing to call the attention of hon. Members to the fact that the commercial interests were really the principal interests of this country in China, but I said that in the crisis

which has taken place there it might be necessary for the consideration of the punishment of the offenders in China to take precedence over all other questions. I may say, perhaps, to the hon. Member for East Mayo, now, that as far as we are concerned we should not consider suicide to be a proper alternative to the death penalty which we demand against these high-placed officials.

MR. DILLON: The noble Lord has given a good answer now to the question I put to him.

* VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I will revert at once to the considerations of a commercial character, at any rate in the first place, in regard to the Chinese question. The hon. Member for Barnsley complained on Friday night of the great delay which had taken place. I fancy he extended it to all the operations in China, both to the drawing of the Note and the enforcement of the demands of the Powers. Undoubtedly, Sir, the delay has been very great. I do not think the most ardent admirer of the Concert would ever accuse it of lightning-like rapidity. Its operations are generally very deliberate, and the Chinese themselves have no reputation for any great rapidity of action. I notice that in a recent article so great an authority as Sir Robert Hart, speaking of the Chinese, tells us that we may look for their rehabilitation against Europe to a period removed from our own by one or two centuries. That is the kind of attitude of mind which the Chinese adopt in all their operations, and undoubtedly when the Concert have to deal with the Chinese they must expect very great delay. I do not think the sending of a special plenipotentiary to China would have hurried matters very-much. We have, very accomplished representatives there, as we have always had. I might appeal again to Sir Robert Hart's authority on the same matter. I do not believe that a mere change of personnel of the kind advocated by the hon. Gentleman opposite would have made any great difference. Certain progress has been made, though, as I have said, it is very slow. In the first place we have arrived at a complete understanding as to the joint Note. It is a long document involving thirteen or fourteen separate heads, all of which had to be a matter of diplomatic discussion and decision.

I need not trouble the House any more on the question of the punishment of the Chinese offenders of which I spoke on Friday night. We have other subjects touched on in the Note. In the first place there is the question of indemnities. On the question of indemnities our representative has been instructed to gather together the various claims which may be made against the Chinese Government and classify them. Now,

these claims may be divided into two classes. There are the claims of individuals and the national claims; the claims of the different Powers, against China. I would rather not say anything at this moment about the individual claims; but, with regard to the claims which the Powers have and especially the claim which England has against China, I am inclined to think there is a measure of agreement between His Majesty's Government and the hon. Gentleman opposite and those who agree with him. After all, we are the injured parties; not the Chinese. We have suffered great wrong in the outrages which have been executed against our fellow-subjects or our representatives, and it would be a very

indifferent compensation for our injuries if we added to those injuries the great further injury of so crippling Chinese finance as to damage our own trade. The Government occupy that point of view just as much as the hon. Gentleman does, and in the consideration of the amount of indemnity which we shall claim against China that matter will be carefully borne in mind. The indemnities, in our opinion, are relatively unimportant compared to our trade interests. What have we done for trade? In the first place, we have gone a long way, although our task is still very far from being complete, to restore a measure of tranquillity in China. I neither suggest that we have gone the whole way which we may hope to go nor that in any case we can hope that for many years it shall be complete, for in many parts of China the condition of unrest is chronic. Still, a great deal may be done, and considerable steps have been taken in the last few months towards a restoration of tranquillity. As hon. Gentlemen have said in this House and elsewhere, that is not sufficient. We do not look merely to restoring the old state of tranquillity, but if possible to improving on the present commercial system in China, so that it shall be advantageous to her and ourselves. I think the House will realise that the subject of such reforms will necessarily lead to prolonged negotiations. There may be some reason, I am afraid, to complain of the long delay that may take place. The Government of China is, as everyone knows, divided into great provinces, autonomous in character, with important officials called Viceroy's at their head; and in any general scheme of commercial or fiscal reform there is no question that every one of these provincial administrations will have to be consulted, and that the time occupied must necessarily be, when we consider Chinese methods, very prolonged. I am afraid that the same reflection occurs when I turn from the general to the particular, and consider the kind of matters in which reform is specially called for.

Now, Sir, as everybody knows, as the hon. Gentleman himself told us on Friday night, the greatest region in which fiscal reform ought to take place is in respect of what is called the *likin*, or the interior customs of China. It is very widely extended. It employs an enormous number of officials in all parts of China; high officials, low officials of all sorts, all of whom have got vested interests of a very substantial kind in the institution of *likin*, which will therefore require great care and considerable time in its reform. It would be so even if it existed in this country; more so out there. That the evils connected with *likin* are very great I do not think anybody can doubt. I was struck the other day by some figures which showed that in the case of one particular province one levy, that is to say the passing of one barrier, taxed the goods to the extent of 18 per cent. *ad valorem*. There are often as much as two or more levies before the goods arrive at their destination. Of course, as the House will understand, I am putting an extreme case. It is a case I have on good authority, and I have no doubt it is a fact. The House will know, as a matter of treaty law, that this particular impost can be franchised by a payment of 2½ per cent. at the coast. I think I have given you some idea of how extremely divergent the actual practice is from that which English merchants have a treaty right to demand. The reasons, of course, are obvious; that the

whole of the revenues by which the government of these provinces is carried on really depend on likin. The money which is paid in view of the duties at the coast does not reach the provincial treasuries at all. Unless they impose likin they have no means of paying their public service or transacting the ordinary business of government. Add to that corruption; there is any amount, I need not say, of that article in China. The explanation is obvious.

I have said this much because I wanted the House to understand that His Majesty's Government are fully seised of both the importance and the difficulties of commercial reform in China, that they have the subject very prominently before their minds, and that they very carefully consider what ought to be done and what can be done. If I may say so, I want to make the House understand how immensely complicated the matter is, and what great delay one must necessarily expect before anything like reform, even to a moderate extent, can be carried out. The hon. Gentleman asked me about certain other matters. He asked me about the waterways. That matter is being considered, but I can say nothing more about it for the present. Then he spoke of removing the obstructions to navigation. There, I think, he made a very good, practical suggestion, a suggestion which the Government are carefully considering. And then there was something he said about the necessity of giving the Chinese Government the right to re-enter upon their railways, if that should seem to be necessary in their own interests. I believe, although it is not a matter which I have gone into very carefully, that in most of the railway agreements such a power is reserved to the Chinese Government.

I will just say a word or two about the very great difficulties in respect of one railway. I speak, of course, of the railway from Tien-tsin to Shan-hai-kwan. There is no doubt that the state of things which has existed with respect to that railway and the occurrences which have taken place there have given His Majesty's Government ground for very great anxiety. The railway was occupied by the Russians, so far as we are aware, without any authority to do so and in the course of their operations they undoubtedly did take into their charge a large amount of railway material at Niu-chwang belonging to a British company, which, I think, there is no question was not part of their own property. These things happened in respect of a railway which had been made by British capital, which had been worked by British skill, where, that is to say, our interests were of the most important and immediate character.

In considering what line we ought to take on this matter, three objects were before us; first of all, the restoration of the railway, which was important in every respect from a commercial point of view; secondly, the rights of our own countrymen; and, lastly, the great importance of maintaining the friendly alliance of the Great Powers of Europe with regard to the Chinese question. We thought it well to proceed not by way of polemical utterance, but by way of friendly representation to the Russian Government. I am glad to say that those representations have met with a large measure of success. In the first place, the Russian Government assured us, and assure us now, in the most categorical manner, that the occupation of the railway was purely a temporary occupation,

dictated by the military considerations of the moment; and, in the second place, they promised to restore the railway material and have restored it. I am bound to say that in all our dealings in this matter with the Russian Government we have been received in a most friendly way, and we have no complaint whatever to make of the attitude of the Government of the Russian Emperor. Sometimes one cannot help regretting that the undoubtedly benevolent intentions of the Russian Government are not so rapidly carried out by their officers in distant provinces as we have some right to expect, but that their intentions in this matter are perfectly sound and thoroughly friendly to this country I, for one, do not doubt. Notwithstanding the great importance of the question involved, when once it is approached in that spirit by the two Governments, when it is explained in the most friendly terms that the occupation is only of a temporary character, even if in some respects we do not agree with the line the Russian Government have taken, nothing removes the controversy from the domain of purely friendly negotiation. Therefore, relying on these assurances, I think the House may have its anxiety with regard to the railway to some extent relieved.

*MR. JOSEPH WALTON (Yorkshire, W.R.,Barnsley): I would like to ask a question of the noble Lord. In speaking of the railway from Tien-tsin to Shan-hai-kwan, did he intend the House to understand that his observations also applied to the railway from Shan-hai-kwan to Niu-chwang? We have heard nothing of the determination of the Russian Government to hand over that railway either to the British or the Germans.

* VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I assure the hon. Gentleman I am too much impressed with the importance and delicacy of the question with which I am dealing to make any mistake as to the names of the particular branches of the railway involved. As to the railway north of the Great Wall, we understand, on the same high assurances, that the occupation is merely of a temporary character. While assenting for the moment on military grounds to the present occupation, we have reserved our full political and financial rights.

I turn for a moment to speak of Manchuria. Rumours have reached us of proceedings of the Russians with respect to Manchuria. We made proper inquiry from our representative, and he assured us that any agreement which exists between Russia and China in respect to Manchuria is in the nature of a *modus vivendi*, consisting merely in the simultaneous presence of the Russian and Chinese forces in Manchuria, in order to prevent disturbances on their frontier. He assured us that the occupation of the railway is of a purely temporary character, and that, although a guarantee is expected by the Russian Government that upon their withdrawal the disturbances shall not break out again, yet that guarantee will not take the form of an acquisition of territory or of a virtual or actual protectorate in Manchuria. The hon. Member for St. Paneras asked me on Friday night a question in respect to Niu-chwang. A great deal has been said about Niu-chwang, which, as the House knows, is a treaty port; but I hope the House will abstain from language of exaggeration in regard to that place. I told the House during a former sitting that Niu-chwang had been occupied by the Russians on the ground of military necessity; but I am able to

say, upon very good authority, that since then, although Niu-chwang is nominally under Russian martial law, the Russians do not interfere, but people are allowed to settle their own differences if they like. As a matter of fact the private rights of the foreign community do not appear to have been interfered with to any extent. In respect to Niu-chwang we have received assurances at least equal to those which have been given us in respect to the province of South Manchuria. We understand the Russians are prepared to restore Niu-chwang at the end of their occupation precisely to its former condition. I do not think that after what I have been able to say to the House on the present occasion any Member will assert that the Government's diplomacy in this matter has not been active. On Friday night I said that it has not been aggressive. We have borne in mind the enormous importance of the British interests in China, and have not forgotten that it is our duty to make representations when we think those interests are in any degree threatened. I earnestly hope the House will recognise not only that the Government have been active, but that I have already taken to heart the lesson read to me an hour or two ago about the anxiety of the House of Commons for information, and that I have done my best to give information in some detail. In pursuit of our policy, which is neither aggressive nor ostentatious, we ask the support of the House of Commons, and beg them to rely on the fact that we shall neither lose sight of the importance of maintaining British interests nor of preserving the peace of the world.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT (Monmouthshire, W.): I am sure the House has heard with satisfaction the very frank and able statement made by the noble Lord. I had not intended to trouble the House to-day; I should have been very glad to have left the discussion of this subject in the able hands of my hon. friend the Member for Barnsley, and I was very pleased to hear from the noble Lord that on many points he agrees with the view of my hon. friend; but there is one point which has led me to desire to ask further explanation from the Government.

I desire to remind the House of the words used by the noble Lord on Friday last. There is a most critical question for this country, for the House of Commons, and for the Government, and that is to know what is our military position at this moment in China, and what is the military policy of the Government in that country. The noble Lord said, and I remarked his words with satisfaction, that; "in pressing these punishments on the Chinese Government we had to be clear that we should not commit ourselves in such a way as to lose control over our own conduct. It was suggested, for example, that in order to enforce the wishes of Great Britain, or other members of the allied Powers, on the Chinese Government an expedition should be taken into the interior of China of a warlike character. That, I think, would have been a most disastrous policy."

I think everyone will agree with the noble Lord that that would be a disastrous policy. Well, Sir, that was the position of the Government on Friday night; but this morning, within a few hours of that statement, another statement has come from China, which is enforced with all the authority of a leading article in The Times, founded on their correspondent's information. I am a little surprised that the noble Lord has made no allusion to that information, and has not told

us whether it is well founded or not. This is the statement put forward, that; "on the next day [that is, on Saturday] Count von Waldersee issued a general order to the troops under his command directing them to make ready to take the field, the idea being to make a march into the interior in the spring."

Now it is of the deepest concern to this country to know whether that statement is true, and how far the British Government are committed to the policy indicated by such an order as that First of all, I ask, is that statement true?

I would ask a second question; I will put a supplementary question; and that is, if that statement is true, has such an order as that been given without consultation with the British Government; and have the Government taken any measures to ascertain the facts with reference to such an order, or will they do so? I wish also to ask whether they have intimated that they will be no parties and give no consent to a policy which the noble Lord has properly declared to be disastrous and objectionable.

There is another matter upon which I do not think we have ever had a proper statement in this House. What is our military position in China as regards the action of ourselves and other Powers? We know that Count von Waldersee has been accepted as General-in-Chief of the armies out there; but would a general order of the kind he has said to have issued apply to all the military forces in China or only to the troops of his own nationality? I want to know whether a general order of that kind would operate upon the British forces out there. And now I come to ask another question which lies at the root of the whole thing. Is it within the purview of the concert of Europe that one Power should make a military expedition into the interior of China without the co-operation and consent of the other Powers? That is a most critical question with reference to the whole future of China. I will not at present enter further into the discussion of this matter, because I am glad to know that His Majesty's Government are opposed to this policy: but I wish to have some assurance as to the situation in which we stand with reference to other Powers, and especially with reference to the action of a single Power without the co-operation of the others. These are most critical questions. We know how easily, without the desire, almost without the knowledge, of the Government we may be committed to some disastrous policy and to some more disastrous war. When you once begin a policy of this kind you may find yourselves embarked in another guerilla war, and in that guerilla war it will be well to remember that the population of China is more numerous even than that of the Boers. Therefore it is a matter of the most critical importance that the House of Commons and the country should have their eyes open to the dangers of the situation, and that before we go into our military Estimates, we should know what is our military position in China. Quite apart from questions of policy, there is for us, at least, a ruling consideration: that we have exhausted our military power in South Africa.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): Not nearly.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: Of course the hon. Member is always ready to go himself. But what did we hear from the Secretary of State for India to-night? He told us the numbers by which our forces in India have been depleted. The hon. Member is

always in terror of Russia attacking India. What does he think of the statement of the Secretary for State? We know perfectly well that you have got almost to the very last man in this country and the colonies, and you cannot afford another guerilla war. That is the situation in which we stand, and we should proceed with prudence at least.

I was very glad to hear the language of the noble Lord as to the relations of this country with Russia. He did not pander to the desire to inflame the animosity of nations. He said the Government has dealt with this Chinese question in a spirit of friendly negotiation with Russia, and you may depend upon it that this question cannot be solved without the greatest disaster unless this country is acting in friendly and reasonable co-operation with Russia, who has so many thousand miles of frontier conterminous with China, where your fleet cannot be and her armies can. Therefore, no Government with any sense of reason, caution, or prudence will ever deal with the Chinese question except in the spirit which I am glad to hear from the noble Lord governs the relations between this country and Russia. What I am thinking of at present is the danger which may occur from a want of a thorough understanding of our military position in China, and how far it may be compromised by the action of any of the other Powers. Therefore I have ventured to ask for some further information from the Government as to what are the commitments and liabilities we may incur in consequence of our military situation in China

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I shall, with the leave of the House, reply to the right hon. Gentleman. I have to say with regard to the question he has put that, so far as we are aware, there is no foreign Government wanting to make an expedition into the interior of China, and I need not say that if such were in contemplation, certainly our Commander would require the instructions of the Government before consenting to go. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will forgive me for saying that his speech illustrates the great difficulty of answering without notice a very large number of categorical questions.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: The noble Lord will forgive me for saying that this is my only opportunity. After to-day he will not be able to answer my question.

* VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: If the right hon. Gentleman will be so good as to revert to the much-abused method of putting questions on the Paper, I will endeavour to give a categorical reply to the several points that have been raised.

*MR. WYLIE (Dumbartonshire): Having already spoken on this subject in December, I shall confine my few remarks within as narrow limits as possible. Let me associate myself with the remarks that have fallen from my right hon. friend the Member for West Monmouthshire, with respect to the speech of the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Nothing could better illustrate the unassailable position the Government occupies in connection with the question of China than this debate and previous debates in the House of Commons. During the elections sweeping statements were made by Liberal orators as to the weakness and futility of the Government's policy in China, and when the House met in December, the hon. Member for Barnsley brought forward a strong Amendment to the Address dealing with this question, but from a comparison of that Amendment with this which he has now brought before the House, it is

†The hon. Member for Barnsley had on the Paper notice of the following Amendment to the Address:; "And we humbly represent to your Majesty that it is essential that adequate clear to me that his criticisms are being gradually reduced to the vanishing point. In addition to having withdrawn his Amendment, he has gone the length of congratulating the Government on having been able to preserve the concert of the Powers and to settle the basis of negotiations for concluding peace with the Chinese Government, and I am of opinion that the more the hon. Member realises the vast difficulties connected with the Chinese problem, and the more he becomes acquainted with what the Government has actually done to preserve the rights and privileges of British subjects in China the more will he be inclined to diminish criticism and to increase congratulations. I noted with pleasure that the hon. Member had entirely deleted that clause in his former Amendment which urged that no demand should be made on the Chinese Government for the punishment of Chinese officials which could not be equally imposed in the case of a European Power; but I regret very much that in the course of his speech he should have stated that his sympathies were entirely with the Chinese, that the rising of the Chinese was a patriotic rising, and that it was hypocrisy on the part of western civilisation to make a demand for the decapitation of Chinese princes and generals. The hon. Member should remember that those men whom he seeks in some measure to protect have been guilty, consciously guilty, not only of the

measures should be taken for the safeguarding of the vast commercial and political interests of the British Empire in China, and that in connection with the settlement following the recent hostilities reparation should be sought in increased facilities for trade rather than by a money indemnity."; This Amendment he did not move, for the reason stated at the commencement of his speech on 15th February. The Amendment proposed by the hon. Member on 7th December, 1900, was as follows:; "And we humbly represent to your Majesty that it is essential that more adequate measures should be taken for the safeguarding of the vast commercial and political interests of the British Empire in China; and we further humbly submit that no demand should be made on the Chinese Government for the punishment of Chinese officials which would not be equally imposed in the case of a European Power, and also that reparation should be sought in increased facilities to trade rather than by a money indemnity."; For the discussion on this Amendment, see The Parliamentary Debates [Fourth Series], Vol. lxxxviii., page 303.

most flagrant breaches of international rights, but of treacheries and atrocities which have been perpetrated on the Christian population, both European and native. Many Europeans, and some natives, put themselves under the special protection of some of these officials, never for one moment doubting that their respect for international rights and treaties would cause them to use their influence on the side of justice and humanity, instead of which they used their position for the purpose of inflicting severe tortures, and often a lingering death, upon those who had sought protection, and whom they were bound to protect. I think that this House will support the action which has been taken

by the British Government and by the allied Powers in insisting that condign punishment should be inflicted upon those cruel, treacherous, and cowardly miscreants, not for revenge, but for the purpose of preventing a repetition of such atrocities, and for the purpose of securing the safety of the Christian population in China, whether European or native, for all time coming.

There is one other point, and only one, to which I wish to refer at the present time. When I spoke in December last, I sought to impress upon the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs that, in the settlement which is being made in China, it is of vital importance to arrange that all duties leviable on goods imported into China should be rigorously confined to the ports of entry, that they should there be levied under the superintendence of European officials, that they should be of sufficient amount to enable the Chinese Government properly to pay the officials, and to meet the purposes of administration, and that the likin, consisting of extortionate exactions which have been charged, and which have been the greatest hindrance to British commerce, should be absolutely and for ever abolished. I am very glad that the noble Lord the Under Secretary has shown us that the Government are fully aware of the importance of this question, and that they are taking every step to have such a measure included among the stipulations with the Chinese Government. In conclusion let me say that the mercantile community of this country especially feel much satisfaction at the vigour and resolution with which the Government persevere in such well advised measures for the purpose of preserving the concert of the Powers to secure peace in China, and of increasing all our commercial advantages in that country. I feel quite certain that the country will thoroughly acknowledge the good service which has been done to them in this important point.

MR. C. E. H. HOBHOUSE (Bristol, E.): I think the House of Commons and the Under Secretary of State are to be congratulated upon the moderate tendency of the speech to which we listened before dinner. The speech marks a very great advance upon anything the country has been told up to the present by any Minister as to the policy of the Government in China.

Attention called to the fact that forty Members were not present. House counted, and forty Members being found present;

MR. C. E. H. HOBHOUSE (continuing): The Under Secretary on Friday last said that the Opposition did not realise what was the avowed policy of the Government.

That was not unnatural, because at that moment the Government had avowed no policy at all; the only policy with which we were acquainted was a policy of reticence and very great reluctance to have anything said about events in China, either in this House or in the country. But to-day the Under Secretary tells us, what we already knew, that there is an absolute right in the House of Commons to know all that was going on, and I am bound to say he did give us some information, which was certainly of a satisfactory kind. In the first place, he told us that the questions of indemnities, duties, the Shan-hai-kwan Railway, and Manchuria had obtained the lively interest of the Government. Not unnaturally, he tried to make out for the Government of which he is a member a position as strong as could be claimed for it; but I venture to say he took an

unduly favourable estimate of the position of England in China at the present moment. The Chinese Government and people are peculiarly susceptible to what may be called "prestige," and we have a means of getting to know the sort of estimation in which the Chinese Government and people hold this country and its Government just now. A proposal was made by the Chinese Government to send an envoy to offer their condolences to His Majesty upon the death of the late Queen. The envoy selected for this purpose was not a prince of the Imperial House; he was not even a person holding a distinguished position in the Chinese Government; he was what is called a Literary Chancellor; a position equal to that of a Viceroy. But the person deputed by the Chinese Government to offer to the German Emperor condolences for the murder of his envoy is not a Literary Chancellor; whatever that may be; but a prince of the highest rank. That is a very significant comment on the difference in the estimation in which the German Government and the British Government are held by the Chinese Government. The Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in support of the policy of the Government, and as a proof of the vigour and spirit of that policy, told us that they had been fortunate enough to propose language which was acceptable to all persons concerned with regard to the proposals made by the various Powers concerned to China. But that language has never been divulged to us; we are ignorant of the terms of the proposals. All we were told was that it was a proposal embodied under thirteen or fourteen heads, and, therefore, a very lengthy document. I think we have a right to be told something more than that. Nine months have elapsed since these disturbances began, and all we know is that the proposals of the Government are voluminous. The Under Secretary took credit to himself for what he told the House, but I think that what he did not tell us was even more marked. With regard to the Shan-hai-kwan Railway, he told us that it was occupied by the Russians without authority. What does he mean by that? If this railway was occupied by the Russian forces without the authority of the general officer commanding them or without the authority of the Government which commands that general officer, surely it would not have been very difficult to induce the Russian Government to withdraw their forces at once, and it need not have been necessary to obtain the sanction or the consent not merely of the Russian Government, but of the German Government, and, as was finally revealed to us a day or two ago, of the Japanese Government, to the restoration of our own property to our own Government. We are not told the exact terms upon which this railway is eventually to be handed back. We are told that one part has already been handed back, but with regard to the other part the Under Secretary did not like to commit himself. But he did tell us that the Russian Government had what he called "taken charge of the rolling stock of this railway." What does that mean? If it means that they have commandeered for their own permanent use the rolling stock of this British company and British undertaking, surely we have a right to ask that they shall replace that rolling stock, or, at all events, refund the money it will cost the railway to restore it. With regard to this railway, the Under Secretary told us that he had the definite assurance of the Russian Government. But it is not the first time that we have had equally

definite;

* VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: Perhaps the hon. Gentleman will excuse me. I am not sure that I made myself quite clear. Not only have we the definite assurance of the Russian Government that they would evacuate it, but they have already done so, and have handed it over to the German Government, who are about to hand it over to us.

MR. C. E. H. HOBHOUSE: That is a rather roundabout way of getting hold of property which belongs to yourself. I suppose that this process was gone through in order to save the face of the Russian Government. But what I want to know is whether the other part of the railway, and also the rolling stock, are going to be handed back to us as well. Has the Under Secretary got permission from the German Government and from the Japanese Government to get this property back also, or has this been made a sort of saving clause by which the Russian Government are to recoup themselves the cost of repairing the railway, which they

did with the property of the railway company itself? The Under Secretary failed to explain how it is that other nations can at the present moment protect their commercial undertakings and their industrial concerns with much greater promptitude than the English Government. It is in the recollection of the country that we stopped a mail steamer and examined its cargo in Delagoa Bay during the disturbances in South Africa. We at once got from the German Government a Note couched in very grave terms. And that Note was not delivered in secret, as most of the communications of our Government are, but it was made public to the world that the German Government would stand no nonsense when industrial concerns were at stake. But we allow a whole railway, costing something like 2£ millions, to be taken from us by another nation and to be retained for a very long time, and eventually we go through a very prolonged process to get back our own property. It may be very satisfactory to get it back eventually, but the methods I venture to characterise as extremely unsatisfactory. With regard to Manchuria, the Under Secretary tells us that he has a guarantee. I did not gather whether that was a written or a verbal guarantee.

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I do not think I said guarantee.

MR. C. E. H. HOBHOUSE: Well, an assurance. Is it a written or a verbal assurance that the occupation of Manchuria is a *modus vivendi* under which order is to be restored? In the course of restoring order I gather that a great number of the Chinese officials have, as the noble Lord phrased it, "disappeared."

*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: No doubt it is my fault, but the hon. Gentleman is mixing up the question of Manchuria with some phrase which I dropped about Niu-chwang. As to Manchuria, we applied to our own representative at St. Petersburg, and it is on his information that I have made that statement to the House. As to Niu-chwang, I explained in detail that the state of things is not so serious as some hon. Gentlemen seem to imagine.

MR. C. E. H. HOBHOUSE: I am sorry if I misrepresented the noble Lord, but I want to insist upon my point. Is that assurance that this *modus vivendi* is not an actual or a virtual protectorate a written or a verbal assurance? Has it been

communicated to our Ambassador in St. Petersburg in writing or by word of mouth, because unless it has been communicated in writing there is great danger that at some future date there may be representations by the Russian Government that our Ambassador misunderstood the tenour of the communication, and that the protectorate which undoubtedly has been established in Manchuria is not to be merely temporary but permanent. It is significant to note in this respect that both the great French newspapers, who are not unfriendly judges of the conduct and attitude of the Russian Government, have spoken of the tenure of Manchuria as an actual and virtual occupation of the country, in direct contradistinction to the assurance which the noble Lord has been so happy to receive. In regard to Manchuria, the noble Lord said on Friday night that with reference to trade in that country there was no exclusion at the present moment. That is naturally the case, because foreign merchandise is brought into Manchuria from America or Europe overseas. That condition of things cannot long obtain, because at no distant date Manchuria will be joined to the Russian Empire by a continuous line of railway. As soon as the necessity no longer exists it will be no longer necessary to keep the door open which is now left ajar; the door may be slammed at any moment upon the not unnatural ground that it is no longer necessary. Therefore, when the noble Lord tells us that exclusion of foreign merchandise does not exist in Manchuria, that answer may be sufficient for to-day, but I venture to say that it is not adequate for to-morrow. It may be impossible for the noble Lord to answer the various points I have endeavoured to raise. I remember that the President of the Local Government Board when addressing his constituents some months ago told them that in reference to China they must not ask too much from the Government. I venture to say that that is a very unsatisfactory answer, coming from a member of the Ministry, upon a question so important as this. We do not ask too much of the noble Lord and the Government, but we do ask that full consideration of the trade and interests, whether commercial or political, of this country shall be given by the Government, and we have some indication; and I venture to congratulate the noble Lord upon it; that these matters have not altogether slipped from his memory.

MR. LOUIS SINCLAIR (Essex, Romford): I wish to address myself to the Report of the Commission upon the Army Medical Corps in South Africa. I think everyone will admit that that Report has not succeeded in satisfying the expectation of those who desired its appointment. No one desired that an unmeasured amount of blame should be cast upon the heads of the Army Medical Department, but it was intended that more impartial and non-departmental evidence should be thoroughly examined into. I think it will be admitted that there has not been a sufficient amount of entirely unbiased and disinterested inquiry into the subject. Official views have invariably been given greater weight to than non-official. The Commission seems to have followed the example set by many others, and its Report condemns and yet seeks for excuses, it blames and yet exculpates, it complains and yet praises. Reading between the lines, it seems as though the Commissioners were fully conscious that there had been a great deal of blundering and mismanagement, and yet they were most unwilling to fix the responsibility, and

where in any case they felt obliged to do so, they proceed to find extenuating circumstances. Whichever way one looks at the Report, I think anyone will admit that a most lamentable state of affairs is palpably disclosed, and the whole consideration of the case seems to fall naturally under three headings: (1) the staff of the Royal Army Medical Corps, (2) their methods of management, and (3) the question of their position in time of war with respect to the difficulties of transport and responsibility. The provision of transport has been made in such a manner as to make the efficiency of this department totally inadequate. I think it will be admitted that in the first place the personnel is woefully deficient, certainly in numbers, and it is to be feared, in many cases, in the special medical and surgical knowledge which is absolutely necessary for a staff of that kind which has to deal with large bodies of men employed in the field fighting against an enemy. Leaving aside the question of an increase of the employment of nurses; although it seems to be generally agreed that there was room for many more even at the base hospitals; there is no doubt that there were not enough surgeons employed. And what is the reason of this? I think the reason is to be found in the fact that the Royal Army Medical Corps is most unpopular amongst medical students as compared with the Navy, for in the Navy any number of surgeons can be obtained, whereas it is impossible to get enough to serve in the Army. Long before the war began it is a fact that the War Department went to all the schools of medical science in the country and begged for surgeons. There were then; more vacancies than applicants, competition was reduced to an absolute farce, and the Army Medical Department were compelled to take on anybody who could be induced to go out to South Africa. This state of things does not exist in the Navy, which is a most popular service with medical men, and therefore there must be something radically wrong.

I think that the only remedy that we can hope for is the appointment of a strong Committee, consisting of representatives from both sides of the House, which should at least contain one or two men from the younger members of the teaching staffs of our medical schools, and this committee should have full power to examine all these questions on oath. It should have the widest scope of inquiry, and be allowed to suggest practical remedies. A remedy is urgent, and should be found with as little delay as possible. There is no need to wait till the war is over. This Department was in a state of chaos before the war, and I think that its working during the last eighteen months has exposed its inefficiency to the whole world. I think everyone will admit that without the help of the civil surgeons our position would have been perfectly hopeless. Here we have established at a moment's notice one of the very finest volunteer forces that the country could wish for. Why should it be done away with even at the end of the war? It is possible to establish a really efficient Army Medical Reserve.

I would suggest a plan on these lines: that young surgeons having no practice to go to immediately after passing their examinations might be induced, by paying them a certain amount per annum; say, for a year or eighteen months; to join a course of instruction which would fit them for the Army. Let them study military

surgery and sanitation, and then join the Reserve. I would suggest that they be paid so much for the first five years, and that the country should have a call upon them for their services should occasion arise. They might be called upon to give a month every year for training for manœuvres for five years, and then be under an obligation to do service in some Volunteer medical corps, with liability to volunteer for home service for ten years. You would then have a body of men capable of fulfilling the duties which an ordinary medical training does not I give to the surgeon who is called upon at the present time to serve in the field. If this were done, we should get an efficient corps of medical men, in case of emergency, to fill the places of those civil surgeons who are now in South Africa, and whose training is not what it ought to be. Such officers would always possess the merit of being up to date in medical and sanitary science. It always has been and is now a great complaint among the members of the Royal Army Medical Corps that they can seldom get leave to go and study any new systems and processes at the great hospitals in times of peace. They are afforded no opportunity by which they can make themselves proficient. I think an arrangement could be made by which our troops at home could be treated in our hospitals in times of peace, and some of the senior medical officers might join the hospital staff. This, at any rate, would keep them up to their work, preserve the connection with their profession, and save a large amount of money to the

nation. One of the most necessary things we shall undoubtedly have to do in the future is to procure and attract a larger number of recruits for service in the Army. To accomplish this successfully you must provide proper treatment for those men in sickness and when wounded, and, unless more care is taken by a court of inquiry than has been taken by the one which has just reported, I am afraid it will militate against the enlistment of many soldiers who would have joined the Army if proper medical treatment was assured. Unless you provide for the alleviation of suffering at the same time, you cannot hope to enlist sympathy for the service which has so woefully broken down in its administration. The country does not blame the Government for its work in South Africa, but what it will demand in the future is that we should put the whole thing on a proper, sound basis; and unless we provide an efficient medical staff for our Army I am quite confident that the country will think that this Parliament has been lacking in its duty.

*MR. J. P. PARRELL (Longford, N.): I desire to draw the attention of the House to what I consider the omissions in which there is practically no reference to the country which Gentlemen on these benches represent in this House. I certainly think that His Majesty's advisers did not do their duty towards their Sovereign in recommending that he should be asked to take the formal Oath which was administered to him at the opening of this session of Parliament. That Oath, I think, can be regarded in no other light by hon. Gentlemen on these benches than as an insult of a very gross character to the religion they profess. In fact, I think that even amongst supporters of His Majesty's Government who profess that religion it was a very great straining of their allegiance to ask them to stand by and hear the tenets which they hold as more sacred than any

other in this world described in terms of opprobrium and reproach. I learn that the coronation ceremony of His Majesty is to be deferred for nearly a year, and I trust that better counsels will prevail between this and that event, and that we shall have this most reproachful declaration concerning on religion eliminated from the coronation ceremony of the King of this country. On these benches we also feel a great disappointment as to the terms of His Majesty's Address to Parliament. I said at the beginning that my complaint was more in regard to what was omitted than for any promise given in that Speech. We have been promised a measure to facilitate the purchase of land in Ireland. I believe it is nearly fourteen years since this process of facilitating the purchase of land in Ireland was first instituted. I think the Ashbourne Act was passed about 1885, and other Acts have been since passed for the purpose of facilitating the transfer of land from the landlords to the tenants in Ireland. But in spite of all the machinery that you have set up for this purpose by Acts passed in this House, you have practically only touched the fringe of the settlement of the land question in Ireland. Out of 600,000 occupying tenants who hold land from landlords in Ireland; although these Land Acts have been fifteen years in operation; barely 50,000 have become owners of their own homesteads, and that has been done under conditions as favourable as any which can be contemplated in the future in any Act or Bill of a voluntary nature to be brought forward by this House. We are told now that the Government are to introduce a Bill of a voluntary nature which will leave things practically as they are, but which will, to some extent, facilitate the operations of the 40th section of the Act of 1896. Perhaps it is an act of supererogation to repeat from these benches that we wish His Majesty's Government to know once and for all that the only possible settlement of this question is to be attained not by tinkering at it with these voluntary measures or by introducing measures to smooth legal difficulties, but by passing a comprehensive and statesmanlike measure for compulsory land purchase for the benefit of the people of Ireland. In a few days this House will be called upon to consider the operation of these Acts by an Amendment to the Address before the House. It is very little short of a farce upon the carrying out of the law when we remember the way in which the head Land Commission and the Sub-Commission conduct the business of the country in Ireland. The head Land Commission consists of such refined gentlemen that they cannot condescend to visit towns like Longford where most of the business of the Commission lies, and they insist upon the unfortunate litigants, who have little money to spend, bringing up their witnesses and solicitors to Dublin for the purpose of having their cases tried. They shall hear more of this question in the immediate future. My principal object in standing up this evening is to express the feeling of disappointment which I feel at the inaction of the Government in regard to what may be called the social ills of Ireland. It is true that the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland has been touring extensively in the west of Ireland, and I do hope that some good will come from the enlightenment which this travelling will confer upon him. I do think that the Government can do everything that is needful for the condition of Ireland, but they are sadly

lacking in seizing the golden opportunity of once and for all settling the great and complex question of the land in Ireland. Neither landlord nor tenant is satisfied with the present state of things, and to no person in that country has the present tribunal given satisfaction. We in this House are called upon from time to time to vote large sums of money for the expenses of this Commission. We are called upon to find indirectly expenses which are kept up for the purpose of carrying on the work of this Commission. I must say that I think to a very large extent the money which has been poured out for that purpose has been wasted, and it is money which, if it had been capitalised and utilised for the direct transference of land instead of being used through these legal channels, would have been much more efficiently applied. There are a great number of gentlemen upon the Commission whose only qualification is that they have served their time in the rent office of some great landlord. It is expecting too much of the tenant farmers of Ireland to expect that they can have confidence in a Commission so constituted, or to expect that the training which these gentlemen have received could otherwise than bias them in the interest of the landlords whom they formerly served.

I do not wish to occupy the time of the House at any great length, but before I sit down I desire to associate myself as fully as possible with the remarks of my colleagues sitting on these benches as regards the war in South Africa. I have heard speeches from the opposite side of the House commenting in anything but favourable terms upon the manner in which the war has been conducted. The hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has, in a mild way, deprecated the manner in which the medical staff, sent out to look after the wounded in this unfortunate war, have done their duty in attending to the sick and wounded. I confess that I have very little sympathy with Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House, because what we find is that although they mildly deprecate these errors or mistakes, when it becomes a question of supporting the policy of the war they are invariably found in the Government lobby. This war question with us is one of pounds, shillings, and pence. We who represent the Irish people here have protested, so far as it lies in our power, against this war. From time to time, and on every possible occasion, we have raised our voices in solemn protest and warning against the war, but although our constitutional voice has been so expressed, the solid fact stares us in the face that every pound of extra taxation which you put on this kingdom will have to be borne in its proportion, and in its over proportion, by the already overtaxed people of Ireland. We have been complaining here session after session of your treatment of us in the matter of taxation. We have complained time after time fruitlessly that you are overtaxing us under ordinary conditions to the extent of -between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000 per annum. When this war started we were told that it was to be over in two or three months, and I recollect that your first Vote was for £10,000,000, which was supposed to be ample for the purpose of concluding the war. Since then what have we seen? Since then the Secretary of State for War and other Ministers have come down here and Asked for millions in addition, and at the end of last session you had drawn no less than £63,000,000 to carry on a

war which you told this House would not cost more than £10,000,000. What is the state of things with which this country now finds itself face to face? Is it not a fact that there are already preparations going on to bring before this House demands for the enormous sum of £70,000,000 to finish this war, and out of this enormous sum of £113,000,000 Ireland will be called upon to pay her proportion. Notwithstanding that Ireland has protested all along through her constitutional representatives against the war on grounds of humanity and justice, she will nevertheless be called upon and forced to pay to the extent of one-eleventh of that large sum. I say that as we find ourselves circumstanced at present, it is almost a farce to require the attendance of representatives from Ireland at the opening of Parliament, because you ignore our constitutional voice when it is raised, and you compel us to bear more than our just share of the burden which you have imposed upon us against our will. On grounds of humanity we have also opposed this war. I was reading in some of the Irish local papers letters from some of your own officers complaining of house-burning and of driving practically to utter starvation and destitution women and children in South Africa who were unable to resist your soldiery. You have, I think, some reason to find cause for pause in the present course to which you have set yourselves. This is a huge and a mighty Empire. It is your boast that the sun never sets upon it. I daresay that if such things as newspapers were printed in the days of Julius Caesar and the Roman Emperors, they might have said that the great Roman Empire of their day was a great commercial Empire, and that it was utterly impossible that it could be overturned. But the more wealth accumulated, the more corrupt did its ruling classes become, and the more certain and terrible was the day of retribution which overtook it for the liberation of mankind. I say, as a humble Member of Parliament, that as this happened to the great Roman Empire, have a care that it does not also take place with the British Empire.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): I should like to support what has fallen from my hon. friend behind me in regard to one point. It is one satisfactory feature in connection with the debates in South Africa that no one seems to have got a good word for the Government. Whether they approve of or condemn the war, they are all agreed on this one point: that the Government have made every possible blunder they could make from any and every point of view. In every sort of case with a legitimate grievance to redress, with every demand for the extension of freedom in the Transvaal, the Government have so conducted the controversy as to have ranged against them every friend of freedom throughout the world, outside Great Britain. And when you come to the war itself, though they have the resources of the wealthiest Empire which the world has ever seen to draw upon, they have so directed their operations that their own soldiers have been half-starved, stricken by disease, and have died by thousands from the sheer lack of the simplest appliances. Who could say a good word for a Government responsible for such a terrible position of affairs?

But there is some difficulty for anyone, especially for one who takes the view which I do of the war, in criticising this Government. Whatever we may say is misconstrued. We are said to be encouraging the Boers. [Ministerial cheers.] I observe that that statement is accepted by hon. Members on the other side of the

House. But let me ask, has anything been said by any Member on this side of the House which tends to encourage the Boers half as much as some of the things I have heard from Unionist Members, and which I have seen in the Unionist press? I suppose that the same canons of interpretation will be applied to the speeches of the Prime Minister and the Secretary for War as are applied to our speeches. Take, for instance, the pessimistic speech of the Prime Minister. We are told that the Boers read our speeches and conduct their campaigns accordingly; but if so, they also read the speeches of the Prime Minister, who has said to them: "Do not be disheartened; we have only been sixteen months in trying to subdue you, whereas the Confederates in America held out for four years." Therefore, the Boers say, "Let us take heart of grace and go on; we are only just beginning." But the Secretary for War says, "I can go one better. It took the North four years, indeed, to conquer the Confederates, but what about Spain and the Cubans? The Cubans were half-castes, they had nothing like your equipment; you have the best equipped army imaginable; and they did not conduct their campaign half so skilfully as you. Yet with only 30,000 troops they held out for ten years against the Spaniards with 250,000 troops. So do not be discouraged." And what about the Unionist press? If anything appears in the Liberal press favourable to the Boers it is said "What a wild, traitorous press it is!" But take what I have seen in respectable, patriotic journals in London. They have within the past few weeks been pointing out, that our troops are war-worn, jaded, and with no fight left in them. Really it is time that high-minded patriots began to work up indignant fury against the violent pro-Boer utterances of the Prime Minister and the Secretary for War. And really I do not know what the Colonial Secretary is about. What has he been doing? He has fulminated against the Stop-the-War party, and yet he has talked about terms of peace and fair and generous treatment. Why, these are the shibboleths of pro-Boerism, as I understand it. We dare not refer to these without being told that we are encouraging the Boers. Why should the Colonial Secretary refer to them? He has played many parts in his time. He has joined every party. Is it possible that he is going to crown his career by once more returning to the pro-Boer party, of which he was the most shining and conspicuous ornament? Really this pro-Boerism which is developing on the other side is most lamentable: and it is time we should eradicate it! After all, which is the more likely to encourage the Boers, and to afford them an incentive to desperate fighting; the knowledge that there are men who are prepared to plead for their fair and generous treatment, or the knowledge conveyed to them by the Prime Minister, the Secretary for War, and others, of what they are to expect if they surrender? What is it? "Not a shred of independence." More than that, "we are to be masters" and they are to be servants. [Ministerial cries of "No, no!"] Well, if one man is master, somebody must be servant. More than that, the Estimates provide for a vote by Parliament for placing 15,000 Imperial Yeoman as settlers on Boer farms. Is it likely to induce the Boers to come to terms? But after all we are delighted to see right hon. and hon. Gentlemen on the other side beginning to discuss the possibility of terms; just what we have been urging

for many months past. I think the opinion of the country is that whatever the blunder of going to war was, the still greater blunder was not to have offered terms when we captured Pretoria. Then a great opportunity was lost, possibly for ever. But what are the terms which are offered? There is no substantial difference, as I understand, between the two sides of the House as to what should constitute the ultimate terms of settlement. You say, "Give them the fullest measure of autonomy, of the right to govern their own affairs in their own country." The right hon. the Colonial Secretary said, "Yes, that is my view as well; but in the meantime I will set up a Crown colony." Of course, once you beat the Boers, once you capture the last commando, you can dictate your own terms. But the question now is, what can be done to curtail the war, to avert and to stop this terrible bloodshed and waste of treasure meantime. Does anyone believe that the Boers will lay down their arms merely in order to be governed from Downing Street, upon an indefinite promise, with no time fixed, that at some time or other, when the Government for the time being think fit to do so, they will restore self-government to the Boers? What is the guarantee that that promise is to be carried out? Let us have perfect, open plain speaking about the matter. This is altogether a question of trust and confidence; the Boers have to lay down their arms, trusting in the words of the statesman who in this House said there was nothing dishonourable in a man breaking into his neighbour's territory upon the strength of a letter which he or his confederates forged. Nothing dishonourable in that; If there is nothing dishonourable in that there is nothing dishonourable in breaking a pledge given to the Boers. I do not believe that they will trust any statesman who has laid that down as his canon of honour. But there is more than that. We gave this pledge to the Boers before; in 1852, and certainly in 1877. Then we made a solemn promise to the Boers that if their territory was annexed we would restore to them self-government, but we broke that pledge. We asked them to take the same promise again, and to lay down their arms and submit to us. Besides, ignorant as the Boers may be, they probably have heard of other countries where we promised to restore to their inhabitants self-government after a due interregnum. They are not so ignorant not to know that Egypt is in Africa, in the same continent as their own country; and what has happened there? We entered Egypt and occupied that territory on the most solemn assurances given not only to the people of Egypt, but to Europe, that we would restore to it self-government. [An HON. MEMBER: Mr. Gladstone.] Mr. Gladstone; Who was a member of Mr. Gladstone's Ministry which gave that assurance? The same right hon. Gentleman who is offering the same pledge now, and the same right hon. Gentleman who has since advocated that we should stick to Egypt and break our former pledge. How can you expect the Boers, remembering all that, to trust to a bare pledge? One thing is certain: not the statesman who is responsible for that pledge, nor any other Member of this House will say that the Boers have not some reason to be suspicious and to doubt when we ask them to lay down their arms with the only security that they must trust absolutely to British faith in regard to what may happen in the future. There is another reason why, at the present moment, it is exceedingly difficult

to arrange peace with the Boers. The conduct of the war during the past six or nine months has exasperated them beyond measure. [HON. MEMBERS: "Hear, hear" and Ministerial laughter.]

Hon. Members see nothing except what is matter for merriment in the burning of Boer homes and the turning of women and children into the wilderness; As long as that spirit remains I despair of any terms being made with the Boers.

Some doubt has been cast on the statements made in regard to the burning of farms. The noble Lord who represents the War Office stated last week that the farm-burning had taken place as a punishment for treachery. There is no one here who is going to criticise that action if treachery is proved against the occupants of these farms. It may or may not be condign punishment; that is a matter which must be dealt with on the spot. At any rate, I am not going to challenge the burning of the houses of men guilty of such treachery; but I do criticise and censure the conduct of men who, for the treachery of others, burn the homes over their heads of people who are perfectly innocent. I am not going to quote anonymous letters. The first quotation I shall make will be from a proclamation by Lord Roberts himself, and if Lord Roberts has been misjudged, he himself has been to blame. We have been told that farms have only been burned in clear cases of treachery proved against the inhabitants. Proclamation No. 20 sets forth;

"Should any damage be done to any lines of railway or public works"; amongst other things that will happen will be this; "the houses and farms in the vicinity of the place where the damage is done will be destroyed, and the residents"; not those guilty of treachery; "in the neighbourhood dealt with under martial law."

Do hon. Members opposite approve of that? I will say to the credit of the noble Lord who spoke for the War Office that he did not. He has been to the front. He has seen what the horrors of war are, and he does not want to extend them. But I will prove from quotations from perfectly untainted sources that these farm-burning operations have been very extensive. This is what the Standard correspondent at Pretoria says, writing in November last;

"Half of the Transvaal and of the Orange River Colony is desolated with fire and sword. The farms are tenantless, and few crops will possibly be reaped this season. By the time resistance is finally stamped down; perhaps not by the end of February at the earliest;

the farming districts throughout the two States will, in all probability, be laid waste. This will mean famine and ruin to the Boers. They must see this, but they do not appear to care."

Another quotation I will give is from a Birmingham paper, and I need hardly say that this information must be unchallenged by the supporters of the Colonial Secretary;

"The charred and blackened country [this is a description of the country east of Bloemfontein] devastated by the red ruin of war has not a crumb for man, or blade of grass for cattle."

But let me give the authority of an hon. and gallant Member of this House who has been to the front, and who has fought in fifteen engagements; I mean the hon. and gallant Member for the Welsh constituency of South Glamorgan, and sits on

the other side of the House. He says that he thought; "the burning of the farms had been a fatal mistake. I believe but for these acts long ago we should have had the Boers surrendering. This burning and destroying is the gravest evil, and now the Boers who would have come in hate us as they never did before."

Then somebody suggested to him that it was done to punish treachery, but what is the answer given by the hon. Member for South Glamorgan? He says he does not object to the burning of farms under those conditions; certainly not. Where any farm is used as a fort it should be destroyed, but not otherwise. It is the burning of homesteads without cause to which he objects. Then he goes on and gives a rather pretty description of one of the houses partially burned. He went into the house, and on the wall saw a portrait of the Princess of Wales and the Queen. The old Boer to whom the house belonged took the portrait down, and said, "I thought she was a good woman; but if these are the things that are done in her name she is not," and he threw the portrait down and trampled on it. What the hon. Member for South Glamorgan describes are cases of farms being burnt, not for treachery, but without cause, simply carrying out Lord Roberts's proclamation. Another item of interest is that Lord Roberts sent a letter to the Commander-in-Chief of the Boer forces. What does he say in that Letter? And I should also like to ask why it is that these letters are kept from the House of Commons? Why is information of this character withheld? I can understand information being withheld which by being published might act detrimentally to our troops in South Africa; but this information is in the hands of the Boers, and, therefore, cannot be detrimental to us. This is one of the many pieces of evidence that the House of Commons is treated disdainfully by the present responsible Ministers of the Crown. We had one instance of that to-day, and we had another instance last night. We vote the money, and, with all due deference, that is the only branch which represents the people in this country; and when we vote the money it is only right that we should know what is going to be done with it.

In the letter which Lord Roberts wrote to Commandant Botha, he complains that the railway has been cut; a peculiar complaint when we consider that the commander of the Boer forces is quite within his right to do everything in his power to embarrass the enemy opposed to him in the field. Lord Roberts says it is very wrong, and he is not going to allow it to go on any longer; that he is going to put a stop to it. But how is he going to do that? Not by capturing the men, but by burning every house within a radius of ten miles. [Cries of "No!"] What is the use of hon. Members saying "No," when I am quoting from the letter of Lord Roberts? Within a radius of ten miles all houses are to be destroyed, because a Boer commander comes and blows up a culvert; [Government cheers.] I have read that this war was brutalising our people; I do not want better evidence of that fact than those cheers. I will just quote another letter, and I shall be curious to see whether hon. Members opposite cheer that. It is written by an officer in the Canadian force, Lieutenant Morrison, of Ottawa (who was mentioned in despatches for gallant conduct), of the march of General Smith-Dorrien's force through a part of the Transvaal.

Lieutenant Morrison said it was like the old-time forays in the Highlands of Scotland two centuries ago. He says;

"The country is very like Scotland, and we move from -valley to valley, lifting cattle and

sheep, burning and looting, and turning out women and children to weep in despair beside the ruin of their once beautiful homesteads. It was the first touch of Kitchener's iron hand, a terrible thing to witness, and I do not know that I want to see another trip of the sort."

Really brave men are revolted by this. Hon. Members do not cheer that; they are disgusted and shocked. But this is not all. He goes on to say how they burnt a track six miles wide right down to the village of Dilston. Not a word of this in despatches. Then, after a description of some of these houses, he comes to the sacking of Dilston, and he tells how it was burnt.

I really do not know why one should read this. It is a horrible account, and makes one ashamed that one's own countrymen could be guilty of such an action.

It is war not against men, but against women and children. In that letter he describes fully the destruction of this town. I appeal to the humanity of hon.

Members opposite; and I am sure they have it; do they approve of this? I am glad that at last they are silent, for the credit of the House of Commons. But there has been more burning of villages; not of isolated farms, but whole villages.

They did not confine their burning to the neighbourhood of the railway, but ravaged the whole of the country. What happened to the town of Bothaville? There was a leading article in The Times, of which I can give the date, and which I can quote if necessary. In that article there is a summary of the news of the day, which states that General Hunter marched from Bothaville to the railway, burning the farms on the way. Bothaville, the town, was burnt. The only reason why it was burnt, according to the telegrams, was because it was a storehouse for the Boers. The village of Ventersburg was also burnt for the same reason. In this connection I think the name of General Bruce Hamilton ought to be immortalised. After the burning of that village this general posted up the following proclamation;

"NOTICE.; The town of Ventersburg has been cleared of supplies, and partly burnt, and the, farms in the vicinity destroyed on account of the frequent attacks on the railway in the neighbourhood."

[Ministerial cheers.] Yes, but you cannot take both grounds: you cannot say it was because of the treachery of those who occupied the farms, and also that it was because the railway was cut in the neighbourhood. [Ministerial cries of

"Why not?"] I do not want to be drawn from the real point;

"The Boer women and children who are left behind"

; the supplies having been cleared out;

"should apply to the Boer commandants for food, who will supply them unless they wish to see them starve. No supplies will be sent from the railway to the town."

This meant that the Boer women and children were to starve, or were to remain there as a bait for the Boer commandoes, that we might capture them.

All that I can say is that this man is a brute, and a disgrace to the uniform he wears. Then there is a telegram that has come from the front, which has passed

the censor, and which, therefore, must be correct. It came from Pretoria and said that the systematic gathering in of all Boer families and their stock in the outlying district was proceeding regularly and vigorously. At convenient centres Boer refugees, voluntary and other, were kept and fed. All those who surrendered voluntarily were given full rations. All the families whose husbands were on commando were put on a reduced scale. It would be increased to the full allowance if the husbands surrendered. That is what the telegram said, and hon. Members who cheer that would cheer anything. It means that unless the fathers came in their children would be half-starved. It means that the remnant of the Boer army who are sacrificing everything for their idea of independence are to be tortured by the spectacle of their starving children into betraying their cause.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): Will the hon. Gentleman kindly quote his authority for these statements he gives us?

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I will, certainly. It is a perfectly fair question. The telegram comes from Reuter's Agency, Pretoria, 15th January, and appears in The Times of 18th January.

MR. BRODRICK: The hon. Gentleman is trying to establish a charge for which he has not a particle of evidence.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: You challenge me to give my evidence. The whole of my evidence comes from Pretoria in a telegram from Pretoria; and no telegram can come from Pretoria that is objected to by the military censor there. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that a telegram which has the stamp of the military censor upon it is not a particle of evidence? [At this point Mr. CHAMBERLAIN walked out of the House.] [A VOICE: "There he goes";] and cries from the Irish benches of "Come back";] The author of this is ashamed of his misdeeds.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E): He flies the white flag.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE: I am not at all surprised; but repentance has come rather late in his case, after all this mischief has been done. [Ministerial cries of "Order";] If I am out of order there is an authority to call me to order, and if I have in any way transgressed I shall be only too willing to withdraw. It is difficult within the bounds of Parliamentary propriety to describe what one thinks about all this infamy which is perpetrated in the name of Great Britain in Africa. That is really what keeps us from coming to terms. We are in a worse situation in South Africa than we were in twelve months ago. Not a third of the men we sent out to South Africa are now in the line of battle. There have been 55,000 casualties, 30,000 men are in hospital, and what do the papers say about the rest? Thoroughly jaded, worn, broken. Those are not my words, but those of correspondents writing from the front to Unionist papers. All the causes of death amongst our men which are classed by the law as the acts of God are increasing in intensity. It will be within the memory of many hon. Members that the right hon. Gentleman in the first war session appealed to the God of Battles. He has got his answer. It is not the one he anticipated, but it is sufficiently terrible in all conscience to make hon. Members pause and reflect whether they dare go on with this business.

*ME. WINSTON CHURCHILL (Oldham): I understood that the hon. Member to whose speech the House has just listened, had intended to move an Amendment to the Address. The text of the Amendment, which had appeared in the papers, was singularly mild and moderate in tone; but mild and moderate as it was, neither the hon. Member nor his political friends had cared to expose it to criticism or to challenge a division upon it, and, indeed, when we compare the moderation of the Amendment with the very bitter speech which the hon. Member has just delivered, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the moderation of the Amendment was the moderation of the hon. Member's political friends and leaders, and that the bitterness of his speech is all his own. It has been suggested to me that it might perhaps have been better, upon the whole, if the hon. Member, instead of making his speech without moving his Amendment, had moved his Amendment without making his speech. I would not complain of any remarks of the hon. Member were I called upon to do so. In my opinion, based upon the experience of the most famous men whose names have adorned the records of the House, no national emergency short, let us say, of the actual invasion of this country itself ought in any way to restrict or prevent the entire freedom of Parliamentary discussion. Moreover, I do not believe that the Boers would attach particular importance to the utterances of the hon. Member. No people in the world received so much verbal sympathy and so little practical support as the Boers. If I were a Boer fighting in the field; and if I were a Boer I hope I should be fighting in the field; I would not allow myself to be taken in by any message of sympathy, not even if it were signed by a hundred hon. Members. The hon. Member dwelt at great length upon the question of farm burning. I do not propose to discuss the ethics of farm burning now; but hon. Members should, I think, cast their eyes back to the fact that no considerations of humanity prevented the German army from throwing its shells into dwelling houses in Paris, and starving the inhabitants of that great city to the extent that they had to live upon rats and like atrocious foods in order to compel the garrison to surrender. I venture to think His Majesty's Government would not have been justified in restricting their commanders in the field from any methods of warfare which are justified by precedents set by European and American generals during the last fifty or sixty years. I do not agree very fully with the charges of treachery on the one side and barbarity on the other. From what I saw of the war; and I sometimes saw something of it; I believe that as compared with other wars, especially those in which a civil population took part, this war in South Africa has been on the whole carried on with unusual humanity and generosity. The hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs has drawn attention to the case of one general officer, and although I deprecate debates upon the characters of individual general officers who are serving the country at this moment, because I know personally General Bruce Hamilton, whom the hon. Member with admirable feeling described as General Brute Hamilton, I feel unable to address the House without offering my humble testimony to the fact that in all His Majesty's Army there are few men with better feeling, more kindness of heart, or with higher courage than General Bruce Hamilton.

There is a point of difference which has been raised by the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition upon the question of the policy to be pursued in South Africa after this war has been brought to a conclusion. So far as I have been able to make out the difference between the Government and the Opposition on this question is that whereas His Majesty's Government propose that when hostilities are brought to a conclusion there shall be an interval of civil government before full representative rights are extended to the peoples of these countries, on the other hand the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition believes that these representative institutions will be more quickly obtained if the military government be prolonged as a temporary measure and no interval of civil government be interposed. I hope I am not misinterpreting the right hon. Gentleman in any way. If I am, I trust he will not hesitate to correct me, because I should be very sorry in any way to misstate his views. If that is the situation, I will respectfully ask the House to allow me to examine these alternative propositions. I do not wish myself to lay down the law, or thrust my views upon hon. Members. I have travelled a good deal about South Africa during the last ten months under varying circumstances, and I should like to lay before the House some of the considerations which have been very forcibly borne in upon me during that period.

In the first place I would like to look back to the original cause for which we went to war. We went to war; I mean of course we were gone to war with; in connection with the extension of the franchise. We began negotiations with the Boers in order to extend the franchise to the people of the Transvaal. When I say the people of the Transvaal, I mean the whole people of the Transvaal, and not necessarily those who arrived there first. At that time there were nearly two and a-half times as many British and non-Dutch as there were Boers, but during the few weeks before the outbreak of the war every train was crowded with British subjects who were endeavouring to escape from the approaching conflict, and so it was that the Uitlanders were scattered all over the world. It seems to me that when the war is over we ought not to forget the original object with which we undertook the negotiations which led to the war. If I may lay down anything I would ask the House to establish the principle that they ought not to extend any representative institutions to the people of the Transvaal until such time as the population has regained its ordinary level. What could be more dangerous, ridiculous or futile, than to throw the responsible government of a ruined country on that remnant of the population, that particular section of the population, which is actively hostile to the fundamental institutions of the State? I think there ought to be no doubt and no difference of opinion on the point that between the firing of the last shot and the casting of the first vote there must be an appreciable interval that must be filled by a government of some kind or another.

I invite the House to consider which form of government; civil government or military government; is most likely to be conducive to the restoration or the banished prosperity of the country and most likely to encourage the return of the population now scattered far and wide. I understand that there are hon. Members who are in hopes that representative institutions may directly follow

military government, but I think they cannot realise thoroughly how very irksome such military government is. I have the greatest respect for British officers, and when I hear them attacked, as some hon. Members have done in their speeches, it makes me very sorry, and very angry too. Although I regard British officers in the field of war, and in dealing with native races, as the best officers in the world, I do not believe that either their training or their habits of thought qualify them to exercise arbitrary authority over civil populations of European race. I have often myself been very much ashamed to see respectable old Boer farmers; the Boer is a curious combination of the squire and the peasant, and under the rough coat of the farmer there are very often to be found the instincts of the squire; I have been ashamed to see such men ordered about peremptorily by young subaltern officers, as if they were private soldiers. I do not hesitate to say that as long as you have anything like direct military government there will be no revival of trade, no return of the Uitlander population, no influx of immigrants from other parts of the world; nothing but despair and discontent on the part of the Boer population, and growing resentment on the part of our own British settlers. If there was a system of civil government on the other hand, which I think we have an absolute moral right to establish if only from the fact that this country through the Imperial Exchequer will have to provide the money; if you had a civil government under such an administrator as Sir Alfred Milner; [Cries of "Hear, hear," and "Oh"]; it is not for me to eulogise that distinguished administrator, I am sure he enjoys the confidence of the whole of the Conservative party, and there are a great many Members on the other side of the House who do not find it convenient in their own minds to disregard Sir Alfred Milner's deliberate opinion on South African affairs. As soon as it is known that there is in the Transvaal a government under which property and liberty are secure, so soon as it is known that in these countries one can live freely and safely, there would be a rush of immigrants from all parts of the world to develop the country and to profit by the great revival of trade which usually follows war of all kinds. If I may judge by my own experience there are many Members of this House who have received letters from their constituents asking whether it was advisable to go out to South Africa. When this policy of immigration is well advanced we shall again have the great majority of the people of the Transvaal firmly attached and devoted to the Imperial connection, and when you can extend representative institutions to them you will find them reposing securely upon the broad basis of the consent of the governed, while the rights of the minority will be effectively protected and preserved by the tactful and judicious intervention of the Imperial authority. May I say that it was this prospect of a loyal and Anglicised Transvaal turning of the scale in our favour in South Africa, which must have been the original "good hope" from which the Cape has taken its name.

It is not for me to criticise the proposals which come from such a distinguished authority as the Leader of the Opposition, but I find it impossible not to say that in comparing these two alternative plans one with the other I must proclaim my strong preference for the course His Majesty's Government propose to adopt. I

pass now from the question of the ultimate settlement of the two late Republics to the immediate necessities of the situation. What ought to be the present policy of the Government? I take it that there is a pretty general consensus of opinion in this House that it ought to be to make it easy and honourable for the Boers to surrender, and painful and perilous for them to continue in the field. Let the Government proceed on both those lines concurrently and at full speed. I sympathise very heartily with my hon. friend the senior Member for Oldham, who, in a speech delivered last year, showed great anxiety that everything should be done to make the Boers understand exactly what terms were offered to them, and I earnestly hope that the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary will leave nothing undone to bring home to those brave and unhappy men who are fighting in the field that whenever they are prepared to recognise that their small independence must be merged in the larger liberties of the British Empire, there will be a full guarantee for the security of their property and religion, an assurance of equal rights, a promise of representative institutions, and last of all, but not least of all, what the British Army would most readily accord to a brave and enduring foe; all the honours of war. I hope the right hon. Gentleman will not allow himself to be discouraged by any rebuffs which his envoys may meet with, but will persevere in endeavouring to bring before these people the conditions on which at any moment they may obtain peace and the friendship of Great Britain. Of course, we can only promise, and it rests with the Boers whether they will accept our conditions. They may refuse the generous terms offered them, and stand or fall by their old cry, "Death or independence"; [Nationalist cheers.] I do not see anything to rejoice at in that prospect, because if it be so, the war will enter upon a very sad and gloomy phase. If the Boers remain deaf to the voice of reason, and blind to the hand of friendship, if they refuse all overtures and disdain all terms, then, while we cannot help admiring their determination and endurance, we can only hope that our own race, in the pursuit of what they feel to be a righteous cause, will show determination as strong and endurance as lasting. It is wonderful that hon. Members who form the Irish party should find it in their hearts to speak and act as they do in regard to a war in which so much has been accomplished by the courage, the sacrifices, and, above all, by the military capacity of Irishmen. There is a practical reason, which I trust hon. Members will not think it presumptuous in me to bring to their notice, is that they would be well advised cordially to co-operate with His Majesty's Government in bringing the war to a speedy conclusion, because they must know that no Irish question or agitation can possibly take any hold on the imagination of the people of Great Britain so long as all our thoughts are with the soldiers who are fighting in South Africa. What are the military measures we ought to take? I have no doubt that other opportunities will be presented to the House to discuss them, but so far as I have been able to understand the whispers I have heard in the air there are, on the whole, considerable signs of possible improvement in the South African situation. There are appearances that the Boers are weakening, and that the desperate and feverish efforts they have made so long cannot be indefinitely

sustained. If that be so, now is the time for the Government and the Army to redouble their efforts. It is incumbent on Members like myself, who represent large working class constituencies, to bring home to the Government the fact that the country does not want to count the cost of the war until it is won. I think we all rejoiced to see the announcement in the papers that 30,000 more mounted men were being despatched to South Africa. I cannot help noticing with intense satisfaction that, not content with sending large numbers of men, the Secretary of State for War has found some excellent Indian officers, prominent among whom is Sir Bindon Blood, who will go out to South Africa and bring their knowledge of guerilla warfare on the Indian frontier to bear on the peculiar kind of warfare; I will not call it guerilla warfare; now going on in South Africa. I shall always indulge the hope that, great as these preparations are, they will not be all, and that some fine afternoon the Secretary of State for War will come down to the House with a brand-new scheme, not only for sending all the reinforcements necessary for keeping the Army up to a fixed standard of 250,000 men, in spite of the losses by battle and disease, but also for increasing it by a regular monthly quota of 2,000 or 3,000 men, so that the Boers will be compelled, with ever-diminishing resources, to make head against ever.

increasing difficulties, and will not only be exposed to the beating of the waves, but to the force of the rising tide.

Some hon. Members have seen fit, either in this place or elsewhere, to stigmatise this war as a war of greed. I regret that I feel bound to repudiate that pleasant suggestion. If there were persons who rejoiced in this war, and went out with hopes of excitement or the lust of conflict, they have had enough and more than enough to-day. If, as the hon. Member for Northampton has several times suggested, certain capitalists spent money in bringing on this war in the hope that it would increase the value of their mining properties, they know now that they made an uncommonly bad bargain. With the mass of the nation, with the whole people of the country, this war from beginning to end has only been a war of duty. They believe, and they have shown in the most remarkable manner that they believe, that His Majesty's Government and the Colonial Secretary have throughout been actuated by the same high and patriotic motives. They know that no other inspiration could sustain and animate the Regulars and Volunteers, who through all these hard months have had to bear the brunt of the public contention. They may indeed have to regret, as I myself have, the loss of a great many good friends in the war. We cannot help feeling sorry for many of the incidents of the war, but for all that I do not find it possible on reflection to accuse the general policy which led to the war, we have no cause to be ashamed of anything that has passed during the war, nor have we any right to be doleful or lugubrious. I think if any hon. Members are feeling unhappy about the state of affairs in South Africa I would recommend them a receipt from which I myself derived much exhilaration. Let them look to the other great dependencies and colonies of the British Empire and see what the effect of the war has been there! Whatever we may have lost in doubtful friends in Cape Colony we have gained ten times, or perhaps twenty times, over in Canada and Australia, where

the people; down to the humblest farmer in the most distant provinces; have by their effective participation in the conflict been able to realise, as they never

could realise before, that they belong to the Empire, and that the Empire belongs to them. I cannot sit down without saying how very grateful I am for the kindness and patience with which the House has heard me, and which have been extended to me, I well know, not on my own account, but because of a certain splendid memory which many hon. Members still preserve.

SIR EGBERT REID (Dumfries Burghs): I am sure the House is glad to recognise that the hon. Member who has just sat down possesses the same courage which so distinguished Lord Randolph Churchill during his short and brilliant career in this House. I have listened with very great pleasure to the hon. Gentleman.

There was much in what he said that I disagreed with, but I think the tone was different from what we some-times hear with reference to this most deplorable conflict. It has been a deplorable tragedy, for which this country is most bitterly suffering, and unless we can find some honourable means of putting an end to this sanguinary conflict, on terms consistent with the peace and welfare of this country. I am afraid that the sacrifices we have hitherto undergone will prove to be less than those we have still to undergo.

The hon. Gentleman said the Government should do all they can to make it easy for the Boers to surrender on fair and honourable terms. That is the feeling which I myself entertain, but I cannot help regretting that on more than one occasion those of us who have expressed that feeling from these benches received hard language from Gentlemen with whom the hon. Member is associated. There have been two stages in this war. The first stage ended with the capture of Bloemfontein and Pretoria. I believe that if at that time fair and honourable terms, consistent with the declared intention of the Government to maintain the British authority in these dominions, had been offered, the war would have ended almost after the capture of Bloemfontein. The Government made a demand for unconditional surrender, and the farm-burnings and other devastations were not, I believe, intended for the purpose, of cruelty, but have been undertaken through a mis-

taken military policy which I cannot help thinking has tended only to the exasperation of the inhabitants. From that time thousands more lives have been sacrificed, millions of money have been spent, Cape Colony is now largely under martial law, and we appear to be at this moment not so close to the end of the war as we were in June.

The question I wish to put to the House is this, is it not possible even now, by temperate counsels, to do something to abridge this horrible conflict? As the hon Gentleman said, the Boers have every inducement that men can have to make terms of peace, provided those terms are fair and honourable towards themselves. Their country has been largely ruined, and something like 60,000 of their women and children are in British custody. Is it not possible for the Government, without any loss of dignity, to do what the hon. Gentleman himself suggested, to communicate terms to the Boers such as men who are admittedly brave men, and who have carried out the war, as the hon. Gentleman said, in a spirit of generosity

as well as of courage, might be entitled to accept after fighting against overwhelming odds? The object of the Government, as I understand it, is to include these two States in the British dominions, to give the best security for permanent peace, and, when that is achieved, to close the war as soon as possible. I imagine from all their speeches that those are the objects the Government have at heart.

Now, Sir, what are the methods; the only methods; which the Government declare they are prepared to adopt? They say that there must be unconditional surrender of the Boer Governments. In addition to that this other point has been mentioned, that there will be safety for the person and property of the Boers in the field. There never was a civilised war that ended by confiscation of property or by putting to death men simply because they were still in the field. The Government have said also that they will maintain the customs and laws of the country.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): We have not said that.

SIR ROBERT REID: Lord Kitchener said it.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I daresay the hon. and learned Gentleman is mistaken. Certainly, as far as possible, they will be; but I should not like the Government to be supposed to be committed to maintain the laws of the Transvaal exactly as they were before the war. It would be absurd.

SIR ROBERT REID: I did not mean that. I was referring to the language used, I think, by Lord Kitchener last December; "substantially to maintain the laws and customs of the country." Of course, no one would think of substituting the English common law for the Roman-Dutch law. What is intended, I imagine, is to leave the customs and laws, as much as may be consistently with an alteration of Government, the same as hitherto. Then the Government said that self-government would be extended at some date hereafter, but no date can be even approximately fixed. The right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary in December last spoke of it as a comparatively early expectation. At the same time the Prime Minister said it might not take place for generations. I ask the House of Commons to consider what these terms really mean to the Boers now in the field. The farms of these men have been ruined, their country is, in parts, almost a desert, and all their stock is gone. In many cases these farms are mortgaged. The interest cannot have been paid in consequence of the war, and there is no prospect of it being paid within the next two or three or four years. If these men lay down their arms, they will find that their mortgagees will be entitled to foreclose upon them, and they can be deprived of their property without having time or opportunity of restoring their own rights, so that, instead of being masters, or farmers, or squires, as the hon. Gentleman opposite called them, they will either have to find some

new source of occupation or become labourers so far as white men are labourers in that district. There is another point which especially appeals to men of honour and of spirit. These Boers have fighting in their ranks a certain number of Colonial British subjects, and they have, from the commencement, always made it a point of honour that, if they surrendered, favourable or fair terms should

be extended to their comrades in arms. Whatever hon. Gentlemen opposite or I may think of the conduct of those who have been British subjects, and have enjoyed full self-government, joining the enemies of their country, we cannot expect the Boers to take the same view of it.

Are all these consequences necessary for the honour of this country, or is it reasonable to expect, if the Boers have no assurance that they will be saved from consequences of that character, that they will come in and surrender? If you insist upon their becoming British subjects, there is no honour that forbids you saving them from ruin; and ruin it is which stares them in the face, or which they imagine stares them in the face, unless some such assurances are given. Is it necessary, from the point of view of security, that we should refuse any terms except those the Government have laid down? Suppose, as I think will probably be the case, the commandoes now in the field are, before long, dispersed and driven north. They will then become, unless you can get them to consent to British dominion, turbulent and desperate; men; the same kind of men as those who fought in Cuba and Bosnia, and other parts of the world too familiar for me to refer to. You are, at this moment, compiling for them a calendar of heroes and, as they think, of martyrs, and we all know how "martyrdom is the seed of the Church." If you drive these men to desperation by refusing them reasonable and fair terms, our children will feel the consequences, even if we do not feel them ourselves. I say that true honour and true security, so far as that is attainable in present circumstances, lies in giving these men something to hope for and something to live for. I say offer them an amnesty—a free and a full amnesty. Offer them assistance to repair their faring. The cost of two weeks war would go a long way to effect this. (Give them an undertaking that you will protect them from the gombeenman. Promise them local self-government. For my part, I do not deny that I should like more, but at all events promise them local self-government. It is asked, Would they accept it; would not such an offer be considered a sign of weakness? I can, of course, give no security that they will accept it; but this I will say, that these arguments were the arguments which lost us the American colonies. But, whether accepted or not, these methods would, at all events, go far to fix the loyalty of our white subjects in Cape Colony of Dutch blood, who are as much entitled to our consideration as our fellow-subjects of English blood. They have been in a difficult position, as everyone must feel, throughout this war. They are men who have ties of kindred all over the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and have the sympathies of race which we all share amongst ourselves. And if His Majesty's Government refuse everything except the bare terms of unconditional surrender; for I do not regard the accessories which I have mentioned as being anything of importance; you will go some way towards alienating the feelings of the Dutch at the Cape who are disposed to be loyal. It is of supreme importance that we should not, if we can help it, encourage the racial feeling that exists already, as we all know, in Cape Colony. We have practically suspended the constitution of (Jape Colony as a temporary measure during the war, but if we contrive to alienate permanently the Dutch population in Capo Colony we shall be confronted with a problem which has never yet been faced by this country; namely,

how to deal with a self-governing colony under the British Crown in which the majority of the population are ill-disposed towards the British connection. This country

has already made enormous sacrifices. We do not know how much this war will cost in money; but to my mind money is the smallest part. We have sacrificed many brave men; many have lost their lives, more have been mutilated and their lives made miserable; and we have sacrificed the friendship of almost all the European Powers. I do not suppose anyone who watches foreign affairs will dispute that.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I dispute it absolutely.

SIR ROBERT REID: If the right hon. Gentleman is referring to the Governments he may be accurate. I am referring to the population, which is bitterly hostile to us in consequence of this unhappy war. We have lost all that; and, though the country is perfectly prepared to make sacrifices for what is necessary, His Majesty's Government have no right to call for sacrifices from this country unless they are prepared to make peace as easy as possible for those who are our enemies in the field. The greatest master of human nature that ever lived left behind him, among many other priceless legacies, this sentence;

"When lenity and cruelty play for a kingdom, the gentler gamester is the soonest winner."

It is with a profound conviction of that truth that I appeal to the Government, although I fear it is hopeless for anyone sitting on this side of the House to do so, that while they are calling on our countrymen for these renewed sacrifices they should at least do all they can for the purpose of bringing this disastrous and lamentable war to an honourable conclusion, and that they cannot do without offering easy and honourable and fair terms to the enemy, whose gallantry in the field has been attested by more than one Unionist speaker in this House.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I do not know why the hon. and learned Gentleman should have concluded his very moderate speech to the House by assuming that his appeal would meet with no approval, gain no satisfaction, from this side of the House. The object, as stated by him, is an object which we, equally with him, have in view. We desire to bring this war to an honourable conclusion; we are determined to avoid no steps which will conduce to that result. It is possible we may differ as to the methods; but certainly he does not appeal to deaf ears when he speaks only of the principles on which our policy should be based.

The speech of the hon. and learned Gentleman is the only speech delivered in the course of this debate which has called for any remark from my self. That speech is addressed, no doubt, to the policy of the Government. The hon. Gentleman adjures us to pursue a particular policy with regard to the future settlement after the war. But other speakers have devoted themselves chiefly to other points; points generally of military administration, which my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War will, no doubt, have an opportunity of replying to in the course of this debate. And let me remark, in passing, the strange case of the hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs. The hon. Member had on the Paper for some time an Amendment* which raised a most important issue; an issue of policy, not of administration; which suggests that the time has arrived when we should

give

* The following is the Amendment placed on the Paper by Mr. Lloyd-George: "Humbly to represent to Your Majesty that, in the interests of the future peace of South Africa, the time has arrived when it should be made known to all resisting Your Majesty's forces that on the cessation of hostilities Your Majesty will be pleased, subject to the overlordship of the British Crown, to grant the security of equal rights to all the white inhabitants and protection and justice to the Native population, and to establish full local autonomy within the several areas of South Africa."

assurances to those who are now resisting His Majesty's forces that at the cessation of hostilities we will not only grant security of equal rights to all the white inhabitants and protection and justice to the natives; a policy which we have already promised; but that we should establish full local autonomy within the several areas of South Africa. That is the gist of the Amendment of the hon. Member for the Carnarvon Boroughs; and the House has listened to a speech of invective from beginning to end of about an hour's duration, in which the hon. Member has never referred to his own Amendment. He has not moved his Amendment; he has devoted himself to prolonged abuse of British officers, British policy, British Ministers; and all this invective against British subjects, and all this praise of the enemies of Great Britain has been cheered enthusiastically by the Opposition. I shall return to this Amendment presently; but meanwhile I must correct an impression that prevails in the mind of the hon. and learned Gentleman, who seems to think that there was a period in the course of this war, when the troops reached Pretoria, when it might have been possible by the offer of terms to put an end to the war. I cannot conceive what effort of the imagination has led him to that belief. It is absolutely contradicted by all the information in our possession. I believe that there is not the slightest foundation for it. At that time, or shortly after that time, it is quite true that there was an interview between Commandant Botha, who represented only a portion of the forces of the Republics, and Sir Redvers Buller; but the hon. and learned Gentleman does not appear to be aware that in the course of that interview Commandant Botha said distinctly that he would not listen to any term of peace which did not grant the full independence of the Republics.

SIR ROBERT REID: I think Sir Redvers Buller thought otherwise.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: If the hon. and learned Gentleman knows what was in Sir Redvers Buller's mind, he has the advantage of me.

SIR ROBERT REID: I infer it from what he said in his despatch.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I think it is a perfectly unjustifiable inference. I believe that there is not the slightest foundation for the theory that peace could have been had, after the capture of Pretoria, for anything less than the surrender on our part of all the objects of the war.

Then the hon. and learned Gentleman went on to say that this splendid opportunity was lost by the statement of Lord Roberts that we required an unconditional surrender on the part of the Government. I have already explained that that statement of Lord Roberts referred to the demand for independence which, from the moment the war was declared, was a demand which we absolutely

refused to consider again. It did not, of course, refer to the condition of individual members of the forces in opposition to us, and that that was quite clear to them is perfectly evident to anyone who will read the account of the interview; but in that interview Sir Redvers Buller stated to Botha that all members of the force would be permitted to retire with their small arms; not their guns; to their farms, and would be unmolested in the pursuit of their ordinary vocations.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT: And the officers?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: And the officers, certainly. As I have said, the only points in this debate with which I am qualified to deal are what may be described as questions affecting the political side of the war, and of the settlement which we hope will some day be reached. Let me say that I have nothing to add to what I said on 2nd December in the House. It was endeavoured then to represent what I said as something new; that a new spirit prevailed; and in that way a sort of an attempt was made to represent the Government as vacillating and changing in its policy. There was absolutely no foundation for that. The truth was that what I said on 2nd December was only some amplification and explanation of what I had said in August of the same year. The policy of the Government has never varied. Before the invasion of British territory, we were ready to accept the most moderate concessions. We were ready to accept a franchise which, even under the most favourable circumstances, could not have operated with any effect for a good number of years. We were willing to accept any condition which gave us the hope of improvement in the position of the British subjects whose interests we were defending, provided that we could avoid this war. But the moment invasion took place, and the first shot was fired by the Boers, that moment we declared our policy that not one shred of the independence which the Boers had abused should ever again be conceded to them. That was the policy stated by the Prime Minister in his answer to the representations which were made to him by the Presidents of the two Republics. That was the policy, is the policy, and will be the policy of His Majesty's Government to the end. Let there be no mistake about that. It is no use arguing with us on the subject of independence. That, as far as we are concerned, is a closed question. Raise it, if you like to raise it, not in speeches, but by Amendments. We are quite ready. We challenged you at the last election. You have never ceased to complain of the challenge. We challenge you in the House of Commons. Bring forward your views. If you believe the annexation we have announced ought to be repudiated; if you think, with the hon. and learned Gentleman who has just spoken, that we ought to restore the independence of these two Republics, in any form, it is for you to say so in a definite Amendment. It is for you to put the issue before the House of Commons and the country, and we are perfectly prepared to meet you. Assuming, for the sake of argument, that we are all united; which I am afraid we are not; assuming we are all agreed that annexation cannot be undone, then the policy of the Government is and has been to establish equality between the two races from the moment of the annexation, so far as our power extends, and protection and justice for the native population, and to grant the fuller liberties

involved in our definition of self-government as soon as that can be safely conceded. But I cannot conceal from myself that the Opposition must take a certain amount of responsibility for those of its members, a considerable number, who are in favour of retracing our steps, once more making a Majuba Convention, and restoring these colonies to the Boers. It is a remarkable thing that we have had six speakers in this debate on the South African question, and every speaker has been opposed to annexation. Where are the members of the Opposition in favour of annexation? We heard a great deal about them at the time of the General Election. It was thought to be a most ungenerous thing to say that a vote gained by the Opposition was a vote gained by the Boers. We have had six pro-Boers speaking in this debate, and have not had a single Liberal Imperialist.

SIR ROBERT REID: The right hon. Gentleman has no right to call Gentlemen in this House pro-Boers. We are just as much lovers of our country as he is.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The term pro-Boer;

SIR ROBERT REID: Is a very offensive observation.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: No, indeed; Directly the hon. and learned Gentleman says the term is offensive I willingly withdraw it. Now, will he give me another one? Will he tell me what word he suggests as describing a Member of the House who thinks the Boers have been right from beginning to end, and who thinks the British Government and, of course, the country, have been wrong, who believes every scandalous libel against the honour of British soldiers and British officers, who repudiates with scorn every accusation against Boer generals or Boer statesmen?

SIR ROBERT REID: The right hon. Gentleman makes charges against Members of this House. When have I made accusations against the honour of British soldiers?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I did not say you.

SIR ROBERT REID: In the heat of his argument will the right hon. Gentleman be good enough to remember that Gentlemen on this side of the House do not like being insulted in general language. If he has any observations to make about my conduct I will listen. If I am wrong I will withdraw. But I will require him to prove them.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: There is no occasion to offer any proof beyond speeches made in this House during the present session and the preceding session. As I have said, the point of difference between the two sides of the House must not be taken as the question of annexation. What is the point of difference? I would wish; I say it most sincerely; it were possible we were unanimous. Who can doubt for a moment that if the House were unanimous in regard to the war, the hands of the Executive; not a party Government, but the Executive; of the nation would be enormously strengthened? A great deal is said about the effect of what goes on in this House on the war and feeling in South Africa. Of course it has an effect. I do not give that as a reason why hon. Gentlemen should repress their sentiments if they feel bound to relieve their consciences by denouncing their own countrymen. That is their responsibility. It is not for me to judge them. But they must always bear in mind what the effect is. They cannot deny that. They cannot deny that the effect of a divided House, and men

of reputation and standing in this country holding such language as has been held by the Leader of the opposition and others, must be encouraging to the Boers in the field. Therefore, I say, I wish most heartily and sincerely that it were possible, even at this stage, to come to a general agreement. But if we cannot do that, the next best thing is to have a definite issue. Then, at all events, if we cannot see the country is unanimous, we can see, perhaps, in what proportion it is divided.

But, Sir, a definite issue is just the thing the Opposition appears at this moment most anxious to avoid. What is the issue, if it is not the question of annexation? Three of the speakers in this debate, one of the Members for Aberdeen, the senior Member for Northampton; [An HON. MEMBER: The junior Member]; Oh, I beg pardon; the junior Member for Northampton, are certainly among those on the other side of the House who are opposed to annexation. The right hon. Member for South Aberdeen told us ;he put it forward, I think rather as a counsel of perfection; that his own opinion was in favour of destroying their independence and treating them as protected States. I do not feel called upon to bring that to an issue, for it may fairly be said that it is a personal opinion not held by any large portion of the Opposition. But that is not the ease with regard to the curious evanescent Amendment in the name of the hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs. The Leader of the Opposition made a speech on the first night of this debate, and what was the effect of that speech? We were to offer terms to the enemy. And what terms? Immediate concession of self-government. [An HON. MEMBER: "No, no!"] Yes, it was indeed. I will examine it a little more closely. He criticised the Government, he attacked the Government, he insinuated that the Government were not doing everything they could to lay proper terms before the Boer commanders, but unless it is a question of immediately giving self-government there is no question between us. The Boers know perfectly well, they have been told again and again, directly and indirectly, and it has been repeatedly stated in this House, that at the earliest possible moment they will be granted self-government. There is no question between us if that is all the right hon. Gentleman meant. But no, he intended a great deal more, because I remember perfectly well his preaching to the country before the House met that there should be no interval between military administration and self-government. We say there must be an intermediate period when civil government will be established, but not full self-government.

SIR H. CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN (Stirling Burghs): I thought you said Crown colony government. That is what I object to.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Either the right hon. Gentleman does not know what Crown colony government is or else he is quibbling about words. Will he be satisfied if I call it a civil government, with Ministers and a Governor appointed by His Majesty and a council to advise him? That is civil government, and it has this about it; that the Imperial Government has control in the last resort. That is what we mean. The issue between the two sides was clearly put by the hon. Member for Carnarvon, and that is what sets the Front Bench opposite into fits. That is a clear issue, and that is what they want to avoid. I should have liked to see

the scene when the Leader of the Opposition went to the hon. Member for Carnarvon and said, "Oh, for Heaven's sake, do not let the cat out of the bag. Do not put a definite issue; who shall be beaten. Let us talk as much as we like, accuse the Government of anything you like; let us suggest everything, but do not bring matters to the test of a division in the House of Commons." I challenge the right hon. Gentleman to say if I have misrepresented the view of himself and others on the Front Bench opposite. The view is not put in definite form, but it is desirable that it should be put into definite form, otherwise we are liable to misunderstanding. In my opinion, the Amendment of the hon. Member for Carnarvon puts into terms in which it could be dealt with by the House everything that the right hon. Gentleman appeared to accept in the course of his speech, not, however, daring to challenge a vote thereon.

Now let us see what this issue means; let us treat it seriously. We are to propose an armistice to the leaders of the Boers, who made war upon us and whom we have defeated. Very well. Having done that, we are to say, immediately on the cessation of hostilities you are to be given self-government on the model of the Australian State. I think the right hon. Gentleman said that, and I say a more inept, more childish, more ridiculous and more impracticable proposal was never made. What does the proposal amount to? After all the sacrifices in this war, we are to place in the hands of the Dutch population of the Transvaal from which the English population has already been expelled the power of stultifying everything we have done, and enable them under a constitution granted by us to frustrate every object for which the war was undertaken. And why is this proposal made to us? If we were willing once more to enter upon this sort of transaction with the Boers, a transaction which failed so lamentably on a previous occasion, we shall not be able to say again, as we said then many of us, as we believed then, that it was a magnanimous policy and that it would be accepted as such. There is no magnanimity in the proposal of the right hon. Gentleman. It is a proposal dictated by his fears. What did he tell us? He told us he was aghast at the present military situation and aghast at the consequences that might follow after the conclusion of the war, and it is upon the ground that our position is an impossible one that, after all these sacrifices we are to betray those who have trusted us, to betray the country which has given us its support, to betray the colonies who have come to our assistance; that we are to do all this, and admit that we, this great Empire, must, in view of the dangerous position in which we find ourselves, surrender everything for which we have been fighting. To whom are we to make these proposals? There are five leaders in the field at the present moment. Are we to make them to all of them? And if one agrees and the others disagree, or four agree and one disagrees, what are we to do then?

The right hon. Gentleman accused us the other day; he used some strong language, because, as he said, we had obliterated the regular Government when we annexed these States. I do not know whether the right hon. Gentleman suggests that we ought to have stopped at Bloemfontein or Pretoria, while the regular Government was reforming. At Pretoria we annexed the Transvaal; from that time there was no regular Government, and could not be. We are only dealing now with the leaders

of separate bands in the field, and the terms we have to make are the terms, the conditions, which may be offered to them and to those they lead.

Then there is another-point. The right hon. Gentleman, followed by the hon. and learned Gentleman to-night says that we are in face of a position which is almost an impossible position. The right hon. Gentleman said that there must be: that it is inevitable that there should be, a majority of Dutchmen in South Africa. In the first place, I protest against the use of the word. It is not a question of Dutch. That is an attempt to recognise these so-called racial hostilities. It is a question of loyalist and disloyalist; it is a question of loyalist and rebel, and for my part I am very glad to believe that a very large proportion, I believe the majority, of the Dutch may be reckoned among the loyalist population. From those, therefore, we have nothing whatever to fear, and even if it were true that there would be a, racial majority of Dutch in South Africa, so long as the majority of the Dutch or a large proportion of the Dutch are loyal to the; British Crown we should have no ground whatever for being alarmed. But, alter all, I do not believe that there will be a majority, and I am not by any means certain that there was a majority before the war. Returns are so imperfect that it is impossible to speak with absolute certainty. But if the riches of the Transvaal are anything like what has been generally suggested, what has been accepted by the other side whenever we talk about the power of taxing them, if the resources of the, country are anything like what is, I believe, universally conceded, then with the development of the country which will follow the conclusion of the war, I believe that the proportion of the subjects of British birth and origin will be very largely in excess of those of any other nationality.

My hon. friend the Member for Oldham, in his very admirable speech, a speech which I am sure that those who were friends and intimates of his father will have welcomed with the utmost satisfaction in the hope that we may see the father repeated in the son;my hon. friend in that speech called attention to a practical matter which appears to have escaped the attention altogether of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition and of the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite. That is, that at the present time, owing to the action of the Boers, who, if we are to use the language of the Member for Carnarvon, I should have to say with great brutality expelled Englishmen, English women, English children, sent them away in uncovered trucks and submitted them to every insult and outrage;if we are to take no account of them, then the franchise and the control of the country if given to the Boers would be given to a party which by its own misdeeds in this matter misrepresents its former population, two-thirds at least of which were of a different opinion. Surely it is only reasonable to suppose, before we grant full government, that the country must be restored to something like its normal condition, and that its old inhabitants, those who contributed to its prosperity, and on whose energy and enterprise its future depends, should have returned to their homes and should be able to take part in the political future of the country. If that is the issue which the hon. Member for Carnarvon puts down on the Paper, but which he refuses to carry to a vote;if that is the issue between us;all I can say is that we refuse to

have anything to do with the policy suggested. We are quite ready to establish the civil government of which I have spoken, we are ready to maintain equality, we are ready to secure justice to all the inhabitants of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, but we are not prepared to put into their hands the whole control of the administration and civil government until we know it will be safe to do so.

It is said that our views have not been communicated to the leaders of the Boers, and that a proclamation which I promised I would endeavour to have circulated has not yet been so distributed. I wish to say that, so far as the leaders are concerned, I am convinced they know perfectly well what terms we are willing to offer. There is no excuse on their part. It is possible that many of their followers, being ignorant people; when they come to us as prisoners we find they have been deceived as to what is going on; do not know the terms we are willing to offer. We have by various means endeavoured to get to the rank and file a knowledge of the terms which are being offered, and we know what the result has been. The emissaries who have been sent; emissaries not sent by us, but permitted by us to go, who volunteered themselves in what they believed to be the interests of their countrymen, to make these representations; these emissaries have been apparently, as far as our information goes, brutally ill-used, tortured before execution, shot as spies after having been flogged. And that action on the part of the Boers finds defenders among those Members of the House who cannot find invective too strong in which to attack British soldiers and British officers. All I can say is that, as far as I am concerned, I have been in constant communication with Sir Alfred Milner, and through him Lord Kitchener, as to the possibility of any additional communication being made to these forces. The present moment would seem to be hardly suitable for such a purpose, but I ask them to keep me informed as to any possible opportunity for further representations.

In view of the hour I cannot attempt to say more. I will only say, in conclusion, that we are not discussing to-night, although several Gentlemen have tried to introduce the point, the original justice of the war. I cannot understand how any person who approaches this matter with an unprejudiced mind can fail to see, in view of all the information which is now in our possession, that this struggle had to come. The real issue behind all the negotiations, behind everything else, was the determination of the Boers to secure supremacy in South Africa; and all their preparations were made for it. That if we had allowed matters to go much further our difficulties would have enormously increased is certainly my conscientious conviction. I am also convinced that, now that we are in the war, in spite of the fact, which we regretfully acknowledge, that the sacrifices which have been called for are greater than we expected, and that the war has lasted longer than anyone anticipated, the country is of the same mind in which it has always been; that it will grudge no sacrifice which is necessary to carry the war to a successful conclusion, and that it will forgive no Government and no party which attempts to stultify the objects with which the war has been undertaken.

Debate adjourned till to-morrow.

House adjourned at Twelve of the clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 19th February, 1901.

PRIVATE BILLS.

The CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS reported, That, in accordance with Standing Order 79, he had conferred with the Chairman of Committees of the House of Lords, for the purpose of determining in which House of Parliament the respective Private Bills should be first considered, and they had determined that the Bills contained in the following List should originate in the House of Lords, viz.:

1. Aire and Calder Navigation.
2. Albion Steam Coal Company.
3. Alfreton Gas.
4. Arlesey Gas.
5. Aspatria, Silloth, and District Water.
6. Barrow-in-Furness Corporation.
7. Bath Gas Light and Coke.
8. Belfast Harbour.
9. Bethlem Hospital.
10. Bideford and Clovelly Railway (Abandonment).
11. Bideford and Clovelly Railway (Extension of Time, etc.).
12. Birmingham (City) Tramways.
13. Bolton Corporation.
14. Bournemouth Corporation.
15. Bridewell Hospital.
16. Bristol, Clifton, and West of England Zoological Society.
17. Bristol Corporation Cemetery.
18. Bristol Corporation (Docks and Railways, etc.).
19. Broadstairs and St. Peter's Water and Improvement.
20. Brompton and Piccadilly Circus Railway.
21. Cardiff Railway.
22. Central London Railway.
23. Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Railway (No. 1).
24. Charing Cross, Euston, and Hampstead Railway (No. 2).
25. Charing Cross, Hammersmith, and District Electric Railway.
26. Chester Corporation Tramways.
27. Chesterfield Improvement.
28. Chester Gas.
29. Christ's Hospital (London).
30. City and Brixton Railway.
31. City and North East Suburban Electric Railway.
32. City and South London Railway.
33. Cork, Blackrock, and Passage Railway.
34. Cowes Ferry.
35. Doncaster Tithe Trust.
36. Dover Corporation.

37. Dover Harbour.
38. Dover Gas.
39. Easton and Church Hope Railway.
40. Elland Gas.
41. Faversham Water.
42. Finchley and Hendon Tramways.
43. Folkestone Corporation.
44. Freshwater, Yarmouth, and Newport Railway.
45. Great Southern and Western Railway.
46. Handsworth Urban District Council.
47. Harpenden District Gas.
48. Harrogate Corporation.
49. Harrogate Water.
50. Henry Diaper and Company (Delivery Warrants).
51. Hey wood and Middleton Water Board.
52. Islington and Euston Railway.
53. King's Norton and Northfield Urban District Tramways.
54. King's Road Railway.
55. Leeds Churches.
56. Leeds Corporation (General Powers).
57. Leeds Corporation Water.
58. Llanelly and Mynydd Mawr Railway.
59. Llanelly Harbour.
60. London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway.
61. London (City) School for Orphans of Freemen.
62. Lowestoft Corporation.
63. Lynton and Barnstaple Railway.
64. Manchester and Liverpool Electric Express Railway.
65. Manchester Corporation.
66. Manchester (Market Street Area) Improvements.
67. Mersey Docks and Harbour Board.
68. Mersey Docks and Harbour Board (Canada Dock Works, etc.).
69. Milford Docks.
70. Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Gateshead Gas.
71. Newport (Isle of Wight) Gas.
72. New Swindon Gas.
73. Nitrate Railways Company.
74. North East Loudon Railway.
75. Nottingham Corporation.
76. Oakham Water.
77. Omagh Gas.
78. Otley Gas.
79. Piccadilly and City Railway.
80. Portmadoc, Beddgelert, and South Snowdon Railway.
81. Poulton-le-Fylde Gas.
82. Prestatyn Water.

83. Rhymney and Aber Valleys Gas and Water.
84. Ripon Corporation.
85. Royal Exchange Assurance.
86. Rugby Water and Improvement.
87. St. Bartholomew's Hospital.
88. Salford Corporation.
89. Sheffield Corporation.
90. Sheffield District Railway.
91. Shields Bridge.
92. Shrewsbury Gas.
93. Smethwick Corporation.
94. South Eastern, London, and Chatham, and Dover Railways.
95. South Essex Water.
96. South Lancashire Tramways.
97. Southport Water (Transfer).
98. South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway.
99. Stockport Corporation Water.
100. Stratton and Bude Gas.
101. Stratton and Bude Improvement.
102. Sutton-in-Ashfield Urban District (Water).
103. Tyneside Tramways and Tram-roads.
104. Warkworth Harbour.
105. Watford and District Tramways.
106. West and South London Junction Railway.
107. Weston-super-Mare Gas.
108. Wigan Corporation Tramways, etc.
109. Wisbech Water.
110. Worcester Tramways.

Several other Members took and subscribed the Oath.

THE DEATH OF QUEEN VICTORIA.

Mr. SPEAKER informed the House that he had received the following Communications expressing the condolence of the Portuguese Chamber of Deputies with the British Nation in the loss it had sustained by the death of Her late Majesty;; London, February 15th, 1900.

SIR,

I have the honour to enclose a resolution from the Portuguese Chamber of Deputies expressing their profound sympathy with the people of Great Britain in the loss they had suffered by the death of the late Queen Victoria.

I am, Sir,

Your obedient humble servant,

SOVERAL.

The Speaker of the House of Commons.

Chamber of Deputies.

Copy of the records of the Session January 23, 1901, containing the vote of profound condolence on the death of H. M. Queen Victoria of England, Empress of India.

The President stated that it was his sad duty to communicate to the Chamber the decease of H.M. Queen Victoria of England and said that this event, which brought mourning and sorrow not only to the Royal Family of England, but to the whole English Nation, had also afflicted the Royal Family of Portugal, and particularly their August Sovereign, the King, Dom Carlos; the Portuguese people too were shocked and felt, as their own, the sorrow and grief of our ancient and faithful ally; he said that he believed himself to be interpreting the sentiments of the whole Chamber, which was the legitimate representative of the country, when he proposed that in the records of the session should be inscribed a vote of profound condolence on this unhappy event, and that the proper communication should be made to the English Government and the House of Commons. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, on behalf of the Government, said that he associated himself with the proposal of the President, and in deeply sympathetic terms eulogised the virtues and high qualities of mind and character which distinguished the illustrious Queen of England, Empress of India, whose glorious reign had seen the realisation of all the dreams of greatness and prosperity of Her beloved people; he extolled the qualities which adorn the Sovereign who is about to preside over the destinies of England, and concluded by saying that the funeral ceremonies which were to be celebrated in the United Kingdom were something more than a commemoration, they were the apotheosis of Her who was the glory of Her Country and an honour to humanity.

Senhor Joas Franco Castello Branco, in the name of the parliamentary majority, said that he associated himself with the proposed manifestation, not only as a mark of condolence which was due, in such circumstances, to friendly nations, but as a confirmation of the sentiments of respectful sympathy and well deserved admiration for the virtues of the illustrious Queen whom England had just lost, and who was a perfect model for Constitutional Sovereigns and Chiefs of modern liberal States; and after declaring that Portugal owed to England an assurance that she would ever be at her side to share her joys and her sorrows, he concluded by laying on the Table the following motion:;
"I propose that the Chamber, in testimony of its regret and deference, do suspend its sittings until after the funeral."

(Signed) JOAS FRANCO.

Senhor Francisco Beirao, on behalf of the progressive minority, said that he associated himself with the manifestations which had been proposed, and after dwelling upon the excellences of character of the illustrious Departed and the services which She had rendered to civilisation, concluding by moving that the proposal of the President and that of the illustrious leader of the majority should be approved by acclamation.

The resolution was passed.

True copy. Directorate General of the Office of the Chamber of Deputies. January 26, 1901. The Councillor, Director and Secretary General.

(Signed) JOAQUIM P. DI ABRANCHE.

CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS.

Mr. SPEAKER further informed the House that he had received from the Judges appointed to try the several Election Petitions the following Certificate and

Report relating to the Election for the Borough of Maidstone;;
MAIDSTONE ELECTION PETITION.

The Parliamentary Elections Act, 1868.

The Corrupt and Illegal Practices Acts, 1854–1895.

To the Right Honourable the Speaker of the House of Commons.

We, Sir William Rann Kennedy, Knight, and Sir Arthur Moseley Channell, Knight, Judges of the High Court of Justice, and two of the Judges on the Rota for the time being for the trial of Election Petitions in England and Wales, do hereby certify in pursuance of the said Acts that upon the eleventh to the fourteenth days of February of this year we duly held a Court at the Sessions House,. Maidstone, for the trial of, and did try, the Election Petition for the Borough of Maidstone, between Fiennes Stanley Wykeham Cornwallis, Petitioner, and John Barker, Respondent.

And, in further pursuance of the said Acts, we report that at the conclusion of the said trial we determined that the said John Barker, being the Member whose Election and Return were complained of in the Petition, was not duly elected, and that the Election was void on the ground of bribery by his Agents; and we do hereby certify in writing such our determination to you.

And whereas the charges were made in the said Petition of corrupt and illegal practices having been committed at the said Election, we, in further pursuance of the said Acts, report as follows;;

(1) That no corrupt or illegal practice was proved to have been committed by or with the

knowledge and consent of the said John Barker.

(2) That the persons whose names are set out in the Schedule hereto were proved to have been guilty of the corrupt practice of bribery.

(3) That although it was proved that corrupt practices were committed at the said Election it was not proved, nor have we reason to believe that corrupt or illegal practices extensively prevailed at the said Election.

(4) That the said John Barker was guilty by his agents of the corrupt practice of bribery.

(5) That we have given certificates of indemnity to all the persons whose names are set out in the Schedule hereto except Levi Barker, Alfred Henry Russell, and Henry Ward.

A copy of the evidence and of our judgment taken by the deputies of the shorthand writer of the House of Commons accompanies this our certificate.

Dated this 18th day of February, 1901.

WILLIAM RANN KENNEDY.

A. M. CHANNELL.

Schedule.

Persons Bribed.

John Costello.

Arthur Henry Pinhorn.

Frederick Perrin.

Alfred Atkins.

George Hoad.

Edward Woollett.
Thomas Bray.
Henry Jenner.
James Jury.
Alfred Henry Russell.
William Rivers.
Lionel Ireland.
Thomas Ring.
William Muggridge.
William Stevens.
Henry Luck.
Thomas Beadle.
Thomas Henry Underhill.
Henry Ward.
Joseph George Rogers.
Eli Harman.
Albert George Honey.
Harry Harman.
Arthur Logan
George Mace.
W. R. K.
A. M. C.
Persons Guilty of Bribing.
William Thomas Over-hill.
Arthur Wiffens.
Albert Turner.
Albert William Airtton.
William John Turner.
Thomas Hewitt.
Levi Barker.
Frederick Martin.
Albert King.
Walter Thomas Beale.
Ernest William Parks.
W. R. K.
A. M. C.

PETITIONS.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

Petition from Low Moor, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (HIGHER GRADE AND EVENING CONTINUATION SCHOOLS).

Petitions for alteration of Law, from Killamarsh; Worcester; Clayton; Liverpool; Heckmondwike; Longton; Loughborough; and Ecclesfield; to lie upon the Table.

LICENSING (SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS).

Petition from Epsom, for alteration of Law; to lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW MEDICAL OFFICERS (SCOTLAND).

Petition from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, for alteration of Law; to

lie upon the Table.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1896.

Petitions for alteration of Law, from Blaenavon; Newport Pagnell; Radstock; Newhaven; and Great Crosby; to lie upon the Table.

PURE BEER.

Petition from Berwick on Tweed, for legislation; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY.

Petitions in favour, from Newport Pagnell; and Fenny Stratford; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN.

Petition from Surbiton, in favour; to lie upon the Table.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR.

Petition from Southport, for termination; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCE).

Paper [presented 15th February] to be printed. [No. 27.]

Paper [presented 15th February] to be printed. [No. 28.]

STATISTICAL ABSTRACT (FOREIGN COUNTRIES).

Copy presented, of Statistical Abstract for the principal and other Foreign Countries in each year from 1889 to 1898–9 (Twenty-seventh Number) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH.

Copy presented, of Report on the State of the Finances of the University, made by the University Court, for the year to 31st August, 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 29.]

DUCHY OF LANCASTER.

Accounts presented, for the year ended 21st December, 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 30.]

EDUCATION (SCHOOL BOARDS, ETC.) (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Copy presented, of List of School Boards and School Attendance Committees in England and Wales, 1st January, 1901 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1899.

Copy presented, of Additional and Amending General Orders for the Regulation of Proceedings under and in pursuance of The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 31.]

EAST INDIA (TRADE.)

Copy presented, of Tables relating to the Trade of British India with British Possessions and Foreign Countries for the five years 1895–6 to 1899–1900 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

NEW BILLS.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND).

Bill to assimilate the Law relating to Police Pensions and Allowances in Scotland to the Law in England, and for other purposes relating thereto, ordered to be brought in by Mr. John Wilson (Falkirk), Sir Lewis M'Iver, Mr. Wylie, Mr. Hozier, Sir John Stirling-Maxwell, Sir Walter Thorburn, Mr. Dalziel, and Mr.

Law.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To assimilate the Law relating to Police Pensions and Allowances in Scotland to the Law in England, and for other purposes relating thereto," presented, and read the first time; to be

read a second time upon Wednesday, 6th March, and to be printed. [Bill 2.]

CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND).

Bill dealing with Congested Districts in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Flynn, Dr. Ambrose, Mr. Dillon, Mr. Boland, Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. Conor O'Kelly, Mr. Boyle, Mr. Roche, Mr. John O'Donnell, Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, and Mr. O'Doherty.

CONGESTED DISTRICTS (IRELAND) BILL.

"Dealing with Congested Districts in Ireland," presented and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13th March, and to be printed.

[Bill 3.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN.

Bill to prevent the sale of Intoxicating Liquors to Children, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Crombie, Sir William Houldsworth, Mr. Tritton, Sir Joseph Leese, Mr. Asquith, Sir Henry Fowler, Sir Edward Grey, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Alfred Thomas, Mr. William Johnston, Mr. Peel, and Mr. Charles Douglas.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN BILL.

"To prevent the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors to Children," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 20th March, and to be printed. [Bill 4.]

BEER.

Bill to amend the Law relating to the manufacture and sale of Beer, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Purvis, Sir Cuthbert Quilter, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Sir James Fergusson, Mr. Frederick Wilson, Mr. Bound, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Griffith-Boscawen, Colonel Brookfield, Mr. Price, Mr. Younger, Mr. Jeffreys, and Mr. Joseph Walton.

BEER BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the manufacture and sale of Beer," presented and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 27th March, and to be printed. [Bill 5.]

MINES (EIGHT HOURS).

Bill to restrict the hours in Mines to Eight Hours per day from bank to bank, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Yoxall, Mr. Pickard, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. William Abraham (Bhondda) Mr. Thomas Bayley, Mr. Markham, Mr. Keir Hardie, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Caldwell, and Mr. Joseph Walton.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

"To restrict the hours in Mines to Eight Hours per day from bank to bank," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 6.]

COAL MINES (EMPLOYMENT).

Bill to amend the provisions of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, which relate to employment, ordered to be brought in by Sir Thomas Roe, Sir Walter

Foster, Mr. Pickard, Mr. William Abraham (Rhondda), Mr. Holland, Mr. Broadhurst, Mr. Brynmor Jones, Mr. Markham, Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Bell, Mr. Cremer, and Mr. Joseph Walton.

COAL MINES (EMPLOYMENT) BILL.

"To amend the provisions of The Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, which relate to employment," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 17th April, and to be printed. [Bill 9.]

EDUCATION (YOUNG CHILDREN) (SCHOOL ATTENDANCE) (SCOTLAND).

Bill to regulate the Attendance of Young Children at School in Scotland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Pirie, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Baird, Mr. Dillon, Sir William Houldsworth, Sir Lewis M'Ilver, Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Robson, Captain Sinclair, Mr. Parker Smith, and Mr. Tennant.

EDUCATION (YOUNG CHILDREN) (SCHOOL ATTENDANCE) (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To regulate the Attendance of Young Children at School in Scotland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 1st May, and to be printed. [Bill 8.]

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER.

Bill to amend the Law as to Marriages with a Deceased Wife's Sister, ordered to be brought in by Sir William Gurdon, Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, Mr. Hambro, Captain Jessel, Sir Joseph Leese, Mr. David MacIver, Mr. Mellor, Mr. Melville, Colonel Sadler, Mr. Charles Shaw, Sir Barrington Simeon, and Mr. Price.

MARRIAGE WITH A DECEASED WIFE'S SISTER BILL.

"To amend the Law as to Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 24th April, and to be printed. [Bill 7.]

LEGAL PROCEDURE (IRELAND).

Bill to amend the Law relating to Trial by Jury and other legal procedure in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Harrington and Mr. Clancy.

LEGAL PROCEDURE (IRELAND) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to Trial by Jury and other legal procedure in Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 15th May, and to be printed. [Bill 10.]

LAND TENURE.

Bill to amend the Law relating to the Tenure of Land, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lambert, Mr. Seale-Hayne, Mr. Soares, Mr. Charles Allen, Mr. Edwards, Mr. Fletcher Moulton.

LAND TENURE BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Tenure of Land," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th May, and to be printed. [Bill 11.]

COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGE TO CROPS, ETC.

Bill to give Compensation for Damage by Fires caused by sparks from railway engines, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hudson, Mr. Jeffreys, Mr. Munro Ferguson, Mr. Channing, Colonel Kenyon-Slaney, Mr. James Lowther, Mr. Price, Major Rasch, and Mr. Strachey.

COMPENSATION FOR DAMAGE TO CROPS, ETC., BILL.

"To give Compensation for Damage by Fires caused by sparks from railway engines" presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 6th March, and to be printed. [Bill 12.]

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, 1883 to 1896, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. P. Farrell, Mr. Barry, Mr. Mumaghan, Mr. Kendal O'Brien, Mr. London. Mr. Joyce, Mr. Crean, and Mr. O'Shee.

LABOURERS (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend the Labourers (Ireland) Acts, 1883 to 1896," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 22nd May, and to be printed. [Bill 13.]

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND).

Bill to enable parish councils in Scotland to grant Superannuation Allowances to Poor Law Officers and servants and to officers and servants of committees of management of poor-houses formed under a combination for poor house purposes, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Maxwell, Sir Lewis M'Ilver, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Nicol, Mr. Ure, Mr. Cross, and Mr. Renshaw.

POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

"To enable parish councils in Scotland to grant Superannuation Allowances to Poor Law Officers and servants, and to officers and servants of committees of management of poorhouses formed under a combination for poorhouse purposes," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 13th March, and to be printed. [Bill 14.]

LICENCES (IRELAND).

Bill to stop the issue of new Licences unless in exceptional circumstances in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. T. M. Healy, Colonel Saunderson, Mr. Clancy, Sir James Haslett, Mr. Samuel Young, Mr. T. L. Corbett, and Mr. Jordan.

LICENCES (IRELAND) BILL.

"To stop the issue of new Licences unless in exceptional circumstances in Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 5th March, and to be printed. [Bill 15.]

OUT-DOOR RELIEF (FRIENDLY SOCIETIES).

Bill to amend the Out-door Relief Friendly Societies Act, 1894, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Wingfield-Digby, Mr. Strachey, Sir Albert Rollit, Sir Mark Stewart, Mr. Goulding, Sir Samuel Hoare, Colonel Brookfield, Mr. Yoxall, Mr. Thomas Bayley, Mr. Holland, Mr. Rigg, and Mr. Platt-Higgins.

OUT-DOOR RELIEF (FRIENDLY SOCIETIES) BILL.

"To amend the Out-door Relief Friendly Societies Act, 1894," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 15th May, and to be printed. [Bill 16.]

TRAWLERS' CERTIFICATES SUSPENSION.

Bill to enable Courts to suspend the Certificates of Trawlers convicted of Illegal Trawling, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bignold, Mr. Harmsworth, Mr. Weir, Mr. J. Cathcart Wason, Mr. Jordan, and Mr. Leveson-Gower.

TRAWLERS CERTIFICATES SUSPENSION BILL.

"To enable Courts to suspend the Certificates of Trawlers convicted of Illegal Trawling," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 6th March, and to be printed. [Bill 17.]

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE).

Bill to grant certificates to persons in charge of Steam Engines and Boilers, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Jacoby, Mr. Bell, Mr. Haldane, Mr. Helder, Colonel Denny, Mr. Fenwick, Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Mr. Paulton, Mr. Joseph Walton, and Mr. Holland.

STEAM ENGINES AND BOILERS (PERSONS IN CHARGE) BILL.

"To grant certificates to persons in charge of Steam Engines and Boilers," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 1st May, and to be printed. [Bill 18.]

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (IRELAND).

Bill to provide for improving and extending the procedure for obtaining parliamentary powers by way of Provisional Orders in matters relating to Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Hemphill, Mr. Field, Mr. T. W. Russell, Mr. Caldwell, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Condon, and Colonel Nolan.

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (IRELAND) BILL.

"To provide for improving and extending the procedure for obtaining parliamentary powers by way of Provisional Orders in matters relating to Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 1st May, and to be printed. [Bill 19.]

OLD AGE PENSIONS.

Bill to provide Pensions for the aged poor, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Channing, Mr. Burt, Mr. John Burns, Mr. John Wilson (Durham), Sir Walter Foster, and Mr. Broadhurst.

OLD AGE PENSIONS BILL.

"To provide Pensions for the aged poor," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 15th May, and to be printed. [Bill 20.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend the Law relating to Local Government in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Crean, Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Mr. J. P. Farrell, Mr. Daly, Mr. O'Shee, Mr. Nannetti, and Mr. Tully.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to Local Government in Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 12th June, and to be printed. [Bill 21.]

LAND TENURE (WALES).

Bill to amend the Law relating to the Tenure of Agricultural Land in Wales and Monmouthshire, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Osmond Williams, Mr. Alfred Thomas, Mr. Brynmor Jones, Mr. Ellis Griffith, and Mr. Edwards.

LAND TENURE (WALES) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the Tenure of Agricultural Land in Wales and Monmouthshire," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 22nd May, and to be printed. [Bill 22.]

TENANTS' IMPROVEMENT (IRELAND).

Bill for improving the condition of Tenants in Cities, Towns, and Villages in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Major Jameson, Mr. Field, Captain Donelan, and Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh.

TENANTS' IMPROVEMENT (IRELAND) BILL.

"For improving the condition of Tenants in Cities, Towns, and Villages in Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 19th June, and to be printed. [Bill 23.]

CRIMES ACT (IRELAND) REPEAL.

Bill to repeal certain criminal statutes relating to Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. William Abraham (Cork), Mr. William Redmond, Mr. O'Doherty, Mr. Patrick O'Brien, Mr. Boland, and Mr. O'Shea.

CRIMES ACT (IRELAND) REPEAL BILL.

"To repeal certain criminal statutes relating to Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 26th June, and to be printed. [Bill 24.]

ROMAN CATHOLIC DISABILITIES REMOVAL.

Bill to remove certain Disabilities affecting Roman Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Tully, Mr. Daly, Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Mr. O'Doherty, and Mr. M'Fadden.

ROMAN CATHOLIC DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

"To remove certain Disabilities affecting Roman Catholics in Great Britain and Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 6th March. and to be printed. [Bill 25.]

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend the Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Acts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Seton-Karr, Mr. Thorburn, and Colonel Lucas.

SALMON FISHERIES (IRELAND) ACTS AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend the Salmon Fisheries (Ireland) Acts," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 5th June, and to be printed. [Bill 26.]

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE (IRELAND).

Bill to establish Manhood Suffrage in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. M'Fadden, Mr. Murnaghan, Mr. Daly, Mr. Roche, Mr. Tully, Mr. Barry, Mr. Cullinan, Mr. O'Doherty, and Mr. Boyle.

MANHOOD SUFFRAGE (IRELAND) BILL.

"To establish Manhood Suffrage in Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 22nd May, and to be printed. [Bill 27.]

OLD AGE PENSIONS (No. 2).

Bill to provide Pensions for aged deserving poor, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Bull, Mr. Goulding, Lord Willoughby de Eresby, Mr. John Hutton, Mr. Remnant, Mr. T. L. Corbett, and Mr. Hay.

OLD AGE PENSIONS (No. 2) BILL.

"To provide Pensions for aged deserving poor," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 17th April, and to be printed, [Bill 28.]

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (RESIGNATION OF SEATS).

Bill to enable Members of Parliament to resign their seats, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Loder, Sir Francis Powell, Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. Fison, Mr. H. D. Greene, Mr. T. M. Healy, and Sir Joseph Dimsdale.

MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT (RESIGNATION OF SEATS) BILL.

"To enable Members of Parliament to resign their seats," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th May, and to be printed. [Bill 29.]

OLD AGE PENSIONS (No. 4).

Bill to provide Pensions for aged deserving poor, ordered to be brought in by Mr. J. W. Wilson, Mr. Goulding, Mr. Ormsby-Gore, Mr. Gray, Mr. Morrison, Mr. Hay, and Mr. T. L. Corbett.

OLD AGE PENSIONS (No. 4) BILL.

"To provide Pensions for aged deserving poor," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 24th April, and to be printed. [Bill 30.]

JURORS' EXPENSES.

Bill to provide for the payment of the expenses of Jurors attending Assizes and Quarter Sessions, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Lloyd Morgan, Mr. Wharton, Mr. John Hutton, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Abel Thomas, and Mr. Edwards.

JURORS' EXPENSES BILL.

"To provide for the payment of the expenses of Jurors attending Assizes and Quarter Sessions," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 17th April, and to be printed. [Bill 31.]

IRISH LIGHTS.

Bill dealing with the Irish Lights Board, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Patrick White, Mr. Field, Mr. Cogan, Captain Donelan, Mr. Nannetti, Mr. Patrick O'Brien, and Mr. Conor O'Kelly.

IRISH LIGHTS BILL.

"Dealing with the Irish Lights Board," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 27th March, and to be printed. [Bill 32.]

CONSTABULARY (IRELAND).

Bill dealing with the Royal Irish Constabulary control, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Condon, Mr. Kendal O'Brien, Mr. P. J. O'Brien, Mr. Cullman, and Mr. O'Shee.

CONSTABULARY (IRELAND) BILL.

"Dealing with the Royal Irish Constabulary control," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 20th March, and to be printed. [Bill 33.]

VOLUNTEERS (IRELAND).

Bill for the establishment of a Volunteer force in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Thomas O'Donnell, Mr. Boland, Mr. Cullman, Mr. Barry, Mr. Murphy, Mr. Flavin, Mr. Conor O'Kelly, Mr. Condon, and Mr. John Redmond.

VOLUNTEERS (IRELAND) BILL.

"For the establishment of a Volunteer force in Ireland," presented, and read the

first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 24th April, and to be printed. [Bill 34.]

WATER AND LIGHT SUPPLY (IRELAND).

Bill to amend the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, so far as regards the Supply of Light and Water to Towns in Rural Districts in Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Conor O'Kelly, Mr. Flynn, Mr. M'Fadden, Mr. O'Doherty, and Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh.

WATER AND LIGHT SUPPLY (IRELAND) RILL.

"To amend the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898, so far as regards the Supply of Light and Water to Towns in Rural Districts in Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th May, and to be printed. [Bill 35.]

BOROUGH FUNDS ACTS (AMENDMENT).

Bill to amend the Borough Funds Act, 1872, and the Borough Funds (Ireland) Act, 1888, ordered to be brought in by Sir Albert Rollit, Sir James Woodhouse, Sir Harry Bollard, and Sir Thomas Roe.

BOROUGH FUNDS ACTS (AMENDMENT) BILL.

"To amend the Borough Funds Act. 1872, and the Borough Funds (Ireland) Act, 1888," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 25th February, and to be printed. [Bill 36.]

ELECTORAL DISABILITIES REMOVAL.

Bill for the removal of certain electoral disabilities, ordered to be brought in by Mr. O'Doherty, Mr. John Redmond, Mr. T. M. Healy, Mr. Mooney, Mr. Hemphill, Mr. M'Fadden, Mr. Tully, Mr. O'Malley, Mr. Boyle, and Mr. Flynn.

ELECTORAL DISABILITIES REMOVAL BILL.

"For the removal of certain electoral disabilities." presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 22nd May, and to be printed. [Bill 37.]

SMALL DWELLINGS ACQUISITION ACT (1899) AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend Section 1 of the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, 1899, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Horner, Sir Benjamin Stone, Mr. Harry Samuel. Mr. Ernest Gray, Mr. Boulnois, and Mr. Thomas Dewar.

SMALL DWELLINGS ACQUISITION ACT (1899) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend Section 1 of the Small Dwellings Acquisition Act, 1899," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 17th April, and to be printed. [Bill 38.]

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT (1897) AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend and extend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Sydney Buxton, Captain Norton, and Mr. John Burns.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION ACT (1897) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend and extend the Workmen's Compensation Act, 1897," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th May, and to be printed. [Bill 39.]

COAL MINES REGULATION.

Bill to amend the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. William Abraham (Rhondda), Mr. Thomas Bayley, Mr. Bell,

Mr. Bolton, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Hatch, Mr. Jacoby, and Mr. Pickard.

COAL MINES REGULATION BILL.

"To amend the Coal Mines Regulation Act, 1887," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 17th April, and to be printed.

[Bill 40.]

SHOPS.

Bill to amend the Law relating to Shops, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Flower, Mr. Lloyd-George, Colonel Hughes, Mr. Kemp, Mr. Melville, Mr. Nannetti, Sir Barrington Simeon, and Mr. Tennant.

SHOPS BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to Shops," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday next, and to be printed. [Bill 41.]

FRANCHISE AND REMOVAL OF WOMEN'S DISABILITIES.

Bill to establish a single franchise at all elections, and thereby to abolish University representation, and to remove the disabilities of Women, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Atherley-Jones, Mr. Logan, and Captain Norton.

FRANCHISE AND REMOVAL OF WOMEN'S DISABILITIES BILL.

"To establish a single franchise at all elections, and thereby to abolish University representation, and to remove the disabilities of Women," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 3rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 42.]

WAGES BOARDS.

Bill to provide for the establishment of Wages Boards, ordered to be brought in by Sir Charles Dilke, Mr. John Burns, Mr. M'Kenna, Mr. Tennant, and Mr. Trevelyan.

WAGES BOARDS BILL.

"To provide for the establishment of Wages Boards," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 26th June, and to be printed. [Bill 43.]

RE-AFFORESTING (IRELAND).

Bill to promote the Re-afforesting of Ireland, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Nolan, Mr. William Abraham, Mr. O'Doherty, Mr. Edward Thompson, Mr. Patrick White, Mr. Tully, Mr. Conor O'Kelly, and Mr. Thomas O'Donnell.

RE-AFFORESTING (IRELAND) BILL.

"To promote the Re-afforesting of Ireland," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 20th March, and to be printed. [Bill 44.]

LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES).

Bill to enable Leaseholders to become Freeholders, ordered to be brought in by General Laurie, Mr. Kenyon, Sir Albert Rollit, Sir George Fardell, Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Spear.

LEASEHOLD ENFRANCHISEMENT (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

"To enable Leaseholders to become Freeholders," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 24th April, and to be printed.

[Bill 45.]

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY.

Bill to prohibit the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Charles Wilson, Mr. Perks, Mr. Cameron, Mr. Pickard, Mr. Cornpton Eickett, Mr. Firkbank, Sir Frederick Mappin, Mr. John Wilson (Mid-Durham), Mr. Fenwick, Mr. Bell, Mr. Crawford Smith, and Mr. Hain.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

"To prohibit the Sale of Intoxicating Liquors on Sunday," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 8th May, and to be printed. [Bill 46.]

PUBLIC WORSHIP REGULATION ACT (1874) AMENDMENT.

Bill to amend The Public Worship Begulation Act, 1874, ordered to be brought in by Mr. H. D. Greene, Mr. Brynmor Jones, and Colonel Sandys.

PUBLIC WORSHIP REGULATION ACT (1874) AMENDMENT BILL.

"To amend The Public Worship Regulation Act, 1874," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 3rd April, and to be printed. [Bill 47.]

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY FATALITIES).

Bill to amend the Law relating to Coroners' Inquests in the case of Fatal Accidents on Railways, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Channing, Mr. Bell, Mr. John Burns, and Mr. Schwann.

CORONERS' INQUESTS (RAILWAY FATALITIES) BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to Coroners' Inquests in the case of Fatal Accidents on Railways," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Wednesday, 27th February, and to be printed. [Bill 48.]

JURORS (IRELAND).

Bill to make provision for the payment of Jurors in Ireland, and to amend the Jury Laws', ordered to be brought in by Mr. William M'Killop, Mr. M'Hugh, Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. Tully, and Mr. O'Dowd.

JURORS (IRELAND) BILL.

"To make provision for the payment of Jurors in Ireland, and to amend the Jury Laws," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 49.]

CONTEMPT OF COURT.

Bill to define and limit the power of Judges to imprison for Contempt of Court, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Patrick Aloysius M'Hugh, Mr. William O'Brien, Mr. O'Dowd, Mr. Crean, Mr. Roche, Mr. M'Killop, and Mr. Condon.

CONTEMPT OF COURT BILL.

"To define and limit the power of Judges to imprison for Contempt of Court," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday, 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 50.]

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES DISQUALIFICATION REMOVAL.

Bill to relieve members of Friendly Societies of certain Disqualifications arising from the receipt of temporary relief, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Strachey, Sir Albert Rollit, Mr. Courtenay Warner, Sir Samuel Hoare, Mr. Barlow, Mr. Platt-Higgins, Mr. Beaumont, Mr. Rigg, Mr. Lambert, and Mr. Nussey.

FRIENDLY SOCIETIES DISQUALIFICATION REMOVAL BILL.

"To relieve members of Friendly Societies of certain Disqualifications arising from the receipt of temporary relief," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday, 26th February, and to be printed. [Bill 51.]
QUESTIONS.

SOUTH AFRICA ; RECRUITING FOR SOUTH AFRICAN CONSTABULARY IN AUSTRALIA.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Premiers of Victoria and New South Wales have, in reply to telegrams from Sir Alfred Milner, refused to allow recruiting for the South African Constabulary to be carried on in those colonies; and whether Sir Alfred Milner had authority from the Home Government for appealing to Australian Governments to allow such recruiting.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): At the same time may I ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether Sir Alfred Milner cabled to the Governor General that he proposed to send an officer to recruit men in Australia and New Zealand, and whether Sir William Lyne has replied that the New South Wales Government objected to this course; and, if so, whether Sir Alfred Milner was acting on his own motion or by instruction from the Colonial Office.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have no information as to such refusal or as to such an appeal to Australian Governments by Sir A. Milner. I am making inquiries on the subject. This also answers the question addressed to me by the hon. Member for East Northamptonshire.

MR. CHANNING: Are we to understand that the Government did not authorise Sir Alfred Milner to take this step?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I am not prepared to answer that question, lest an inference be drawn that if such an application had been made we should not have approved it. As soon as I know the facts I shall be prepared to say whether we approve what was done.

CIVIL ADMINISTRATION OF THE NEW COLONIES.

MR. TREVELYAN (Yorkshire, W.R., Elland): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies how soon it is his intention to issue the proclamation in the English, Dutch, and Taal languages, announcing the intentions of the British Government as to the immediate civil administration of the new South African colonies, and the promise of colonial self-government at the earliest opportunity, as he engaged to do in his speech in debate on 7th December last, and in answer to a question by the Member for Bolton on 11th December.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I have felt obliged to defer to the opinion of both Lord Kitchener and Sir Alfred Milner that during the last few weeks the time was not opportune; but I have asked Sir A. Milner to inform me at once as soon as such action is advisable.

SOUTH AFRICAN LANDS SETTLEMENT COMMISSION.

MR. CHANNING: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he can state when the Report of the South African Lands Settlement Commission will be completed and issued to Parliament.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: No, Sir. The evidence is not yet in my hands.

COST OF THE WAR;THE TRANSVAAL CONTRIBUTION.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether any estimate has been made of the amount of the contribution towards the cost of the war in South Africa which will be levied on the diamond mines and the gold mines now in the possession of the British; and whether it is proposed that such contributions shall be levied by way of specific charges or by way of a rateable tax on profits, and, if not, in what other way.

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER (Sir M. HICKS BEACH, Bristol, W.): I do not quite understand the allusion to diamond mines in the question. Everything I have said on this subject has related to the Transvaal. But it is not possible at present to make any estimate, or to state the mode in which such a contribution may be obtained, and I fear that the prolongation of the war will delay the date at which I had hoped such a statement might be made.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Does the right hon. Gentleman anticipate being able to make his statement before he introduces his Budget?

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: No, Sir.

ALLEGED ORDERS TO SHOOT BOERS DRESSED IN KHAKI.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): On behalf of the hon. Member for North Aberdeen, I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether any order, either from Lord Roberts or Lord Kitchener, or any other general qualified to give such an order, has been issued that the Boers dressed in khaki when captured are to be shot; and, if so, if he can state what was the date of such order, what were its terms, and in how many cases has it been acted upon.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): No, Sir. Certainly not.

GUILDFORD CORPORATION ; RESERVISTS AS FIREMEN.

GENERAL LAURIE (Pembroke and Haverfordwest): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been officially called to the action of the Corporation of Guildford; in refusing to permit the employment of Reservists in the borough fire department; and whether any other locality can be selected as a suitable headquarters for the Queen's Royal West Surrey Regimental District in the stead of a town of which the municipal representatives act thus towards the men who have served their country.

MR. BRODRICK: My attention was not called to this matter officially, but privately. I understand that the corporation has since withdrawn the refusal.

SOUTH AFRICAN DESPATCHES;LORD ROBERTS AND "THE CLOSE OF THE WAR."

MR. BLACK (Banffshire): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether Lord Roberts's despatch of 14th August, 1900, had been received in this country by 20th September, 1900, and whether the Government was at that date in possession of any further advices from him, telegraphic or otherwise, dealing with the probability of the war in South Africa being brought to an early close; and, if any such communications exist, will they be printed as a supplement to the despatches already printed and circulated.

MR. BRODRICK: The reply to the first part of the question is in the affirmative. There was no further correspondence up to the date named except a telegram from Lord Roberts stating he had information that Kruger and Botha had come to the

conclusion that further resistance was hopeless.

REINFORCEMENTS OF MOUNTED TROOPS.

MR. BARTLEY (Islington, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War how many mounted troops have been sent to South Africa since 1st January last, and how many of these are to fill up vacancies, and how many are additions to the strength of the Army in South Africa sent at the request of Lord Kitchener.

MR. BRODRICK: The total reinforcements of mounted troops for South Africa sent out since the 1st January amount to 131 officers and 5,530 men, including one officer and 920 men of the South African Constabulary. There are no returns available to show how many of these will fill up casualties or be additions to the strength of the Army in South Africa.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): Are these figures independent of General Baden Powell's police force?

MR. BRODRICK: I have said they included the men sent out for that force.

MR. BARTLEY: Are we to understand that no portion of the 30,000 additional men has yet been sent out?

MR. BRODRICK: About 2,000 have started.

HORSES OVERWEIGHTED; LIGHTWEIGHT MEN.

SIR H. MEYSEY-THOMPSON (Stafford, Handsworth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been drawn to the weights habitually carried by our horses in South Africa; whether he is aware that the efforts being made to end the war have been much hampered and delayed by the slowness of movement forced on our troops by the weight placed on the horses; and whether, in order to give some portion of our troops the power of moving quickly, the War Office is, while raising the large number of mounted men it is now proposing to send out, making any special effort to discover and secure the services of the lightest men capable of doing the work required of them.

MR. BRODRICK: My attention has been drawn to the matter referred to by the hon. Member, and much thought has been given to the subject. There is no doubt that our horses have in many cases been over weighted, but other causes, such as shortness of food, and the unsuitability of some of the horses, are also in part responsible for the lack of mobility. As regards the weight of the men, the standard has been materially reduced, and no man is now accepted for cavalry of the line who is over 5 feet 8 inches.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Is there any record of the countries from which the horses which broke down came?

MR. BRODRICK: I do not think there is a record of each country.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is it only the Argentine horses that have broken down?

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet): Is it in contemplation to effect any reduction in the weight of the saddle?

MR. BRODRICK: Only two or three hours ago I was informed by an expert that horses under the heaviest saddles had gone best.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Did that refer to the American saddle?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order; These details should be discussed on Supply.
FARM BURNING.

MR. TREVELYAN: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is yet in

a position to inform the House as to the extent of the farm burning in the new South African colonies.

MR. BRODRICK: No, Sir. The information called for has not yet reached the War Office, but I am informed by Lord Kitchener that some information has been despatched.

IMPERIAL YEOMANRY; RATES OF PAY.

SIR JOSEPH LEIGH (Stockport): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Imperial Yeomen who volunteered for a fixed period of twelve months, and who have been in active service at the seat of war for the past twelve months, will now receive the same rate of pay; namely, 5s. per day; that is to be given to the men of the same class who have recently joined the colours.

MR. THOMAS DEWAR (Tower Hamlets, St. George's): I beg also to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Imperial Yeomanry now at the front will receive the same amount of pay which is now to be given to those enlisting; and if so, have they been notified of such increase.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): All the Yeomen will receive the higher rates of pay from 1st February, and any who may have completed twelve months service before that date will receive the higher rates from the date on which the twelve months expired.

The exact date of the increase was notified to South Africa by telegram on the 6th inst., but the general announcement was made on 21st December last year.

MR. DILLON: May I ask the noble Lord whether the War Office has considered the desirability of extending to the ordinary soldiers, such as the Dublin Fusiliers and the Gordon Highlanders, who have gone through the whole of the campaign, the same terms of pay as are now to be given to the Imperial Yeomanry?

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not arise out of the question.

MR. DILLON: I will give notice of the question.

MILITARY SAVINGS BANKS - SERGEANT MAJOR GARNER'S SAVINGS.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD (Essex, Epping): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that a Sergeant Major Garner, 13th Battery Royal Field Artillery, who was killed at Farquhar's Farm in October 1899, left a sum of about £200 in the military savings bank; that his widow proved her claim to the money, but has not been able to secure the payment of a single penny of this money; and that all communications with the War Office have proved fruitless; and whether there is any reason for withholding the payment of this sum; and if not, what further lapse of time beyond the eighteen months indicated is likely to take place before the widow receives the money due to her.

LORD STANLEY: A man's regimental savings bank account is kept with his battery or company. No notification of the existence of any account in this man's name has been made by the battery, and only in December, 1900, the widow reported to the War Office that her husband had left an account, said to be over £100. Inquiries were addressed to the battery, but no reply has as yet been received. The remainder of the estate, so far as it is known, has been issued, and the case was, on the 13th November, 1899, notified to the Patriotic Fund Commissioners, who, it is understood, made a grant of 6s. 6d. per week.

COLONEL LOCKWOOD: Will the noble Lord answer the latter part of the question?

LORD STANLEY: This matter involves communication with Natal, which, as my hon. and gallant friend knows, is very difficult just now. I will try and get an answer as quickly as possible.

PROVISION FOR PERMANENTLY DISABLED SOLDIERS

*MR. LEVY (Leicestershire, Loughborough): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that soldiers who have been so maimed in the South African campaign as to be rendered incapable of ever again following any remunerative employment, are being only temporarily relieved by the War Department, and in some cases reduced to pauperism; and if he will state on what principle pensions and allowances are granted to officers, non-commissioned officers, and men respectively, who have been permanently disabled while on active service.

LORD STANLEY: No, Sir; I am not aware of the existence of such a state of things. The Chelsea Commissioners award a temporary pension at first, and when the result of the injury continues, they continue the pension; if the results became more serious, the pension might be increased. The principles on which pensions are granted are clearly laid down in the Pay Warrant, the exact amount within certain limits being left to the discretion of the Commissioners in the case of non-commissioned officers and men.

*MR. LEVY: Does the noble Lord consider that a man who is certified by the medical authorities of the War Office as practically blind, mentally dull, and I helpless as a result of the war is sufficiently compensated and able to keep his wife and family on a shilling per day?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order !

OFFICERS' WAR GRATUITIES.

MR. HAY (Shoreditch, Hoxton): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, in view of the fact that the persons dependent upon the war gratuity due to the estates of officers who have died in the service of their country in South Africa are often in needy circumstances, he will state the cause of the delay which has hitherto occurred in the payment of this gratuity; whether such gratuity is subject to any deduction; and, if so, under what circumstances; and whether he will give immediate instructions to secure the prompt issue of this gratuity in the future?

LORD STANLEY: On the death of an officer his estate is wound up by a committee of adjustment as required by the Regimental Debts Act. Owing to the conditions of active service in South Africa there is generally considerable delay in sending home the report of the committee. On its receipt immediate steps are taken to issue the estate, but probate has to be obtained except in cases of estates under £100. The gratuity referred to by the hon. Member forms part of the estate and like the rest is available to meet the debts of the deceased. To expedite matters the gratuity has recently been issued to the representatives on their giving a guarantee to meet all preferential charges.

SOLDIERS' WIDOWS AND ORPHANS IN IRISH POORHOUSES.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War what inquiries he has made concerning the statement in the House on 11th December,

1900, by the hon. Member for North Louth, to the effect that while Irish soldiers have been amongst the bravest of our regiments, many of their wives and children are in the poorhouse in Ireland; and what have been the results of such inquiries, if any.

LORD STANLEY: As a result of the action taken by the hon. Member for North Louth, some Irish Unions have referred certain cases to the War Office. These are now being carefully inquired into.

MILITARY AID TO THE CIVIL POWER;BILLETING RATES.

MR. D. A. THOMAS (Merthyr Tydvil): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office whether, as a result of the consideration given to the matter last year, legislation will be introduced this session to place the cost of catering troops when sent to maintain the peace in disaffected districts upon the local authorities, and to increase the maximum rates allowed by the War Office for billeting.

LORD STANLEY: As regards legislation concerning the incidence of cost of military aid to the civil power, the question should be addressed to the Secretary of State for the Home Department. As regards billeting, the question of revising the rates was very thoroughly considered about a year ago, and it was decided that no grounds existed for disturbing the present rates.

UNDER-AGE ENLISTMENTS.

MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether his attention has been called to the enlistment some weeks ago of Edward Moore, of Rossville Street, Londonderry, a boy under eighteen years of age, in the Inniskilling Fusiliers; and whether, seeing that enlistment under eighteen years by the recruiting sergeant is contrary to conditions of Enlistment No. 5, issued by the War Office, the authorities will direct the discharge of this boy out of the Army.

LORD STANLEY: All cases of enlistment under age are decided by the General Officer Commanding the district concerned, who will no doubt give the case all proper consideration.

THE PERMANENT UNDER SECRETARY FOR WAR.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is now able to announce the name of the new Permanent Under Secretary of State for War; and, if not, whether it is his intention to select an experienced military officer who is competent to advise upon the needs of the Army, or to follow the traditions of the office by selecting a civilian.

MR. BRODRICK: I shall be glad if this question can be deferred for a few days.

ROMAN CATHOLIC ARMY AND NAVY CHAPLAINS.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that His Majesty King Edward the Seventh, the supreme head of the Army and Navy, has sworn or declared that the invocation or adoration of the Virgin Mary or any other saint, and the sacrifice of the Mass as they are now used in the Church of Rome, are "superstitious and idolatrous," the Government intend to discontinue the payment out of public funds to Roman Catholic chaplains for celebrating Mass and performing the other functions of the Roman Catholic religion for the

military and naval forces in the service of the King who profess the Roman Catholic faith so described by His Majesty's oath or declaration.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): No, Sir; we do not propose to discontinue the payment.

NAVY ; BOILER COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

MR. PENN (Lewisham): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state when the Report of the Boiler Committee will be laid upon the Table of the House.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): It is not possible at the present stage to give a date for the presentation of the final Report of the Water-tube Boiler Committee. It is, however, the intention of the Committee to present an ad interim Report, which has been specially called for, dealing with some of the points referred to it. I have reason to believe that this Report will be presented to the Admiralty in the course of the next few days.

INDIA;CHINA AND THE OPIUM TRADE.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether, in view of the opinion expressed by this House in 1891 that the opium trade of the Government of India with the Chinese is morally indefensible, and considering the present demand of His Majesty's Government for Chinese reform, the Government have any intention of abandoning this traffic.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): I am not aware that this House in 1891 passed any definite decision upon the subject to which the hon. Member's question refers; but I am aware that in 1895 a Royal Commission, after an exhaustive investigation, reported generally in favour of the system under which the growth and export of opium is now regulated in India. His Majesty's Government have no present intention of altering that system.

COOPER'S HILL COLLEGE.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India if he will institute an inquiry into the matters in connection with the recent dismissal of certain professors from Cooper's Hill College.

LORD G. HAMILTON: I propose to publish the Papers which deal with this subject, and when published they will show that a most careful investigation, to which full consideration was given both by the Board of Visitors and by the Council of India, was made before the proposed educational reforms were sanctioned.

CHINA;PROTECTION OF THE FOREIGN LEGATIONS IN PEKING.

MR. DILLON: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the generals of the Allied forces in Peking have decided to erect an extensive fortress in the heart of that city for the protection of the foreign legations; whether His Majesty's Government has approved of this project; and whether there is any precedent in history for such a proceeding.

THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Viscount CRANBORNE, Rochester): The question of the measures to be taken for the protection of the legations is now under discussion by the foreign representatives at Peking, but no decision has yet been come to in the matter by His Majesty's Government. But I may add that we are fully conscious of the expediency of keeping such

arrangements within reasonable bounds.

THE BUDGET.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he can give any indication of the time when he will introduce the Budget.

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: No, Sir.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN: Will the right hon. Gentleman say if he will take it before Easter?

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I cannot say.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether, in anticipation of increased taxation, large quantities of dutiable articles are being taken out of bond; and whether he has considered any means of preventing the revenue of the next financial year being seriously discounted in this manner.

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Considerable quantities of certain dutiable articles are being taken out of bond, and I believe that much of this is due to the reason suggested in the question. I am considering whether it would be at all practicable to check this by making increases of duty retrospective; but probably the best check to gambling of this kind would be that those who have put themselves to considerable trouble and expense in this way should find themselves disappointed in their expectations of increased taxation on the articles taken out of bond, and it is by no means impossible that this may be the case.

MR. CHANNING: Does the right hon. Gentleman contemplate introducing the Budget at an earlier date in order to achieve this object?

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I must decline to answer questions as to dates.

REVENUE RETURNS AND EXCHEQUER ISSUES.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he is aware that the quarterly returns of revenue and issues from the Exchequer which are supplied to the press are not supplied to Members of this House; and whether he can see his way to giving instructions that in future these Returns shall be laid upon the Table and distributed to Members.

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: In accordance with an arrangement made by the late Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 100 copies of the Quarterly Account are sent on the evening of the last day of the quarter, when Parliament is sitting, to the Vote Office.

INCORPORATED LAW SOCIETY; DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE; CASE OF B. G. LAKE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his attention has been called to the case of Benjamin Green Lake, solicitor, sentenced to penal servitude for fraud; whether he is aware that this is the same person who was, up to May last, the chairman of the Discipline Committee of the Incorporated Law Society; whether this is the committee which conducts the investigation of cases in which fraud or other misconduct is charged against solicitors in order to ascertain whether there are grounds for striking them off the rolls; whether he still adheres to the statement of May last that having personally inquired into the allegations made against the Incorporated Law

Society, he was satisfied with the explanations given; and whether he proposes to continue the payment out of public moneys of £2,500 a year to the Incorporated Law Society towards defraying the expenses of their investigations into alleged frauds or other misconduct by solicitors.

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: The committee referred to in the question is a statutory committee of the Incorporated Law Society appointed by the Master of the Rolls, whose duty it is to consider allegations against solicitors of professional misconduct, and report to the Court if a prima facie case is made out. They also report to the Public Prosecutor if there is prima facie evidence of a criminal offence. The person mentioned retired from the committee in December, 1899. I adhere to my statement of last

May; on the subject. The allegations into which I inquired related to certain specified cases, and had been made in the public press. I do not see why the Vote should be withdrawn because one person who held a high position in the society has been convicted of crime. I fear that even the House of Commons has in the past suffered in the same way.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): Can the right hon. Gentleman say if this lawyer had anything to do with the promotion of the Limerick, Kerry, and Tralee Railway?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order;

GIBRALTAR; ACCOMMODATION FOR NAVAL AND MILITARY FORCES.

MR. STEVENSON (Suffolk, Eye): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he is now in a position to communicate to the House the steps taken by His Majesty's Government and the Governor of Gibraltar to carry out the recommendations of the Inter-departmental Committee, which were made in 1898, with the object of improving the sanitary condition of the town and garrison, and of affording better house accommodation and recreation grounds for the naval and military forces stationed there.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The recommendations of the Committee were very numerous, and are being gradually carried out. I am not in a position to state exactly what stage has been reached in regard to many of the recommendations, but the Governor will be asked to furnish a report on the subject.

MR. STEVENSON: Can the right hon. Gentleman say how soon the Report will be presented to Parliament?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I am afraid not.

MR GIBSON BOWLES: Has the drainage been completed?

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I would rather not answer now. I hope to have a full report before long.

; See The Parliamentary Debates [Fourth Series], Vol. LXXXIII., page 409. HARBOUR DUES ; TONNAGE MEASUREMENT.

MR. FFRENCH (Wexford, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is aware that the Wexford County Council at a recent meeting unanimously passed a resolution expressing the opinion that the system of levying dues on the net registered tonnage of steamships is detrimental to the best interests of the harbours of Ireland; and whether the Government is prepared to alter the law so as to enable Harbour Commissioners to levy dues on the gross tonnage.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): Yes, Sir, I am aware of the resolution to which the hon. Member refers, but as at present advised, I do not propose to take steps to alter the present law of tonnage measurement which is international. It is, of course, open to Harbour Commissioners to endeavour to obtain powers to levy dues on the gross tonnage by means of local Acts. Such powers have, I am informed, been already obtained in several places, notably in Scotland.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Did I understand the right hon. Gentleman to say the system now in vogue in this country is international?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: Yes, Sir.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Has the circular promised last session been issued?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir, but the negotiations are progressing.

MR. T. M. HEALY: In view of the public anxiety will not the right hon. Gentleman expedite its issue?

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: It is obviously in the public interest there should be as little friction as possible, and with this object it is desirable to consult the parties interested.

CRUELTY IN CAPTURING SONG-BIRDS AND ALBATROSS.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade if his attention has been drawn to certain cases of cruelty to animals practised in angling for song-birds in Cornwall and for albatross on ocean-going steamers; and what steps he purposes taking in the matter.

*MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir. The subject is not one which comes within the purview of the Board of Trade, nor have I any powers in the matter.

TRIENNIAL BOROUGH COUNCIL ELECTIONS.

CAPTAIN JESSEL (St. Pancras, S.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether the Local Government Board has as yet come to a decision as to the request forwarded by the City of Westminster and other borough councils, in accordance with the London Government Act, 1899, in favour of triennial elections.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): I have received applications from most of the metropolitan borough councils asking for Orders directing that the whole of the councillors shall retire together in every third year. There are technical questions of difficulty in connection with this subject upon which I have determined to take the opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown. On receipt of that opinion I shall be prepared to come to a decision with regard to the course to be adopted in the matter.

HIGHER ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS; OFFICIAL RECOGNITION.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education if he will state how many applications for recognition of schools, or departments of schools, as higher elementary schools have been made to the Board since the date of the Higher Elementary School Minute; how many schools or departments have been recognised under that minute; in how many cases the applications have been declined by the Board; and, during the same period, how many applications for recognition of schools as organised science schools or schools of science and art have been

refused by the Board.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (SIR J. GORST, Cambridge University): I am told that some 190 applications have been made to the Board of Education, but many of these are general and vague and not for the recognition of any specific school. The answer to the second paragraph of the question is, two; to the third paragraph, one; to the fourth paragraph, none.

STREET REFUGES IN PICCADILLY.

SIR BARRINGTON SIMEON (Southampton): I beg to ask the First Commissioner of Works whether the crossing refuges are to be placed in Piccadilly; and, if so, when will this be done.

THE FIRST COMMISSIONER OF WORKS (MR. AKERS DOUGLAS, Kent, St. Augustine's): The matter is not one which is under my control, but under that of the local authority; the City of Westminster.

SIR BARRINGTON SIMEON: Will the right hon. Gentleman communicate with the local authorities as to the extreme danger arising from the present condition of things?

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: It is not part of my duty to communicate with the local authority, but I have no doubt that the publicity which the hon. Baronet has given to this matter will secure the object which he has in view.

DOG MUZZLING IN COUNTY CARMARTHEN.

MR. LLOYD MORGAN (Carmarthenshire, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he has received a copy of a resolution passed at the meeting of the Carmarthenshire County Council, held on the 24th of October last, calling his attention to the fact that the Board of Agriculture had either refused or omitted to make inoculation experiments in order to discover whether the dogs destroyed by

order of the Board of Agriculture in the county of Carmarthen, on the ground that they were suffering from rabies, were in fact so suffering; and, if so, whether he will state the reasons for such refusal or omission to make the necessary experiments; and whether he will state the grounds on which the muzzling order now in force in the county of Carmarthen was issued.

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS (for Mr. HANBURY): The resolution to which the hon. Member refers does not appear to have been received in my Department, but it is clear that it was passed on some misunderstanding as to the facts of the case. The Carmarthenshire Muzzling Order was passed because certain experiments conducted by our veterinary officers conclusively confirmed the opinion expressed by the veterinary inspector of the local authority that a dog kept near Llanwrda had developed symptoms of rabies. Eleven other cases of the disease have since occurred in the district to which Muzzling Orders have been applied, in two of which inoculative experiments were also carried out.

IRISH AND SCOTCH REPRESENTATION AND THE DEMISE OF THE CROWN.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney General if he can state to the House what effect the demise of the Crown has upon the representation of Irish and Scotch constituencies.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Sir ROBERT FINLAY, Inverness Burghs): The demise of the Crown has no effect on the representation of Irish and Scotch constituencies.

The 51st section of the Representation of the People Act, 1867, provides that the Parliament in being at the demise of the Crown shall not be determined or dissolved by such demise, but shall continue so long as it would have continued but for such demise, unless sooner prorogued or dissolved by the Crown. As there is only one Parliament for the United Kingdom, this enactment applies in the case of Members for Scotch and Irish constituencies, as well as in the case of Members for English and Welsh constituencies, and the provision in Section 2, exempting Scot-

land and Ireland and the election of Members for the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge from the operation of the Act, can have no application to Section 51, the terms of which show that it applies to the Parliament of the United Kingdom as a whole. There is no such thing as a partial dissolution of Parliament. I may add that the Statute Law Revision Act, 1878, repeals the words in Section 4 and Section 5 of the Statute 6 Anne c. 7 (c. 41 Ruffhead's Edition), which, until the passing of the Representation of the People Act, 1867, restricted the duration of the existing Parliament to six months from the demise of the Crown.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER: What would be the effect of the demise of the Crown before Parliament had met?

SIR ROBERT FINLAY: That depends on another statute altogether. I shall be happy to show it to my right hon. friend.

LONDON TELEPHONE SYSTEM.

MR. THOMAS DEWAR: I beg to, ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he can state approximately when the Government telephone system will be opened so far as London is concerned.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): No definite statement can be made at present.

URBAN DISTRICT VALUATIONS IN IRELAND.

MR. FIELD (Dublin, St. Patrick): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the fact that the system of valuation in urban district councils differs from the English method, he will consider the advisability of introducing a measure to assimilate the law, so as to enable the periodical and general revaluation by local authorities in Ireland.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): If the chief object of the hon. Member is to secure a revaluation of urban districts under the existing system which is now being applied to county boroughs, I will consider the possibility of dealing separately with such districts. But to supersede the existing system would not, I think, be expedient and would meet with great opposition from many quarters in which the Irish system is justly considered superior to that which prevails in England.

MR. FIELD: Are we to understand it is proposed to assimilate the English to the Irish system, which is superior?

MR. WYNDHAM: I believe in many quarters in Ireland a general revaluation for the whole country is held to be of the highest importance. There would be great objection to having one which was merely local and piecemeal.

ANNALLY (CO. LONGFORD) ESTATE.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord

Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a number of farmers on the eastern portion of the Annally (county Longford) Estate have not yet got their vesting orders, although all the necessary papers were lodged fourteen months and in some cases two years ago; can any explanation of the delay be given; and will he call for a report as to the causes of the delay.

MR. WYNDHAM: Applications from a number of tenants on this estate for advances to enable them to purchase their holdings were received by the Land Commission on various dates between the 24th July last and the 10th ultimo. It may well be that there was delay in the Land Judge's Court. This under existing circumstances cannot, I fear, be avoided. Of the 124 applications, 36 have been sanctioned, while the remaining cases are either awaiting the completion of the inspection of the tenants' holdings, or replies to necessary queries which have been issued from the office of the Commissioners.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Will the cases be settled before Easter?

MR. WYNDHAM: I should not like to say without fuller knowledge, but I should imagine there will be no avoidable delay.

IRISH HEAD LAND COMMISSION.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any report has been furnished to him regarding recent sittings of the Head Land Commission for fixing fair rents on appeal; whether he is aware that within the present month twelve tenants have had to go to Dublin to get their appeals heard; and can he explain why it is that, as was always the case, the Land Commission refuses to come to Longford on circuit to hear appeals; and will he call for a report on this subject.

MR. WYNDHAM: If the hon. Member refers to a list of appeals from West-meath, which were heard in Dublin on the 30th and 31st January, I am informed that the list contained forty-five appeals, and that there were no appeals in it from Longford, though in some of the cases the holdings were situated near to the borders of Longford. Unless under exceptional circumstances, it has always been the practice to hear appeals from all parts of the county of Wostmeath in Dublin; by this arrangement the Land Commissioners are enabled to provide for such appeals being heard at earlier dates. It is not the case that the Land Commissioners have always refused to go to Longford for the hearing of appeals.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Land Commission has not sat in Longford for a period of three years, thereby causing great loss to the tenant litigants?

MR. WYNDHAM: They may not have sat in Longford, but they have taken cases in Dublin, thereby accelerating the business, which, as the hon. Gentleman knows, is in arrear.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Will the right hon. Gentleman use his influence to get a change in the rules, so that poor country litigants may not be put to the cost of going to Dublin?

MR. WYNDHAM: I do not think it would be wise on my part to interfere with the administration of the Land Commission.

RAILWAYS IN COUNTY MEATH.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether any funds

or balance of funds voted by Parliament for the construction of railways in Ireland yet remain unexpended; and whether, in view of the importance of giving railway facilities to connect the port of Drogheda with the Midland counties of Ireland, the Government would be prepared to assist in constructing a line of railway between Granard and Oldcastle, the present terminus of the Great Northern Railway in Meath county.

MR. WYNDHAM: At the request of my hon. friend I will answer this question. None of the money provided by Parliament for the construction of railways in Ireland is now available for further railway projects.

CRIME IN COUNTY DONEGAL.

MR. O'DOHERTY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if his attention has been called to the Judicial Statistics for the past year, whereby it appears that the county of Donegal, and especially the North Donegal division of said county, has had during the past five years the lowest average per 100,000 of the population of indictable offences in Ireland; and whether, seeing that this division of the said county is proclaimed under the Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1881, although practically in a crimeless condition, steps will be at once taken to have the proclamation revoked.

MR. WYNDHAM: The first part of the question states the fact correctly. It is erroneous, however, to assume that the question of the removal of a proclamation against the keeping of firearms is determined by considerations such as are urged by the hon. Member. The Government do not consider it desirable to revoke the proclamation.

LONDONDERRY AND THE PEACE PROCLAMATION (IRELAND) ACT.

MR. O'DOHERTY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, though the City of Londonderry is proclaimed under the Peace Preservation (Ireland) Act, 1881, so far as regards the carrying of arms, his attention has been called to the discharge of firearms on the 18th December from the city walls, and of a bomb some months ago into the yard of a house in Wellington Street, in the Roman Catholic quarter of the city, and is he aware that no one was ever made amenable to justice; whether a quantity of explosives of the description used at the Orange celebrations held in Derry City was discovered on the other side of the city walls, which resulted in serious injury to one or two boys of the district; and whether an investigation by the authorities was ever made into the above circumstances; and if so, with what result.

MR. WYNDHAM: There was no discharge of firearms in Derry on the 18th December. On the 11th November a signal rocket, that is to say one of a dangerous character, found under the city wall, exploded and injured a young man. This rocket is believed to have been discharged on the 6th June previously. The occurrences were carefully investigated by the police, but they were unable to make anyone amenable.

MR. O'DOHERTY: Are we to understand that, though the City of Londonderry is proclaimed, the constabulary authorities have no idea of the quantity of arms stored therein?

MR. WYNDHAM: One can hardly call a rocket a firearm.

MR. O'DOHERTY: The right hon. Gentleman did not answer that part of the question which deals with the bomb.

MR. WYNDHAM: I think that the bomb and the signal rocket must be the same. I have heard of no other.

MR. O'DOHERTY: May I ask if the discharge of the bomb in Wellington Street was not inquired into by the magistrate, and was not the discovery of the rocket outside the city walls an altogether different matter?

MR. WYNDHAM: I have done my best to give information. One of these rockets which were discharged on the (5th June last caused injury to the person, and the rocket found on 11th November, to which I have referred, is believed to have been another of those fired on the 6th June. Both occurrences have been carefully investigated by the police.

MR. O'DOHERTY: Have not Orangemen for carrying firearms been fined only one penny each, while Roman Catholics have been subjected to a much more severe penalty?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order !

As the hon. Member did not at once sit down;

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is a new Member, and perhaps is not aware that it is his duty to resume his seat when I rise.

LATE LONGFORD PETTY SESSIONS CLERK.

MR. J. P. ARRELL: I beg to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland whether he can state the grounds upon which the widow of the late Mr. Moore, clerk of petty sessions in Longford, was refused a sum of about £;300 compensation on retirement because he died a few days before the necessary papers completing his resignation could be perfected; whether the refusal of the petition recently addressed to the Lord Lieutenant on the subject has been in consequence of the attitude of the Treasury; and whether, as this family have been deprived of a sum to which they were legally entitled, steps will be taken to have the payment made to them of this £;300.

MR. WYNDHAM: No application was made by M. Moore, before his death, for a pension or gratuity, which could only be granted to him on his retirement from office. There is no power to grant a gratuity to his widow. Her son has succeeded his father in the office of petty sessions clerk. The Treasury are in no way concerned in the matter, and were not communicated with.

TIPPERARY RENT APPEALS.

MR. CULLINAN (Tipperary, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland what is the cause of the delay in the hearing of a number of cases in the Tipperary Union in which notices to fix judicial rents for the second terms were served more than two years ago; and whether he will make a representation to the Land Commission on the subject.

MR. WYNDHAM: A list containing a large number of cases from this union was issued on the 22nd ultimo, and the hearing of this list commenced at Cahir on the 6th instant. There are no cases now unlisted from the Tipperary district in which applications are pending for so long a period as that stated in the question.

MR. CULLINAN: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware of the fact that the delay in dealing with these cases has prevented settlements for the purchase of some of the property?

MR. WYNDHAM: I am not aware of that. I think the delay regrettable.

MR. FLAVIN: Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the desirability of appointing more Land Commissioners?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order !

DUBLIN POST OFFICE;SORTERS' GRIEVANCES.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether memorials have been received from three Dublin sorters, Sweeney, Kelly, and Farrelly, who, on grounds of age, had, been reduced in salary to 18s. per week; and whether proof could be shown they were aware of intention to reduce; whether, in December, 1897, they were informed that the London Secretary admitted cause for dissatisfaction, and offering the ordinary salary from

their nineteenth birthday; and whether the Postmaster General is now prepared to put into effect the promise made by the Secretary.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The Postmaster General has received statements made on behalf of the three officers referred to, and hopes to arrive at a decision in the course of a few days.

DUNGARVAN POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. SHEE (Waterford, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether the decision of the Postmaster General with reference to the improvement of the postal facilities for Dungarvan has yet been arrived at.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The railway company have been asked whether they propose to maintain permanently at the present hours the early morning train from Mallow to Dungarvan and the evening train from Dungarvan to Mallow. If the reply is in the affirmative, instructions will be given for these trains to be used for the Dungarvan mails.

IRISH LIGHTS BOARD.

MR. FIELD: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the Irish Lights Board consists of twenty-two self-elected and eight ex-officio members; that the salaries of the officials amount to £;5,000 per annum; that the "Princess Alexandra" yacht is used for annual inspection at a yearly cost of £;10,000 and that the annual outlay of the Board is about £;84,000; and whether the Government intend to bring in a Bill to reform this Board or to dissolve it and appoint a responsible Government department with a competent staff.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: The number of members of the Irish Lights Board, as fixed by Act of Parliament, is 22, of which number 5 are ex-officio members, and 17 are co-opted by the Board. The salaries of the officials I amount, as stated, to about £;5,000 per annum. The annual cost of the "Princess Alexandra" yacht is a little over

£;0,000. The annual outlay of the Board is, as stated, about £;84,000. His Majesty's Government do not, as at present advised, contemplate the introduction of a Bill dealing with the constitution of the Lighthouse Authority.

MR. FIELD: Will the Government support a Bill brought in by a private Member for the purpose of reforming this Board?

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: No, Sir, I can give no such undertaking.

IRISH LIGHTSHIPS; REPAIRS.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether the Irish Lights Commissioners continue to place contracts for the repairs of lightships under their control with an English shipbuilding company at Appledore, Devon, which does not pay the trade union rate of wages; and whether he will suggest the desirability of placing such contracts with Irish firms.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR: I am informed by the Commissioners of Irish Lights that the last contract for the repair of a lightship which was placed by them with the shipbuilding company at Appledore, Devon, was in the case of the "Gannet," in 1898. As stated by my predecessor in reply to a question from the hon. and gallant Member in February 1899, the company in that case gave an assurance that they were prepared to pay the wages generally accepted as current in each trade for competent workmen in the district. I am also informed that tenders were advertised for in that case, and the lowest was accepted. As regards the second paragraph of the question, I do not think this is a matter in respect of which the Board of Trade can properly interfere, by suggestion or otherwise.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: Is it a fact that neither the Government nor the Irish people have any control over these Lights Commissioners?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order ! The hon. Member must give notice of that question.

ESTATE DUTY IN IRELAND.

MR. T. M. HEALY: I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if he can state the amount of Estate Duty collected in Ireland since the passing of the Finance Act on devolution of tenancies from year to year, what has been the decision of the Irish Courts as to the legality of such duty, and whether the Government propose to refund any duty held not to have been legally exigible.

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: (1) The amount cannot be exactly stated; it is estimated at £37,000. (2) The decision ! in the case referred to in the question is that what is in Ireland known as "tenant right" comes within the definition of "Agricultural property" in Section 7 (5) of the Finance Act, 1894. The main effect of this decision is that the head rent paid by the tenant, and the expenses of management, are allowable as deductions from the annual value before multiplying such annual value by the number of years purchase agreed upon (but never to exceed 25) to fix the principal value. (3) Orders have been issued that in all cases affected by the decision of the Irish Court, applications for a proper return of Estate Duty are to be entertained.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Have not the Government been ordered to repay something like £35,000?

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: I do not know; it may be so.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Will the Government consider that honesty is the best policy?

MR. GIBSON BOWLES asked if a return would be granted.

[The answer was inaudible.]

TREASURY GRANTS FOR IRISH HARBOUR CONSTRUCTION.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer if until about 1884 it was a custom to devote a separate sum of £;8,000 a year solely to the construction of small Irish harbours; if about 1884 the Treasury absorbed this £;8,000, granting in lieu thereof a sum of about £;220,000 for creating similar harbours; if this £;220,000 was drawn exclusively from an Irish and not from an Imperial fund and is long since expended; and if, under the circumstances, he would consider the expediency of reviving the annual £;8,000 which was made until about 1884 for the above purpose.

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: Down to about 1884 a sum of varying amount was annually voted by Parliament in aid of the construction of minor Fishery Piers and Harbours. In 1883 a sum of a quarter of a million was provided out of the Irish Church Fund under the Sea Fisheries Act for these purposes, and it therefore became unnecessary to apply to Parliament so long as the fund created by that Act lasted. The fund is not yet quite exhausted, but the question of the future policy in regard to such works has not been lost sight of.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that in answer to previous questions it has been stated that the fund is exhausted?

SIR M. HICKS BEACH: No, Sir, I am informed that it is not.

MR. T. M. HEALY: Well, we have been told so for the last seven years.

ROYAL OPENINGS OF PARLIAMENT;ACCOMMODATION FOR MEMBERS.

SIR HENRY FOWLER (Wolverhampton, E.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he will consent to the appointment of a committee to consider the accommodation provided for Members of this House when their attendance in the House of Lords is commanded by the King, and also as to the best means of securing the orderly and safe progress of Members when they obey His Majesty's commands.

The following question also appeared on the Paper::

MR. STEVENSON: To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the increase in the number of Members of the two Houses, to the inadequacy of the accommodation afforded on such occasions by the House of Lords, and to the necessity for ensuring better order and greater dignity in connection with the proceedings, and in view of the existence of various precedents in accordance with which the opening of Parliament used to take place in a chamber other than those in which the two Houses habitually sat, generally in the Painted Chamber of St. Edward the Confessor, he will consult with other authorities concerned as to the possibility and desirability that in future when Parliament is opened by the Sovereign in person the ceremony shall take place in Westminster Hall, in order that every Member of the Legislature may have an opportunity of hearing the Speech from the Throne.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: As I have already stated to the House, the Government have no control over, and, therefore, are not responsible for, the arrangements which are made when Parliament is opened by the Sovereign in person, but I have it in command from His Majesty to express his approval of the appointment of a Joint Committee of both Houses to consider what accommodation can be provided on such an occasion for Peers and Members of Parliament, and, in particular, whether

Westminster Hall could not be utilised.

CAPRICIOUS DISMISSAL OF SCHOOL TEACHERS.

MR. CROMBIE (Kincardineshire): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government contemplate introducing a Bill during this session dealing with the capricious dismissal of teachers.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The questions which arise in connection with the hon. Member's questions are under the consideration of the Government.

SCOTTISH EDUCATION BILL.

MR. CROMBIE: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the educational measures promised in the King's Speech will include an Education Bill for Scotland.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am not prepared to say what action will be taken in pursuance of the announcement until the matter has been further considered in consultation with the Secretary for Scotland.

MR. BARTLEY: Will it be introduced before Easter?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have told the House already that we have come to no decision on the subject.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S FUNERAL; THE MEMBERS' STAND.

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury who was responsible for placing the stand allotted to Members of the Houses of Parliament at the funeral of Her late Majesty at so great a distance from the route of the procession; and whether he will consent to the appointment of a permanent committee of unofficial Members on both sides of the House who would have the right of approving such arrangements as it may be necessary to make when the House of Commons takes part in any State function.

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: The route of the funeral of her late Majesty was selected and the general arrangements, made by the Earl Marshal, and were not under the control of the Government. For the stand allotted to Members of Parliament I am responsible, and the site selected was the only one available on the line of route which was at the disposal of the Government. It is a matter of regret to me that no better provision could be made. I may add that on the occasion referred to I was at pains to submit what I thought could be done to the authorities of the House for their approval. With regard to the last paragraph of the question, I may observe that the suggestion appears to me hardly a practicable one or suitable for all circumstances and occasions. The erection of stands on these occasions is no part of my official duty, though I am always anxious to meet the general convenience of Members of the House, and to consider any representations that may reach me.

*MR. ALFRED DAVIES (Carmarthen Boroughs): May I ask how it was there were no covers on this stand?

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: Perhaps the hon. Member is not aware of the great difficulties which occurred in getting any accommodation for members. There was extremely short time after the route was settled; I think only four days; and it has always been the practice of this Government and other Governments not to enclose for any privileged class any portion of the ground reserved for the public. There was literally no time to put up a cover, and I doubt whether we

should have been justified in putting it up, thereby excluding the view of those behind.

*MR. ALFRED DAVIES: May I also ask if it would not have been better to have had no place at all than such a stand?

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Were any steps taken by the right hon. Gentleman or any other person in responsible authority to represent to the Earl Marshal that the position of the stand or the route of the procession was most inconvenient for Members of the House?

MR. AKERS DOUGLAS: I have said that there was very short time. I had no authority to act for the House, but I acted in the belief that hon. Members would desire the best accommodation they could get, and I placed before the Earl Marshal the desirableness of affording some accommodation for Members. This was literally the only accommodation that could be found.

AYES.

Abraham, William(Cork, N.E.
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Bowles, T. Gibson (King's Lynn
Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.
Baird, John George Alexander
Brassey, Albert
Agg-Gardner, James Tynte
Baldwin, Alfred
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Balfour, Rt. Hn A. J.(Manch'r)
Brookfield, Colonel Montagu
Aird, Sir John
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G.W.(Leeds)
Ballard, Sir Harry
Allhusen, Augustus Hy. Eden
Balfour, Maj. K. R. (Christch'ch
Burdett-Coutts, W.
Anson, Sir William Reynell
Banbury, Frederick George
Carlile, William Walter
Archdale, Edward Mervyn
Barry, Sir Francis T. (Windsor
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Arkwright, John Stanhope
Bartley, George C. T.
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs).
Arnold-Forster, Hugh O.
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol
Cavendish, V. C. W (Derbysh.
Arrol, Sir William
Bignold, A.

Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
Bill, Charles
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Blundell, Colonel Henry
Chamberlain Rt.Hn. J. (Birm.)
Austin, Sir John
Boulnois, Edmund
Chamberlain, J Ansten(Worc.)

AGRICULTURAL LAND RATING ACT 1896;TITHE RENT-CHARGE (RATES) ACT, 1899.

MR. GEORGE WHLTELEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the fact that the Agricultural Land Rating Act, 1896, and the Tithe Rent-charge (Rates) Act, 1899, expire next year, it is the intention of the Government to propose their renewal to Parliament during this session, and whether he will generally state the course the Government intend to take in relation to these Acts.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, Sir, it is our intention to propose the renewal of these Acts.

MR. GEORGE WHLTELEY: When will the necessary Bill be introduced?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I should like to have notice of that question.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE (KING'S SPEECH.)

Ordered, That the Proceedings on the Address in answer to His Majesty's Speech have precedence this day and to-morrow of all other business.:(Mr. Balfour.)

SITTINGS OF THE HOUSE (ASH WEDNESDAY).

Motion made, and Question put, "That this House do meet to-morrow at Two of the clock.":(Mr. Balfour.)

The House divided::Ayes, 276; Noes, 153. (Division List No. 3.)

Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry
Hoare, Edw. B. (Hampstead)
Murnaghan, George
Chapman, Edward
Hoare, Sir Samuel (Norwich)
Murphy, J.
Churchill, Winston Spencer
Hope, J. F.(Sheff'ld, Brightside
Murray, Rt Hn A Graham (Bute
Clancy, John Joseph
Hornby, Sir William Henry
Myers, William Henry
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H.A.E.
Horner, Frederick William
Newdigate, FrancisAlexander
Coghill, Douglas Harry
Houldsworth, SirWm. Henry
Nicholson, William Graham

Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Hoult, Joseph
Nolan, Col. John P. (Galway, N.
Colomb, Sir John Charles Ready
Howard, Capt. J. (Faversham)
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Howard, J. (Midd., Tottenham)
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Hozier, Hon. Jas. Henry Cecil
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)
Cranborne, Viscount
Hudson, George Bickersteth
O'Malley, William
Cubitt, Hon. Henry
Jackson, Rt. Hon. W. Lawies
O'Mara, James
Dalrymple, Sir Charles
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick
Orr-Ewing, Charles Lindsay
Dewar, T.R. (T'rH'mlets S. Geo.
Jessel, Capt. Herbert Merton
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.
Dickinson, Robert Edmond
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Pease, Herbert Pike (Darlingt'n
Dickson-Poynder, Sir John P.
Joicey, Sir James
Pemberton, John S. G.
Digby, John K. D. Wingfield
Kennaway, Rt. Hon. Sir J. H.
Penn, John
Dillon, John
Kennedy, Patrick James
Percy, Earl
Dimsdale, Sir Joseph Cockfield
Kenyon, Hon. G. T. (Denbigh)
Platt-Higgins, Frederick
Dixon-Hartland, Sir Fred D.
Kenyon, James (Lancs., Bury)
Plummer, Walter R.
Dorington, Sir John Edward
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-

Kimber, Henry
Power, Patrick Joseph
Doxford, Sir Wm. Theodore
Laurie, Lieut. -General
Pretymann, Ernest George
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
Law, Andrew Bonar
Pryce-Jones, Lt.-Col. Edward
Dyke, Rt. Hon. Sir William Hart
Lawson, John Grant
Purvis, Robert
Egerton, Hon. A. de Tatton
Leamy, Edmund
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert
Faber, George Denison
Lecky, Rt. Hon. W. E. H.
Randles, John S.
Fardell, Sir T. George
Lee, Capt A. H. (Hants. Fareham)
Redmond, William (Gloucester)
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward
Leveson-Gower, Fred. N. S.
Reid, James (Greenock)
Fergusson, Rt. Hon. Sir J. (Manchester)
Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
Renshaw, Charles Bine
French, Peter
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Rentoul, James Alexander
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Long, Col. Chas. W. (Evesham)
Ridley, Samuel F (Bethnal Green)
Finch, George H.
Long, Rt Hon. Walter (Bristol, S.)
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. Thomson
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne
Lonsdale, John Brownlee
Ropner, Colonel Robert
Fisher, William Hayes
Lowe, Francis William
Round, James
Fison, Frederick William
Lowther, C. (Cumb., Eskdale)
Rutherford, John
Fitzroy, Hon. Edw. Algernon
Lowther, Rt. Hon. J. (Kent)

Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-
Flannery, Sir Fortescue
Loyd, Archie Kirkman
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alex.
Fletcher, Sir Henry
Lucas, Col. Francis(Lowestoft)
Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse
Forster, Henry William
Lucas, R. J. (Portsmouth)
Saunderson, Rt. Hn. Col. E. J.
Fuller, J. M. F.
Lundon, W.
Sharpe, William Edward T.
Garfit, William
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred
Shaw-Stewart, M.H. (Renfrew
Gibbs,Hn.A.G.H(CityofLond.
Macartney, Rt. Hon. W. G. E.
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick
Macdona, John Cumming
Sinclair, Louis (Romford)
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (Elgin&Nairn
MacIver, David (Liverpool)
Skewes-Cox, Thomas
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
Maconochie, A. W.
Smith,AbelH. (Hertford, East)
Gordon.MajEvans- (T'rH'ml'ts
M 'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool)
Smith,HC(North'mb.Tyn's'de
Gorst,Rt.Hon. Sir John Eldon
M'Calmont,Col.J.(Antrim,E.)
Spear, John Ward
Goschen, Hon. Geo. Joachim
M'Cann, James
Stanley, Edward J. (Somerset)
Goulding, Edward Alfred
M'Iver, Sir L. (Edinburgh,W.)
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)
Gray, Ernest (West Ham)
M'Killop, James(Stirlingshir'e)
Stewart, Sir M. J. M'Taggart
Greene,SirE.W.(Bury St. Ed.)
M'Killop, W. (Sligo, N.)
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.

Grenfell, William Henry
Manners, Lord Cecil
Stock, James Henry
Groves, James Grimble
Maple, Sir John Blundell
Stroyan, John
Guthrie, Walter Murray
Martin, Richard Biddulph
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)
Hain, Edward
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W.F
Talbot, Rt. Hn. J. G. (Oxf'd Uni.
Halsey, Thomas Frederick
Maxwell, W. J. (Dumfriesshire)
Thomas, F. Freeman- (Hastings
Hambro, Charles Eric
Mellor, Rt. Hn. John William
Thompson, E. C. (Monaghan, N.
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G (Midd'x
Melville, Beresford Valentine
Thorburn, Sir Walter
Hamilton, Marqof (L'nd'nderry
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.
Thornton, Percy M.
Hammond, John
Middlemore, J. Throgmorton
Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
Hardy, Laurence (Kent, Ashf'd
Mildmay, Francis Bingham
Tufnell, Col. Edward
Hare, Thomas Leigh
Milner, Rt. Hon. Sir Fred. G.
Tully, Jasper
Harris, F. Leverton (Tynem'th
Milward, Colonel Victor
Valentia, Viscount
Haslam, Sir Alfred S.
Mitchell, William
Walker, Col. William Hall
Haslett, Sir James Horner
Molesworth, Sir Lewis
Wanklyn, James Leslie
Hatch, Ernest Frederick Geo.
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)
Warde, Lieut.-Col. C. E.
Hay, Hon. Claude George

Moon, Edward Robert Pacy
Warr, Augustus Frederick
Hayden, John Patrick
Mooney, John J.
Wason, John C. (Orkney)
Hayter, Rt. Hn. Sir Arthur D.
Moore, William (Antrim, N.)
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C.E (Tauntn
Healy, Timothy Michael
More, Robt. Jasper(Shropshire)
Wharton, Rt. Hon. John L.
Heath, Arthur H. (Hanley)
Morris, Hon. Martin Henry F.
Whitely, H. (Ashton-u-Lyne)
Heath, Jas. (Staffords., N. W.
Morton, Arthur H. A (Deptford)
Whitmore, Charles Algernon
Hermon-Hodge, Robert T.
Mount, William Arthur
Willoughby de Eresby, Lord
Higginbottom, S. W.
Mowbray, Sir Robert Gray C.
Wilson, A. Stanley(York, E. R.
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Wylie, Alexander
TELLERS FOR THE AYES;
Wilson-Todd, Wm.H. (Yorks.
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George
Sir William Walrond and Mr. Anstruther.
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E.R. (Bath
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong
Wortley.Rt.Hon.C. B. Stuart-
Young, Samuel (Cavan, East)
Wrightson, Sir Thomas
NOES.
Allan, William (Gateshead)
Foster, Sir Walter (DerbyCo.)
Perks, Robert William
Allen, Charles P. (Glouc, Stroud
Fowler, Rt. Hon. Sir Henry
Pickard, Benjamin
Asquith, Rt Hon Herbert Hy.
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Price, Robert John
Atherley Jones, L.
Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)

Rea, Russell
Barlow, John Emmott
Haldane, Richard Burdon
Reckitt, Harold James
Barry, E. (Cork, S)
Hardie, J. K.(MerthyrTydvil)
Reddy, M.
Rayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)
Harmsworth, R. Leicester
Redmond, John E. (Waterford)
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.
Harwood, George
Rickett, J. Compton
Bell, Richard
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Black, Alexander William
Helme, Norval Watson
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs.)
Blake, Edward
Hemphill, Rt. Hon. Chas. H.
Robertson, Edmund (Dundee)
Boland, John
Hobhouse, Henry (Somerset, E.
Roche, John
Boyle, James
Holland, William Henry
Roe, Sir Thomas
Brigg, John
Hope, John D. (Fife, West)
Russell, T. W.
Brunner, Sir John Tomlinson
Humphreys-Owen, Arthur C.
Schwann, Charles E.
Bryce, Rt. Hon. James
Jacoby, James Alfred
Scott, Chas. Prestwich (Leigh)
Burt, Thomas
Jones, David B. (Swansea)
Shipman, Dr. John
Buxton, Sydney Charles
Jones, Wm. (Carnarvonshire)
Sinclair, Capt. John (Forfarsh.)
Caine, William Sproston
Jordan, Jeremiah
Smith, James Parker (Lanarks.)

Caldwell, James
Joyce, Michael
Soames, Arthur Wellesley
Cameron, Robert
Kinloch, Sir John Geo. Smyth
Soares, Ernest J.
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Labouchere, Henry
Spencer. Rt. Hn. C R(Northants
Campbell-Bannerman, Sir H.
Lambert, George
Stevenson, Francis S.
Carew, James Laurence
Lambton, Hon. Frederick Wm.
Strachey, Edward
Cawley, Frederick
Langley, Batty
Sullivan, Donal
Channing, Francis Allston
Layland-Barratt, Francis
Taylor, Theodore Cooke
Cogan, Denis J.
Leese, Sir Jos. F. (Accrington
Tennant, Harold John
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Leng, Sir John
Thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan, E
Crean, Eugene
Levy, Maurice
Thomas, David A. (Merthyr)
Crombie, John William
Lewis, John Herbert
Thomson, F. W. (York, W. R.)
Cross, Alexander (Glasgow)
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.
Tomkinson, James
Cullinan, J.
M'Arthur, William (Cornwall)
Trevelyan Charles Philips
Daly, James
M'Fadden, Edward
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)
M'Govern, T.
Wason, Eugene(Clackmannan)
Delany, William

M'Hugh, Patrick A.
White, George (Norfolk)
Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles
M'Kenna, Reginald
White, Luke (York, E. R.)
Donelan, Captain A.
Mansfield, Horace Rendall
White, Patrick (Meath, North
Doogan, P. C.
Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe
Whiteley, George (York, W. R.)
Douglas, Charles M. (Lanark)
Markham, Arthur Basil
Whitley, J. H. (Halifax)
Duffy, William J.
Morgan, J. Lloyd (Carmarthen
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer
Duncan, James H.
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth
Dunn, Sir William
Newnes, Sir George
Wilson, Chas. Henry (Hull, W.)
Edwards, Frank
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
Wilson, John (Durham, Mid)
Elibank, Master of
Nussey, Thomas Willans
Wilson, John (Falkirk)
Kills, John Edward
O'Brien, K. (Tipperary, Mid)
Wodehouse, Hn. Armine (Essex
Evans, Samuel T.
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.
Woodhouse, Sir J T (Huddersf'd
Farquharson, Dr. Robert
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)
Yoxall, James Henry
Farrell, James Patrick
O'Doherty, William
Fenwick, Charles
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
TELLERS FOR THE NOES;
Ferguson, R. C. Munro (Leith)
O'Dowd, John
Mr. Broadhurst and Sir William Gurdon.

Field, William
O'Shee, James John
Flavin, Michael Joseph
Partington, Oswald
Flynn, James Christopher
Paulton, James Mellor

ADDRESS IN REPLY TO HIS MAJESTY'S MOST GRACIOUS SPEECH.
[FOURTH DAY'S DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming Adjourned Debate on Question [14th February],

"That an humble Address be presented to His Majesty, as followeth;

"Most Gracious Sovereign,

"We, Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, beg leave to offer our humble thanks to Your Majesty for the Gracious Speech which Your Majesty has addressed to both Houses of Parliament.";(Mr. Forster.)

Question again proposed.

Debate resumed.

*MR. ASQUITH (Fifeshire, E.): I shall not detain the House long, nor should I have intervened at all at this stage in the debate but for the challenge which was directly addressed last night to the occupants of this bench by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. On the last occasion, in December, when the right hon. Gentleman spoke to the House upon the terms of settlement in South Africa, it was my agreeable duty, in following him, to congratulate him upon the spirit, and to concur to a large extent in the substance, of what he had said. The Amendment which had then been moved by my hon. friend the senior Member for Oldham was, by the general consent of both sides of the House, withdrawn, and it really seemed as if we were within a measurable distance of an eirenicon, not only as between parties in this House, but, what is much more important, as between the combatant forces in South Africa. Nothing, as far as we on this side of the House are concerned, has been said in the course of this debate to detract from or to qualify what then occurred. Criticisms ;serious and weighty criticisms;have been passed by my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition and the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean upon certain aspects of the conduct of the war. Anxiety, natural and; as I venture to think;perfectly legitimate anxiety, has been expressed as to how far and by what means the terms of peace announced by the right hon. Gentleman in December have been and are being communicated to the Boers. An Amendment, it is true, was put down on the Paper by ray hon. friend the Member for Carnarvon Boroughs; but that Amendment has not been moved. That is one of the main grievances of the Colonial Secretary. I should think that it is the first time, that it is at any rate quite a novel thing for a Minister to complain when there are forty-six Amendments on the Address, that one of them is not to be moved, and that the possible number of divisions is to be reduced to forty-five. It is true that my hon. friend has not moved his Amendment. He confined his speech to an attack on the methods in which the war has been, and is being, conducted in South Africa;an attack in which I may say at once I myself do not in the least

concur; and which, as the right hon. Gentleman said, will no doubt be met in due course by the Secretary of State for War. Finally, my hon. and learned friend the Member for the Dumfries Burghs made a grave appeal for the lenient and considerate treatment of those who should surrender; an appeal the extreme moderation of which was acknowledged by the right hon. Gentleman himself, who also said that it would be found not to have fallen on deaf ears.

Such has been the course of this debate; and it is under these conditions that the Secretary of State for the Colonies takes the opportunity to make a speech as unprovoked and as provocative as almost any which I ever remember to have heard in this House. Why, Sir, the right hon. Gentleman, in one part of his remarks, went out of his way to revive; I hope I am not using too strong language; what we had all hoped to be the obsolete Billingsgate of the General Election. He described the six Gentlemen, including my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition, who have addressed the House from this side in the course of the debate, as so many pro-Boers. There was a time, in the heat of the election, when it almost seemed as though the right hon. Gentleman had brought himself honestly to believe that anyone who was presumptuous enough to question the wisdom of his diplomacy, or even the taste of his metaphors, must be in alliance, secret or avowed, with the enemies of his country. But the election fever is over. The majority has been secured, and now sits safely and, I hope, comfortably on those benches. These epithets have served their purpose: and is it not about time that they should be cast into the rhetorical dustbin, which is the only place fit for them? The right hon. Gentleman in almost the same breath complained of the want of unanimity in this House in strengthening the hands of the Executive. This is a very curious way of procuring unanimity. We are sometimes warned as to the effect which speeches made here may produce on the minds of the Boers. I am not sure that the best way to promote an early cessation of the war and to bring about a discontinuance of a hopeless resistance is to suggest, as the right hon. Gentleman more than suggested last night, that, if not the whole, the majority of those who sit on this side of the House are in sympathy, latent or acknowledged, with those who are in the field. However that may be, I think this kind of circumspection should begin at home. Has the right hon. Gentleman reflected what gratuitous obstacles deliverances such as that of his last night interpose in the way of that unanimity which he professes to desire, and of the consequent strengthening of the hands of the Executive for the attainment of that which, I believe, we all, without any distinction of party, agree to be at this moment the cardinal and the capital object of British policy; the securing of an honourable and lasting peace? But my main object, indeed my sole object, in rising is to remove one or two misconceptions to which the right hon. Gentleman's speech lent countenance, and which, if they were not misconceptions but were founded on fact, would reflect greatly upon our conduct and credit as an Opposition, and I think might even conceivably have the effect of hindering or postponing the termination of the war. In the first place, the right hon. Gentleman suggested that we, or some considerable section amongst us, are in favour of undoing the annexation of the two Republics and restoring the political status quo. That I believe to be a

complete delusion. I am not in the least ashamed to confess for myself that I was a slow and reluctant convert to the necessity of annexation. I am not going into the argument now. It was fought out at the General Election. It is sufficient to say this: that my own view, which I believe to be that of many others, is that to annexation there is not, and there has not been for a long time past,

any practicable alternative; practicable, I mean, in a double sense: on the one hand, of guarding against the future recurrence of past dangers, and, on the other hand, of securing equality and freedom for the whole of South Africa. But that is no new statement of policy. So far back as last Whitsuntide my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition at Glasgow, with all the authority that belongs to his position, declared annexation to be inevitable, and stated that, in his opinion; which was also, of course, that of his colleagues; it had to be accepted both by parties in this country and by the Boers and British in South Africa as an indispensable condition of the ultimate settlement. So much for that. But the right hon. Gentleman went on to allege that a number of us here; and he singled out in this particular my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition; had expressed the opinion that the terms to be offered to the Boers should include the immediate concession of self-government in the conquered territories. Well, Sir, speaking again, I believe, not only for myself but for a number of others, and speaking certainly for my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition, I say we have neither entertained nor expressed any such idea. I listened, on the first night of this debate, to my right hon. friend's speech, and certainly he never said or suggested anything of the kind; and I was never more surprised than when I heard the First Lord of the Treasury father upon his words that construction; a construction which was emphatically repudiated a few hours later the same evening by my right hon. friend the Member for South Aberdeen, and I repudiate it now. What is the situation with which we have to deal in those conquered territories? I am speaking as one who is most anxious that, at the very earliest possible moment, the solemn pledges which the Government and the people of this country have given to the people of South Africa should be completely and effectually fulfilled. You have a community, of which it is no exaggeration to say that both the social and the political fabric have been overturned from top to bottom. You have a population in which racial animosities have been heated and envenomed by the war until they have reached a state of the most acute inflammation. You have a territory which has been to a large extent devastated and depopulated. The leaders of the farming class are prisoners of war, and the industrial classes to a large extent are emigrants. Under those conditions I agree entirely with my hon. friend the junior Member for Oldham; whose interesting and eloquent speech last night we must all hope and believe, and especially those of us who, like myself, enjoyed the privilege of friendship with his illustrious father, was the first step in a Parliamentary career of the highest distinction; that to plant, or attempt to plant, the full machinery of constitutional government would be to ignore the fundamental facts of the case. There must be an interval for resettlement and revival, for a renewal of the ordinary functions of social and domestic life,

before the work of political and constitutional reconstruction can be properly set on foot. How is that interval to be bridged over? Here, again, as it seems to me, the right hon. Gentleman magnified and inflated verbal distinctions into differences of principle and policy. I suppose we are all agreed that military government ought to be brought to an end at the very earliest possible moment that it is practicable to do so. I am sure my right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition agrees with me there. We are all agreed. It may be, I hope it may not be, but one cannot ignore the possibility, and even the probability, that at the time when it is safe to bring the regime of a purely military administration to an end, the conditions are not yet sufficiently matured for starting the new machinery of self-government. If that be so, there must be a period, not of military but of civil administration; and when my right hon. friend protested, as I believe he did protest, in the speech to which I have referred, against introducing into these countries the system of what is called a Crown colony, what I understood him to mean, and what I should certainly mean myself, was that from the earliest moment when you transform the administration from a military into a civil character, you ought, so far as you can, to associate the work of administration and government with some representative element

which, although you have not yet got full-fledged representative institutions, still less full-fledged responsible government, will ensure that the Government for the time being is more or less in touch with the feelings and interests and sympathies of the governed. No one proposes, as the right hon. Gentleman seems to think; no one, at any rate, with whom I am acquainted; to purchase peace in this manner at the price of dishonour. It is not a question of yielding to fear that which we are not ready, freely and spontaneously, to give; still less is it a question of betraying those who have trusted us. But it is of vital importance, with a view first of all to the speedy ending of the war, with a view next to making good the pledges we have given, that both Boer and Briton in South Africa shall understand that we are not going to replace the artificial ascendancy of one race by the artificial ascendancy of another. Surely it would be more useful; I do not care to use the word patriotic, because until recently patriotism was claimed as a monopoly by the right hon. Gentleman and his friends, otherwise I should have said it was more patriotic; at a time like this of grave national necessity that, rather than endeavour to create a perfectly artificial party issue, we should inquire whether the best means have been taken, or are being taken, to attain this end.

I am not going into the question; the very speculative question; of whether terms of peace could or could not have been arranged immediately after the capture of Pretoria last June. Speaking for myself, and for myself alone, I doubt it; and I doubt it for this reason, amongst others: that as we now know, and as the Boers knew perfectly well then, we were not at that time in any real or effective sense in occupation of their country. However that may be, I do not hesitate to say that, in my opinion, the steps which were taken in the immediately succeeding months were singularly ill-calculated for the purpose. What were they? You had a series of inconsistent and inconsequent proclamations. Of course

the responsibility rests not with Lord Roberts, but with His Majesty's Government; and I must say, having studied those proclamations with as much care as I can, I think it must have been difficult almost to the point of impossibility for any Boer of average intelligence to ascertain at any given time what precise offer was open to him to accept. You had, at the same time, the policy of what has been called farm-burning, as to which, again, after carefully studying the evidence, I say; I am giving my own opinion; that it was conducted on the part of our officers and men with all the humanity that was possible in the circumstances. That is my opinion. But it is a policy to be condemned, in my opinion, not so much for its cruelty; all war is cruel; but for its wastefulness, for its want of method, and, above all for its almost complete futility. Then the generals came home under the impression that the war was over; and the House still awaits, and awaits, I think, with interest and impatience, some statement from the Secretary for War as to the steps which were taken during the autumn and the winter to replace the disbanded and recalled troops and to replenish and reinforce the wasted regiments that were left upon the spot.

What are we doing now? I suppose most of us will agree that we have, or we ought to have, two objects in view ;to make the Army efficient, and to bring home to the Boers the conviction of the sincerity of our intentions. The right hon. Gentleman asked last night to whom are we to address ourselves. Well, it appears from the answer which he gave to a question this evening that the proclamation has not yet been issued which he foreshadowed in December last, and which was to be the means by which we at any rate understood the Government were to make known to the mass of the inhabitants of South Africa their intentions in this matter. I cannot help feeling great regret that the issue of that proclamation has been delayed; and we should like to know precisely what are the reasons for that delay. Let me ask, further, if the terms which the right hon. Gentleman announced two months ago have been conveyed to the Boer prisoners at St. Helena and Ceylon? Have any assurances been given to these men as to the restoration and restocking of their farms or as to provision being made for the mortgages and other debts which are accumulating upon them during their absence? Above all, have these prisoners been allowed, are they being allowed; this is one of the most pacific influences that you can bring to bear on the Boers; are they being allowed to communicate freely with their families, their friends, and kinsmen in the field?

These are practical questions which demand categorical answers. We have differed widely in this House as to the origin of the war. We may differ; though suppose that there the differences are not quite so widespread; as to the wisdom, the foresight, and the energy with which it has been conducted. But we all agree, I believe, without any distinction of party or section, in the desire to secure at the earliest possible moment an honourable peace. Sir, that end will not be accelerated, I venture to say by truculence of language any more than by weakness in action. If it is to be attained, it can be attained only in one way, and that is by the combination of two things; an army, strong, mobile, capable of commanding victory, and terms of pacification which it will not be derogatory

either for the victors to offer or for the vanquished to accept.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): I do not think there can be any doubt in the mind of any Member of the House that the tone of the speech which has just been delivered by the right hon. Gentleman is different from that of the speeches of his colleagues who have spoken from the same bench. I think that it will be felt by the House that the right hon.

Gentleman has struck a distinctly higher note than that which we have heard on previous evenings during this debate, and I venture to say that if all the speeches which have been made from that side of the House during the last three days had been delivered in the same tone and to the same purport the necessity for the speech which my right hon. friend the Secretary for the Colonies delivered last night would not have arisen. But, Sir, there was one very striking feature in the speech of the right hon. Gentleman; striking and, to me, exceedingly

disappointing; in that he spoke, not amidst the rounds of cheers which greeted the sallies of other speakers on that bench, but in chilling and disappointing silence. I call attention to that because the right hon. Gentleman asked the House to take up a position, which is not only far better and far higher, from the point of view of the office which I occupy, but also a far more useful and practical position for the purpose which we all ought to have, and I cannot help still hoping we all have, in view; namely, that we should use our opportunities in this House, from whatever standpoint we approach the question, with a determination to do everything, and to leave nothing undone, which will bring us nearer to the termination of the war. The right hon. Gentleman has spoken for his colleagues. I cannot say that the description which he gave of the speech of the Leader of the Opposition agrees with the impression conveyed to us on this bench when we listened to him on Thursday last. But when he proceeded to bring into line the right hon. Gentleman the Member for South Aberdeen, I think that we were in a position to make an effective retort. But I would rather leave that retort unuttered; I would rather accept his statement. I can assure the right hon. Gentleman that it does not give the Minister for War any pleasure, to use his own phrase, to go scavenging in the rhetorical dust-heaps of the past. It is almost impossible in approaching this question, in the daily responsibility of watching the ebb and flow of the war, knowing, as the Secretary of State must know perhaps more than any other man, what is going on at the front, responsible for filling up the too numerous vacancies made by wounds and disease, responsible also for withdrawing officers who may not be efficient and replacing them, and for repressing disorder if it occurs, and still more responsible perhaps for defending those who have been maligned in or out of this House; I say it is impossible not to feel that the moment has come, frankly, when we should get rid of these stale party recriminations, and, putting party aside for a few moments, consider how we can best bring to an end this great loss of life which is going on, this devastation which must take place of an entire country, this embitterment of feeling which will remain afterwards, and this waste of resources, which are the necessary concomitants of war.

I look to the debate which is taking place solely from that point of view, and I ask the Opposition to consider, holding what views they please, the question not from the point of view of justice only, on which Gentlemen opposite may hold different views from us, but from the point of view which they themselves have adopted; namely, that of expediency; and I would ask, from that standpoint whether the speeches which have been made in the last few days tend to a speedy termination of the war. I am not going into the argument as to whether we are right in saying that there shall be no independence, whether the Member for South Aberdeen with his protected State is nearer the mark, or whether the suggestions made in two other speeches from that bench of a speedy return of self-government after the close of the war might possibly most tend to conciliation. I ask the House to look at the matter clearly and to face the facts as they are at this moment. We are told by all the speakers opposite that the Boers we now have to deal with are desperate men. You may say that we have made them desperate. [An HON. MEMBER: Who else?] The more you say so the more you force upon us the view that they are not open at this moment to a reasonable compromise. What I ask the House to consider is this. They are fighting for independence as they understand it. They have been told that the complete surrender of their independence is the only means by which the war can be finished. Does the Member for South Aberdeen really believe that if Lord Kitchener went to-morrow to General De Wet and General Botha and said to them, "We cannot give you back your independence, but we will make you a. protected State; we will give you back 25 per cent. of that for which for the last sixteen months you have been fighting," he would get a favourable answer?

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Try it.

MR. BRODRICK: I think the hon. Member is probably the only Member of this House who thinks so. ["No."] Is it not more in keeping with reason and with our past experience of the Boers to believe that the mere offer of 25 per cent. of their independence would cause them more vigorously than ever to pull themselves together to fight in order to turn that 25 per cent. into 50 per cent.

The position at this moment, so far as the Government are concerned, is this. We have by proclamation offered to the Boers terms of surrender which have never before, I delieve, been offered to a vanquished enemy. [An HON. MEMBER: Never were there more disgraceful terms.] Perhaps the hon. Member will allow me to develop that for a moment. Lord Roberts's original policy when he entered the Free State was to accept the oath of any Boer who came in and surrendered his rifle, and to allow him to go back to his farm. I do not believe that in any other war such a thing has been done; that a private soldier has been allowed to go free on mere parole, and to go back to live as a private individual in the very country in which warlike operations were going on. That leniency was a disastrous failure; because men who had given their parole were either cajoled or compelled again to take up arms, and the very men who came in one day and gave up their rifles would assault these same posts a week afterwards with all the advantage of the information they had obtained. The next stage in the operations was that those who were taken were sent across the water, and their wives and families were promised protection, and they were promised that they

should return when the war was over. That plan, again, has not been a success, for the reason that the Boers, dreading to go across the water as they do, have preferred to continue in arms rather than to come in on those terms. Lord Kitchener has now undertaken a third step. He has proposed (and to the extent of 15,000 persons, I think, his proposal has been accepted) that all the Boers who desired to surrender to the British Government should be allowed to come in and obtain protection in laagers with their families and be preserved either from compulsion to take up arms again or from any danger which might accrue until it is possible for them to go back to their farms. I know not what a British general could have done more in order to bring home to those against whom he was fighting our desire to make the path of submission as easy as possible. But I think it would be not only a mistake but positively disastrous if we were now to go to a man like General De Wet, who is making such a desperate resistance and offering so determined a front against any terms whatever, who is flogging and shooting members of the peace committee, who is alleged, rightly or wrongly, to be flogging his own men who desire to surrender; MR. DILLON: Where is your authority for that statement?

MR. BRODRICK: I say who is alleged to be doing so; is it not absurd to suppose that, if we were to go to him with a proposal now to leave him a few shreds of independence at a time which we cannot name and of a nature which he could not be expected to appreciate, we should break down his determination to continue in arms? I think by such a policy we should not only render ourselves contemptible in the eyes of the world, but make the British Government ridiculous throughout Europe. All I can say is this. The right hon. Member for South Aberdeen said the other night that he could not check himself in making speeches here by the effect which they might have in South Africa.

MR. BRYCE (Aberdeen, S.): I did not say that. I said it was my duty here to say what I thought.

MR. BRODRICK: Allowing for the divergence of language, consequent perhaps upon my less concentrated methods of thought, I should have said that I had exactly expressed the right hon. Gentleman's meaning. However that may be, I want to make the House, in all sincerity, feel in the fullest sense its responsibility in this matter. It is one on which I feel exceedingly deeply. Letters reach me by every mail showing the mischief done by speeches, proclamations; [Irish cheers]; I mean by pamphlets and publications, and speeches which are called those of conciliation. There is a Committee of Conciliation, and another committee which, I believe, is distinct from it, called the Stop-the-War Committee. I believe I am right in saying that one or other of these committees was responsible for the atrocious libel on Lord Kitchener, when it was said that he had given orders to shoot all Boer prisoners. We know that a question in this House, or a statement in the newspapers, is sufficient to disabuse every Englishman of such an idea; but that statement goes broadcast throughout South Africa, and publications like the letter quoted last night by the Member for Carnarvon; from a lieutenant in the Canadian Horse, a letter which may be a highly coloured narrative, but which has never been verified or tested, but on which I will undertake to say General Smith-Dorrien will have considerable light

to throw; have been found in the farmhouses not merely in Orange River Colony, but in Cape Colony. I heard by the last mail that our own troops that are pursuing General De Wet in Cape Colony had found them broadcast, having been distributed, deliberately, throughout the Dutch farmhouses in the Cape Colony, creating among those who read them an absolutely false idea, and immeasurably embittering the differences between the two races, and the feelings of those who have hitherto been loyal subjects of the King. What happened the other day in the town of Calvinia, which is in the western part of Cape Colony, and about 100 or 150 miles from the Orange River Colony? It is not a place about which any question of rebellion against Boer authority, if there was a Boer authority still existing in either of the colonies, could arise, as it was as much a part of His Majesty's dominions as the House in which we are sitting. What happened there the other day? A coloured man, educated, well-known in Cape Colony, cultured beyond his fellows, who has taken part in politics in Cape Colony to a considerable extent, was seized by a commando which reached that town about a month ago. What was his crime? It was that he was well-known to be a centre of loyal feeling in that neighbourhood. That man was openly taken out by the commando; who were no doubt stimulated by their feelings as regards cruelties which, they were told by every publication they came across in the Dutch farmhouses, had been practised on their own fellow-citizens; and flogged so brutally that his vitals were exposed. He lingered for three weeks, and was then shot in cold blood before our troops entered the town. I quote that only as an instance of many in Cape Colony who had been similarly treated, and I quote it because I would ask the House to consider whether the Conciliation Committee, by whom these stories are published, ought not better to have been called the Exasperation Committee, because these stories and loose talking across the floor of the House, such as that indulged in by the hon. Member for Carnarvon, without due consideration, and without being verified, do not influence us here, but they do go to South Africa to further exasperate and increase our difficulties there. I am not one who complains of the ordinary chances of war. You must lose lives, you must ride horses to death, you must see a country devastated if you once go to war. All these are necessary incidents of warfare. But surely, it is right for any man who is responsible in any degree for the conduct of operations, to make an appeal that we should do as much as we can here to prevent the ordinary horrors of war degenerating into acts of savagery of the kind to which I have referred.

The right hon. Gentleman opposite has urged me to say what steps the Government have taken in the last two or three months to bring about a speedy termination of the war. In December last I stated that I believed the kindest thing to both parties was to place Lord Kitchener in possession of every force he could desire in order to bring about a speedy capture of the marauding bands which are disturbing the two colonies in South Africa. We are told that the Government have been drifting in their policy and action. I deny that altogether. Our policy has not changed and our action has not for one moment swerved. A statement has appeared in the papers that Lord Kitchener asked us for a large body of troops in December last and that we began very late to

provide them. The fact is, we have never been behind Lord Kitchener in our supplies, but we have always endeavoured to anticipate his wishes. The 13th December last was the first time we had had any demand from South Africa for troops for some months. At that moment there were 210,000 soldiers in South Africa. Lord Kitchener then asked whether, as some of his mounted troops, owing to service in the war, had lost numbers, we could supply drafts. I took action on that at once. He also asked whether some of the colonial troops, on whom he greatly depended and whose services he eulogised in the highest manner, could be replaced. The Government immediately appealed to the colonies to replace their contingents, and we had a reply as enthusiastic as we could possibly receive. Ten days or a fortnight ago I published a summary of the mounted troops we hoped to supply in the course of a few weeks. In that summary I put down the colonial troops at 5,000. I find that the number of those who have come forward has already exceeded that figure.

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): At 5s. a day !

MR. BRODRICK: And if more were wanted they would be ready to come to our assistance. I promised 2,500 cavalry and 1,000 mounted infantry. Of this 3,500, 2,500 left in a few days, and at this moment form part of the column in pursuit of De Wet. In addition to that, we quickened the recruiting of the 10,000 Colonial Police, which, being a force of a more permanent character, did not fill up quite so quickly as the more temporary reinforcements; and we brought before Lord Kitchener the extreme desirability of prompting every man in Cape Colony willing to take up arms for local defence to do so. Now that the war has extended to Cape Colony, I think the colonists ought to be among the first to strike a defensive blow. Within three weeks some 10,000 men were enrolled in Cape Colony, and these were mounted and equipped with rifles by the British Government. I have been asked by several hon. Members questions as to the supply of horses, and we have been taken to task in some quarters for delay in sending out an additional supply. In keeping up the supply of horses our difficulty has been great, for this reason, the wastage of horses has always exceeded the wastage expected by the commanders in the field; consequently, although we kept up the supply, that supply was not sufficient. When I took office three months ago I immediately tried to attain an object which is most important in regard to the supply of horses in South Africa, that they should arrive a month in advance of the time of their actual requirement. That alone gives the animals time to regain their condition, and probably prolongs their working life many weeks or months. In these efforts we fairly succeeded. From 1st October to 14th February there were 21,800 horses landed in Cape Colony, and on 14th February there were 8,500 at sea on their way, a total of 30,000 in a period of little over three months. I do not think there will be found in any period of the world's history an instance of any nation sending for an expedition to any part of the world 30,000 horses a distance of 6,000 miles in three months. Lord Kitchener also, when the war extended to Cape Colony, found it necessary from the point of view of anticipating Boer raids to secure as many horses as he could locally; and he succeeded in obtaining at a good price a good supply of 13,000 horses and 4,000 mules in January, and I am glad

to say, from the most recent telegrams sent, Lord Kitchener has got all the men he can mount provided with good horses. Lord Kitchener applied for reinforcements at the end of January. Early in January I found that the recruiting for the South African Constabulary was not proceeding as rapidly as I had expected, and I thought it necessary, in view of probable demands from Lord Kitchener, that we should be ready to send out a large force of Yeomanry. We called for more Yeomanry, and the response was extraordinary. We have up to date enlisted 8,000 or 9,000, and they are coming in very rapidly. I understand the men are of very good stamp. The result was that when Lord Kitchener did tell us at the end of January that, owing to a very great increase in the area of warlike operations,

more mounted troops were needed, we sent him at the end of the same week the first batch. We have sent a considerable number, and in ten days ships will sail with further forces; and by the end of March we expect to be able to put at Lord Kitchener's disposal something like 30,000 men.

It is not for me to say anything of the future course of the war. I can only say that the strain at the front must be very great. Many officers have been on active duty for fifteen or sixteen months, and it must not be supposed that when generals come home in any special case they are in any way discredited. It is extremely desirable that some generals should have a rest, and we are therefore sending Lord Kitchener every general he has selected or desires to have in order to relieve those who have been on service for a long period. In this connection I quite agree with my right hon. friend the Member for Oldham when, in his admirable speech last night, he said that in Sir Bindon Blood and General Elliot, distinguished officers with Indian experience of a special character, we are sending the best men we can to supplement Lord Kitchener's force. But the House may rest assured that whatever form the operations may take the Government will work hand in hand with Lord Kitchener, and we have every confidence and expectation that the steps taken are such that before long they will greatly narrow the area of the war. We recognise that in strengthening Lord Kitchener's hands lies the way to this. The House may be assured that to this consideration everything; even the reorganisation of the Army at home; will be subordinated, that we may keep the Army in the field in the highest state of efficiency we can attain.

During the debate there have been three or four speeches in reference to hospital arrangements in South Africa, and I hope the House will pardon me for entering on that important subject. It is fully worth a debate to itself, but as it has been brought forward during this debate, I ought to say a few words upon it. Great blame has been thrown on the Army Medical Department, and I do not for a moment mean to say that the Department has not many things to answer for; but, in considering mistakes made by the Army Medical Department, let us also consider the part the House of Commons has played in bringing about the present state of things. I am quite ready to take responsibility and blame for which we are fairly accountable at the War Office, but it should be remembered that in the House of Commons, when nearly fourteen years ago the late Lord Randolph Churchill carried on for two years his crusade against public

expenditure, this Army Medical Department was severely criticised. I well remember a strong speech in which the right hon. Member for East Wolverhampton said there were too many doctors, and that the Department wanted overhauling, for it cost too large an amount of public money, and the Report of the Committee at the time bore out the right hon. Gentleman's belief. The Committee, after two years investigation at the War Office, decided that there were too many doctors, and that they were too highly paid, with a too high proportion of retired pay, and that the whole subject required revision. By this the War Office has ever since been influenced. In the House of Commons successive Ministers have laid it down that we must provide for three army corps at home and two abroad, and upon this the arrangements of the Army Medical Department have been made. Can you wonder, then, that when we came to send the equivalent of six Army Corps to South Africa the medical arrangements should be somewhat strained? Difficulties arose that were not foreseen in sending supplies along lines of communication longer than had ever been necessary in a Continental war. The War Department in the matter of doctors has for the last fourteen years been between the upper millstone of a Parliament determined to keep down expenditure and the lower millstone of the medical profession, who denied their best candidates except upon better terms. The War Office did all it could to get better men, but the heads of the profession declared that medical men must have military rank, without which they could not hold up their heads among their military colleagues. I remember it was even urged that beyond the titles of major and colonel the title of general should be open to them. Five years ago Lord Lansdowne was assured that unless the title of "general," not "surgeon-general," were given other proposals would be useless. I remember perfectly well suggesting that a deputation of the profession should go over to the Admiralty and ask that naval surgeons should be allowed to become admirals, When they received that recognition the War Office would consider the concession of the rank of "general."

But, not to trouble the House at length, I will sum up in a few words what the experience of the war has shown. It has shown, in the first place, that these military titles have not altogether conduced to harmony. In the second place, the Commission of able, independent men, who, whatever we may say of their conclusions, certainly held no brief for the Government, have shown in their Report that there has been no general disposition on the part of the Army Medical Department to shirk its duties, and that there has been great devotion shown among the medical men. If in some cases there have been defects of organisation and skill, that organisation can be reformed, and want of skill has been due to the fact that officers have been so hardly worked that they have not had proper opportunities of studying their profession. It has been said by the hon. Gentleman the Member for the Ilkeston Division that we have not realised the importance of a suggestion that came from himself; that sanitary committees should be sent out to direct sanitary arrangements for the various camps. I think the experience of the war has shown that a committee of that character, or something like it, would have done good service. And, while knowing as I do the devotion to duty of the great mass of medical officers of the Royal Army Medical

Corps, I cannot deny that it has been brought out in the course of these inquiries that there was a certain amount of professional jealousy, an indisposition to avail themselves of outside assistance in an emergency, and, perhaps, too much of that red-tape disposition which is supposed to pursue the Army in all its courses, which I, at all events, desire to see removed to a great extent. And in this respect let me say that so far from regarding those who have interested themselves in these matters, both here and in South Africa, with any suspicion or distrust, I thank them for their attempts; I believe they have been largely productive of good to the public service, and I believe we may found on the recommendations of the Commission, and on the extraneous assistance we have received, partly from Members of this House, a new and satisfactory system, but one which can only be brought about by a drastic reform of the Army Medical Service. But in the emergency as it now exists we cannot pretend to make a complete reform in a few weeks. We are bound to look at this question very carefully, and we are determined to call to our assistance the heads of the medical profession. It may be that by making our terms of enlistment more elastic, it may be that by making them more attractive in other ways, we can obtain a better class of men. All I would say is this: if the House will give us a little confidence in this matter I will undertake that no effort shall be wanting, that there is no experience we can get but shall be turned to account, and that no past prejudices shall be allowed to intervene, or prevent outgiving the Army in the future an effective medical service.

I do not know that there is any other subject on which I need trouble the House, for I feel that I have been too long already, but I wish to say this before I sit down. The right hon. Gentleman expressed regret that the Colonial Secretary had not yet been able to put out the proclamation foreshadowed in December last. He may rest assured that at the first moment that such a proclamation is likely to have any effect it will be at once published. Lord Kitchener has made, and is making, every effort, by personal action, by offers to meet the hostile generals, by every means in the power of a general or administrator to take, to bring before the Boers the terms on which he is willing to give them the opportunity of surrendering. And those who know; the right hon. Gentleman thought the Boers do not know; those who know what have been the terms in these proclamations, those who know how earnestly the Government desire, and the House desires, to see the Dutch and British races in South Africa again settling down in amicable concord, will know that no stone will be left unturned, as far as is possible to remove past subjects of bitterness and to secure peace between the two races in South Africa. I can only conclude by adopting in the fullest sense the language of the right hon. Gentleman, and by saying that if this House will only keep before it first and foremost, putting aside all party issues, the main question of bringing this war to an end, we shall not only avoid great occasion of difference and recrimination in this House, but we shall go a long step towards securing for South Africa an honourable and lasting peace.

*MR. C. P. SCOTT (Lancashire, Leigh): The right hon. Gentleman has just stated that it is the desire of the Government to do everything they can to bring this

war to an honourable and satisfactory close, but in the early part of his speech he seemed to convey to us that the only effectual means was to conquer them. He told us that it was useless to offer to the Boer generals in the field terms of accommodation which would not be wholly acceptable to them, because the only result of offering 25 per cent. of what they wished for would be to induce them to ask for 50 per cent. I hold that this is not the way in which the Government ought to conduct this great and momentous business. I think there must be a feeling in this House and in the country also that the time has come when some more effectual steps should be taken to bring this dreadful conflict to an end. On our side, at least, it is felt that there is doubly a reason for that, because many of us believe that you can obtain now terms which would be better, safer, and more conducive to the welfare of this country and to a lasting peace than you would obtain if you carried this war through to the bitter end and crushed out every spark of opposition. Why do we think that? It appears to some of us that the policy of force and of simply using the enormous power of this country to crush out all opposition in South Africa is in itself doomed to failure. However successful you may be and however complete the triumph which, after infinite losses and sacrifices, you may obtain, the result will be less than the result which you might obtain without those sacrifices by offering generous terms. We are told that to offer terms would be a sign of weakness, but what argument can be weaker than that? What is the supreme weakness of a statesman? It is the fear to seem weak. It requires courage to look the facts fairly and fully in the face and deal with them, not according to the exigencies of party; God forbid that any man on these benches should look to the interests of party in a matter of this kind; but in the interests of the permanent peace of South Africa and the welfare of this country. We have not got to deal merely with the suppression of the resistance of our enemy in the field, but how are you going to govern people on the other side of the globe unless you can do something to reconcile them to your rule? How are you going to do it? If you are going to do it or try to do it why will you not at once make it plain to them what are the lines of the healing policy on which you intend to proceed. It is my conviction that the only means by which we can secure the permanent peace of South Africa is to offer to respect the natural sentiments of these people, their dignity and prejudices and love for their old customs and institutions, and to give them everything which you can give subject only to this one condition, that you shall guard yourselves against the outbreak of hostilities in the future. What are the securities which are necessary in order to protect us from a fresh outbreak of war, and in order to secure to us the fruits of all this expenditure of blood and treasure? There is now no practical question before the House of restoring to the conquered States the full independence which they have lost. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Colonies confused the issue when he suggested and actually stated that that was the question which divided the parties in this House. He asked, "What is the issue if it is not a question of annexation?" That is not the issue. Annexation is now accepted as a practical necessity, whatever

we may think of its justice. We on this side of the House realise that we are powerless upon this matter, and that is not the question upon which we are at issue for the moment. The difference between us is quite other than that. It is not a question of the restoration of the full and complete independence of these two States as Sovereign International States, but we have to consider how we can reconcile those States, who dearly loved the independence they have lost, to the loss of that independence. That is the problem which statesmen have to grapple with at this moment. How can we reconcile them unless we are prepared while they are in the field, and as a condition of their surrender, to tell them what terms we will give them, in what way existence is to be made tolerable to them, what respect is to be shown for their sense of nationality, their love of their flag and of their country. I believe we might go a long way to meet them, and at least it is worth while trying.

The right hon. Gentleman says that to attempt to negotiate or make an arrangement is simply to encourage the Boers to resist. A more fallacious argument I never heard. At any rate, if we believe that any terms of accommodation can be made which will safeguard the interests of this country and at the same time will in some measure reconcile the conquered territories to their absorption in the body of the Empire, it is our bounden duty to make that effort. I believe that much could be done, and that even now it might be possible to put an end to the waste of life and treasure. Obviously the great fear of the Boers is that they will be deprived practically of their independence and that they will be governed in a way they detest; by British officials from Downing Street. This is what happened to them before. This is not the first experience the Boers have had of British annexation. We annexed their country once before. We then promised them that we would grant them full local self-government, but we never fulfilled that promise, because we had not the courage, even when they were a small, weak people, compared to what they are now, to say, "We will give you local independence at once under the British flag providing you acknowledge the supremacy of the Crown." I believe the same thing will happen again, and if we begin with Crown colony government we shall go on with it. It is all very well to say that when these men become reconciled to your rule, when they are loyal and prepared to accept from their hearts British supremacy, then, and not till then, we will grant them self-government. Why should they become loyal to the British? What faith are they likely to put in our promises if their fulfilment is postponed to a remote and indefinite future?

The only plan is to take our courage in both hands and to say to these men, "We give you full control of your own affairs. We respect your old institutions. Keep your Volksraad, your President, your flag; subject, all of them, to the supremacy of the British Crown and the British Government." It is no doubt a difficult course, but all courses are difficult, and I believe it will give the only chance of reconciling these people to British rule and of securing from them, if not a willing assent, at least an assent to the incorporation of their country in the British dominions. I believe, myself, the best plan would have been to treat the conquered territories as protected States, and to have left

them their institutions. But if that be objected to; and I admit there are great objections to it; another plan is to treat them as two of the federated States of South Africa. Federation has been the dream of the Colonial Office for a generation. It has been responsible for much of the mischief that has been done and for many of the errors that have been committed. But now, I believe, federation would be accepted, and it would be a panacea to a large extent for all our difficulties. If these States were treated as independent, and were added as two States possessing autonomy under a federal constitution, then the conscious allegiance of the individual citizen would be to his State, as it is in Canada and Australia; the allegiance of the State would be to the Federation, and the Federation would be under the authority and supremacy of the Crown. In that way we should escape the greater part of our difficulties. We should escape all the friction and trouble arising from the need of a Resident and constant interference from Downing Street with the affairs of these communities. We should have a federal body to deal with, a body responsible and strong, with which we could deal effectively, and which we might trust to deal itself with disaffection or rebellion in any of its members. I do not believe that we would get disaffection, but in that way we would to a large extent escape from these difficulties. There are no doubt difficulties in this course, but there are far greater difficulties in the opposite course. Suppose the Government determine to offer no terms, but to crush out opposition and at their own time and in their own way to give some small portion of self-government which by degrees would be developed into a larger measure, what would happen? The Boers would not believe us, they would not trust us, and, thinking that we had deprived them of their rights as citizens and did not mean to restore them, they would become discontented and rebellious. Their discontent and rebellion would again be made a reason for refusing to extend to them the self-government we had promised. No, I believe it is far better and safer to take the risks of dealing at once and effectively with the constitutional position of these States, and with the rights of their citizens, and that by postponing it we shall only lay up for ourselves an infinitely greater crop of troubles in the future.

*MR. LAW (Glasgow, Blackfriars): The speech of the hon. Gentleman who has just sat down has been answered already many times in this House, and never more effectively than by the right hon. Member for East Fife. The speech delivered last night by the hon. Member for Carnarvon Boroughs was, from his own point of view, a very able one, and if I am not presumptuous in saying so I can pay it the compliment of saying that if it were properly printed, with a sufficient number of head-lines, it would be a most effective conciliation pamphlet like those with which hon. Members of this House are so generously supplying the public. What struck me, from a debating point of view, was the peculiar ability and the remarkable success of the way the hon. Member laid his baits for the applause of the Gentlemen around him. The first of these baits rather surprised me. It was a reference to the Colonial Secretary's expression of opinion as to the personal honour of Mr. Rhodes. The applause which that remark excited was not due to its

novelty; but it seems to me that, as regards the Colonial Secretary, there is no statute of limitations, that the oftener a charge is made against him, and the less there is in it, the more certain it is of being applauded by a certain section of the House. But did the hon. Gentleman not perceive that in attacking the Colonial Secretary he was attacking the former leader of his own party? In 1896 the right hon. the Member for West Monmouth used these words; "Knowing Mr. Rhodes as I do, I am certain that he may have been actuated by what the poet calls 'the last infirmity of noble minds,' but that he has not been actuated by any mean or sordid motives, or greed of gain. These words seem to me to resemble very closely those employed by the right hon. the Colonial Secretary.

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs): That was before the Inquiry.

*MR. LAW: I expected the interruption; but these words referred to the supposed complicity of Mr. Rhodes in the raid. These speeches, it seems to me, were creditable to both the statesmen who made them, although I daresay the hon. Member for Carnarvon cannot understand the motives which induced them to make them. It is easy to hit a man when he is down, but that is a form of warfare which does not commend itself to either of the statesmen I have mentioned. Another reference of the hon. Gentleman was to the quotation from the Prime Minister He said that because we demanded the unconditional surrender of the Boer Governments there would be masters, and therefore the Boers must be servants. But no one knows better than the hon. Gentleman that the moment the war is over and the last shot fired, the Boer race will be under exactly the same laws as the men of British extraction; and what is good enough for our own people

is surely good enough for the Boers. But what shall we say of the charge made by the hon. Gentleman against the distinguished General now in the field? It seems to me that the last person whom a fair-minded man would attack is one who is absent, who cannot speak for himself, who is serving his country in the field, and who, after all, is risking his life in her service, while the hon. Member is risking nothing, not even his reputation. But it is such a man whom the hon. Member has chosen for an attack, and whom he attacked so brutally last night, and who, for all the hon. Gentleman knows or at all events for all that he has told this House, was merely executing literally the orders of his superior officer. The hon. Member said that we had exasperated the Boers. That is perfectly true, but he seemed to be under the impression that it would be our duty to make war in a peaceful manner; Whenever he could win from these benches a sign that we do not like what is going on in South Africa, he seemed to think that he was scoring against the Government. Of course we don't like it; the soldiers do not like it: and, above all, Lord Roberts does not like it. We don't like war, we don't like the horrors of war, but we are responsible for them only if the war is an unjust war, and that is a responsibility which this Government and country can bear with a clear conscience. If the hon. Member had proved that in this war we had done anything contrary to the laws of war there might have been something in the charges he has made which would have affected the Government and done discredit to the country. But he has not proved that,

and no one could. What are the laws of war? The laws of war are the usages of war, and the usages of war are the history of what has been done in modern times by nations under circumstances similar to those in which we are placed to-day. Reference has been made more than once to the analogy of the American Civil War. I venture to say that if our generals had chosen to adopt the measures adopted by American generals in that war, the war in South Africa would have been ended long ago.

Hon. Gentlemen know one quotation so-well that it is hardly necessary to repeat it. They know the phrase used by General Sheridan in a letter to General Grant describing the devastation caused in the Shenandoah Valley, because it was quoted in one of the Conciliation pamphlets. In that letter General Sheridan said he had devastated the valley so effectually that "if a crow were to fly over the district it would require to bring its own rations with it." I will read you another proof of what I say, which is perhaps not so well known; the general order issued by General Sherman before proceeding on his march through the South, which ended the Rebellion, He gave these instructions; "To army corps commanders is entrusted the power to destroy mills, houses, cotton gins, etc., and for them this general principle is laid down. In districts and neighbourhoods where the army is unmolested no destruction of such property would be permitted; but should guerillas or bushwhackers molest our march, or should the inhabitants burn bridges, obstruct roads, or otherwise manifest local hostility, then army corps commanders should order and enforce a devastation more or less relentless according to the measure of such hostility." That order was most literally and most accurately fulfilled. The hon. Gentleman had again brought the God of Battles into the debate. He told the House that because the war had been more difficult than we had expected, therefore the God of Battles apparently was not on our side. That is a curious and dangerous argument, and I do not agree with the hon. Gentleman. I agree rather with Sir Wilfrid Laurier when he said that the very fact that the war has proved so difficult, and that our enemies were so ready for it, while we were not, proved that the war was not our war, but that it was the war of those who were ready for it, and expected to beat us in it.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS (Carnarvonshire, Eifion): I do not wish to go over in any detail the subject of farm-burning, but I desire to deal shortly with a reference of the right hon. the Member for East Fife to the speech of the hon. Member for Carnarvon on that point. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to think or state that he did not concur with the eloquent and able speech of my hon. friend; but immediately after making that statement he proceeded to show that he did concur distinctly, and in every respect, with it. The right hon. Member for East Fife said that my hon. friend complained against the manner in which the policy of farm-burning had been carried out. My hon. friend made no such statement. On the contrary, he said that the soldiers who had been employed to carry out that policy loathed it, and if they loathed it the inference was left that they carried it out to the slightest extent consistent with obeying orders. What my hon. friend complained of was the inhuman and barbarous policy forced upon the soldiers, so that if the right hon. Gentleman had not misunderstood my

hon. friend's speech he might have agreed with it completely. My hon. friend quoted instance after instance in which the soldiers were annoyed and ashamed of what they had to do; and he quoted especially a Welsh Member who has been fighting at the front and who was the first and loudest to raise his voice from the other side of the House in denunciation of the barbarous and inhuman policy, ordered probably from home, and certainly proclaimed by Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener. The hon. Member who had just spoken seemed to imply that even Lord Roberts disapproved of the policy, or, at any rate, had a strong distaste for it. I am inclined to think that that is the case; but, if so, Lord Roberts has shown himself a very weak man. It was obvious to everyone who had closely followed the news which came from South Africa that an attempt was made to force Lord Roberts's hands in that respect. We were told that references were coming over from the press in South Africa urging this policy upon the military authorities, and, in fact, covertly and openly denouncing Lord Roberts for his leniency. And Lord Roberts was weak enough to give way. Pretty nearly every mistake that we have made in connection with this lamentable war in South Africa has been due to following the advice given us by the English colonial gang there. Even this disastrous and hateful policy, now proved to be futile and injurious to our own interests, was inaugurated solely and pressed upon us and forced upon us by the Uitlanders, who have deluded us all so long, and for whom we have been fighting.

The right hon. the Secretary for War had made a very powerful and impassioned appeal to hon. Members on this side of the House to refrain from expressing their views because of the injury which it caused in South Africa. That appeal had been made before the war commenced, and I can say that it has been fruitful in mischief. In my belief it was that appeal which brought about the war. From an expression dropped on the other side of the House it seemed to be believed even there that there was really not so much force in the complaint of the Secretary for War. That complaint was made on the radical delusion, fostered by the war party from the very first, that the Boers do not know their own business, that they are incapable of judging for themselves, that they are not sensible or even intelligent men, but a set of little children who can be led hither and thither by the opinion of other people who know less of the circumstances of the case than they do themselves. It has been that nonsense that has led us to carry on our whole policy, under the belief that bluff would succeed with the Boers. Bluff succeeds with children, and very often has succeeded with the Front Opposition Bench; but it has never succeeded with the Boers. They understand their own business as well as anybody, and always have been and will be guided by their own judgment, and it is not to be supposed for a moment that they would be influenced in the slightest degree by anything said in this House. In fact, the Colonial Secretary admitted as much in the remarks he made last night; while the hon. Member for Oldham expressly dissociated himself from the statements of the Secretary for War. He based his argument upon the practice of the most eminent Parliamentarians in past times. When these denounced an African War in a previous crisis, the Boers did not allow themselves to be guided by the pinion of their friends in this country. The

mistake the British

make in judging of other nations and peoples is in not believing that others are actuated by the same feelings of patriotism as themselves, and that they are not able to judge what is good for them as well as we. Would England be affected in a matter of this kind in the slightest if she was in a similar position to that of the Boers? Supposing that this country was invaded by France, and that the French were unanimous as to the invasion, and that they were as much stronger than we as we are than the Boers, and that we had been driven up north as far as Carlisle, and we were asked to shape our policy in accordance with the opinions of a few gentlemen in the French Chamber of Deputies, who had still some regard to justice. Should we be so foolish as not to defend ourselves to the utmost upon the reliance that the views of truth and justice raised by those gentlemen in France might finally prevail? No, Sir, we should not allow that to influence us in the slightest degree, and it is not to be supposed that the Boers would in this case.

There is this injustice, of which we are entitled to complain. Whatever we do, hit high or hit low, we are to be blamed. The Colonial Secretary on a previous occasion denounced us because we did not express our views. On the 11th of May last, in Birmingham, he expressly said the question was whether the war was just, righteous, and inevitable, and later on he could not refrain from expressing his contempt for the men who, though they believed the war was unrighteous and unjust, had not the courage to express their views. The same argument was urged by the First Lord of the Treasury. Therefore, we who believe from the depths of our hearts that this war is unrighteous are denounced as contemptible if we do not express our views, and if we do we are accused of a want of patriotism. Possibly, if the universal opinion in England and throughout the world was that the war was just on the part of England and unjust on the part of the Boers, the opinions we hold might have had some effect; but the opinion is the other way. The opinion of independent people on the Continent is dead against us, a great part of the country is dead against the war, and the opinion in America is practically unanimous against it, and on that account I for one shall never refrain from expressing my opinion, in the endeavour to save this country from the evil and disastrous course it is pursuing in this war. We were silent in the autumn of 1899 in order to give the policy of bluff a chance of succeeding, which in the case of the Boers it never has. We remained silent because it was said any protest on our part would strengthen the hands of the Boers, but my belief is that if two or three hon. Members and right hon. Members who sit on the Front Opposition Bench; the right hon. Member for East Wolverhampton and the hon. Baronet the Member for Berwick, and others; had sat on the other side of the House it would have been better for the Opposition. We have had to fight them from the first, and I trace the war to a great extent to the paralysing influence of those Gentlemen's silence in opposition.

Now what is the present condition of affairs? It is such as nobody ever dreamt of. No one ever dreamt for a moment that we should be in the deplorable position in which we now find ourselves. Every object for which we embarked in this war

could, after the capture of Bloemfontein and Pretoria, have been secured. All the Boers wished for then was to concede what we asked, and that was intimated by the two Presidents to Lord Salisbury. All they wished to maintain was their independence in the country, and that we did not desire to take away when we went to war. The Colonial Secretary stated what was incorrect when he said that from the moment the invasion of Natal took place by the Boer troops the policy of the Government was changed, and became a policy of exterminating the Boer States, and that the policy of not leaving a shred of independence to these people was adopted from that moment. I suppose the reason he made that mistake was because he does not read all Lord Salisbury's speeches. If he had read those speeches he would have found that a month after the invasion of the Transvaal Lord Salisbury said at the Mansion House: "We seek no goldfields and we seek no territory." My point is, that we could have attained all our objects if we had been content with those objects for which we went to war; but after we succeeded in capturing

Bloemfontein and Pretoria we thought the rest would be a walk-over, and we declined to listen to any terms. If the hon. and right hon. Gentlemen who guide our destiny knew then what they know now they would not have thrown away that opportunity. A declaration has been made that "not a shred of independence" is to be allowed to remain, and I have no doubt that every effort will be made to maintain that declaration, but it would be as well to remember that Lord North and his king George III., in the last century, made just as strong a declaration, and had just as high stomachs, but they had to withdraw and give way. The force of circumstances compelled them to do so, and it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that this Government may have to seek some other solution. I believe, unless some terms are made, that South Africa will be lost to England, and it is only by making terms it can be retained. Hon. Gentlemen have said that in South Africa we shall have a second Ireland on our hands if we annex the Transvaal. It is not suggested that if we restore the independence of these States, Cape Colony will be a second Ireland. I believe that if we gave them independence in internal affairs they would give up all claim to direct foreign affairs; and if they were independent in internal affairs it would reconcile all the Dutch, loyal and disloyal.

We have been accused of disloyalty ; I am quite as loyal as any man who prates patriotism and jingoism, who maintains that the best interests of the country are to be sacrificed and thousands of lives are to be lost in the future as there has been in the past to save the faces of the right hon. Gentlemen on the Government benches, and the politics of the Conservative party. We have been denounced by our friends and even by our constituents, and called pro-Boers. I have been called a pro-Boer in my own county, but I did not quail. I did not let that cow me. I explained my views and denounced annexation at every meeting which I attended, and the result was that I was returned unopposed, although the Conservatives did everything in their power to obtain a candidate to contest the seat. Other hon. Gentlemen have been returned unopposed ; the right hon. Gentleman

the Member for East Wolverhampton was returned unopposed, and others;but only by

the goodwill of the Conservatives. They were returned unopposed because they made friends with the enemy. I was returned unopposed because my enemies did not dare to face me. We have suffered a good deal for our opinions, but we stick to those opinions, because we believe the best interests of our country depend upon those opinions being expressed and adopted by the country. We are ready to sacrifice ourselves to save the country. Hon. Gentlemen opposite, on the other hand, have been ready to sacrifice the country to save themselves. Hon. Gentlemen who have made this war have made a name for themselves in history, but a name only similar to that of the Duke of Alva. In thirty or forty years all England will be eager to dissociate itself from the responsibility of the war. There is no war in the history of our country which will be at the same time so famous and so infamous as this; the fame will rest with the Boers, the infamy with us. The war has made a great general, but he is not English; his name is De Wet. Look at the ignominy of this war. The white population of the Boer Republics is half a million, the population of the country which attacked them 50,000,000. If there was a country opposed to us as superior to us in numbers as we are superior to the Boers, it would have to have a population seven times as large as that of the entire world. These people have resisted an army in proportion to theirs of twenty to one for twelve months. If we had been able to do a like thing we should be entitled to look upon ourselves as heroes, and so they will be reckoned in history. I do not care what the consequences may be to me for the course I have taken in this matter. I have conscientiously discharged what I believe to be my duty, and I believe if everybody else in this House had done the same there would have been no war.

*LORD ALWYNE COMPTON (Bedfordshire, Biggleswade): Although I also had the honour of being returned unopposed, I do not feel equal to the task of following the hon. Member who has just sat down in those flights of rhetoric in which he has indulged. I approach the consideration of this question from the point of view of one who has spent ten months in the country and travelled over a great portion of it, and therefore I should like to ask the indulgence of the House while I say a word upon the subject of South Africa.

I have listened with great attention to the criticisms that have been made in the course of this debate, but what seems to stand out very strongly is the criticism as to the prolongation of the war, and the policy which has guided our Government. In the question of the whole operations of the war the Government has been taken severely to task because at some particular moment when I was in South Africa there seemed to be an idea that the war was likely to come to a termination. Personally, I may say that does not seem to me to be very unreasonable. May I ask the House to look back for a moment to what the circumstances were when the Army under Sir Redvers Buller drove back the Boers and took possession of the railway from Pretoria to Komati Port. Mr. Kruger had gone out of the country with £; 2,000,000, we had beaten the army over and over again, we had taken prisoner their best general and some 17,000 men, we had taken possession of their chief cities, and occupied their railways, and cut off their supplies. Was it unreasonable to suppose that on the Boers, a brave and intelligent foe, the dictates of common sense and humanity would prevail, and

that they would realise the position, that they would see that they were beaten, and would sue for peace? But in considering this matter, it seems to me that what is wanted is a knowledge of the Boer character.

What is the Boer character? Take a community of Dutch such as those who settled at the Cape in 1652, add to them a sprinkling of broken and desperate men whom the Dutch East India Company enlisted in their service, and mix with them a strain of the inflexible French Huguenot, such as settled there later, and the product must be a hardy, rugged, virile, and unconquerable race. Give the Boers a country which is peculiarly adapted to the tactics of marksmen and riders, and

you have the most formidable and remarkable foes which any people could encounter. You have in the modern Boer the most formidable enemy that has ever crossed the path of Great Britain. We have altogether misunderstood the character of the Boer for three-quarters of a century, just as they have misunderstood us, and it is not likely that we should understand them now. So far as I am concerned, I do not blame the Government for forming a wrong judgment with regard to the early termination of the war, but at the same time, while I exonerate the Government, I am not prepared to exonerate a great department of the State; the War Office; for relaxing the efforts which they should have continued unceasingly up to the present time. It is, of course, delicate ground to touch upon. I do not know what the relations are between the Defence Committee of the Cabinet and the Secretary of State for War, but at least I am quite sure of this, whatever miscalculations they may have made with respect to the war, and the time when it will be terminated, they never told him to relax his efforts in keeping up the supply of equipment, stores, and food, and, above all, of trained mounted men for South Africa. If that was not said to him then, how was it that on my return from South Africa, the other day, I saw it announced in the newspapers that there was a fresh call to arms, which was practically going to the country for untrained men and offering them 5s. per day? According to my conviction, these preparations ought to have been made earlier, and the army in South Africa should have been reinforced by men who had been in training. There will be another opportunity for discussing these matters, but I should like to make a point of this particularly, because I had an opportunity, which I was glad to have, of equipping and training a body of men myself. I make a point of this because, as I have said, I found on my arrival here that a miscalculation had been made, apparently, inasmuch as no efforts whatever had been made for keeping up the supplies. The next point I wish to make is as to the criticism that has been passed on the policy which has guided His Majesty's Government in our efforts at subjugation. Again I say that to a certain extent there was a miscalculation of the Boer character.

For myself I would say that I have had the honour of the friendship of Lord Roberts for about twenty years. I do not suppose that the whole world contains such a humane man as Lord Roberts. While he is a man of wide sympathies, no one is more capable of exercising an iron will should the necessity arise. The Boers never gave Lord Roberts a chance. I have heard in South Africa and also in this

country a great deal about the use that was sometimes made of the white flag, and I think it is quite possible that some of these incidents may have been exaggerated, but I do know that time after time when the Boers thought they were in a tight place the white flag was raised, and when the English soldier, with the simplicity and confidence characteristic of his nature, appeared, the inevitable volley ensued. That occurred over and over again. With regard to the policy of farm-burning, I have from the first regretted it more than I can tell, but such a measure was in my opinion necessary. A long line of communication, which is obviously the life blood of an army, had to be maintained, and I can state from my own personal observation, and also upon the authority of letters which I have received from my own friends, that in every instance in which farm-burning took place it was only under exceptional circumstances, and only after the officer in command had thoroughly assured himself that a case of treachery had occurred. We heard last night some of the fiction which has been current in regard to the action of our troops in South Africa. There is another side to the picture which perhaps the hon. Member for the Eifion Division of Carnarvon has not seen. There was the case of the white flag appearing over a farm and an English soldier going to the farm to get a drink of water and being received with a volley.

MR. BRYN ROBERTS: Did the hon. Member see such a picture himself, or is he repeating rumours?

*LORD ALWYNE COMPTON: There is another point I should like to refer to, very shortly, and that is the recklessness of the language which has been employed in this country during the whole course of the war. It is language which ought not to have been used. I will give credit to hon. Members who sit opposite for honestly believing that what they say here does not matter, but that is an utter fallacy. The Leader of the Opposition at the commencement of the session said in the speech he made that it was quite possible the Boers did not know of the House of Commons itself, and possibly had never heard of the Colonial Secretary. Let me relate my own experience. When I was in Johannesburg, Sir Alfred Milner made me chairman of a committee to inquire into looting which was alleged to have taken place. I came in contact with burghers who had been fighting against us; lawyers and others who had been in the Transvaal Government. I conversed with them on various topics. They told me that everything that had been said for the last twenty years in this country had been faithfully represented in South Africa. They said;

"The Boers can perfectly well understand that under your form of government there is an Opposition whose duty it is to criticise. We know that one party takes a different view from the other. We have seen that during the last twenty-five or thirty years. We have seen vacillation in this country. We have seen the party in power acquire territory, and we have seen another party hurriedly abandon the same territory without the slightest consideration for the loyal people whose interests were affected. All that we can understand. We have seen it, and we know what it is, but what we do not understand is that in time of war there can be any dissentient voice in the whole of your country."

They stated with respect to themselves that at least when they were at war all

other considerations were put on one side and they faced the foe as one man. There are two aspects of this question which have presented themselves to my mind. One is the problem as to the settlement of South Africa, and the second is the expansion of our military forces for the defence of the Empire. In regard to the first of these questions I do not think it is desirable for me to say anything on this occasion except that, as the result of my observation and judgment, the very best effect with the view to the fusion of the two races will come from the colonisation of the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal. From that point of view I am bound to say that in my judgment there are large tracts of country which hold out the most promising prospect for the agriculturist. I shall state what in my opinion would be the best course to pursue. I believe that as soon as subjugation has taken place, or if possible before, if the Government were wise they would adopt some definite form of state colonisation. Farms should be acquired by purchase, and I would suggest that our colonists should be allowed to settle on them. I would suggest also that the farms should be stocked and our colonists placed on them. In the course of this debate I have heard some doubt cast upon the question as to whether any of our people would be inclined to remain there as colonists. My own experience in South Africa has convinced me that many of the men now on service in the country would remain there in fairly large numbers. When I came away my own force was broken up, and of the eighty men left in the country sixty announced their intention to remain in the Colony.

As to the problem of the expansion of our military forces in order to provide for the defence of the Empire, I shall have an opportunity of discussing it on the Army Estimates, but I should like just briefly to say that if anything is proved as the result of this war it is that Army critics like the hon. Member for West Belfast, who is now a member of the Government, the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Forest of Dean, and others, including myself, have been absolutely right in our criticisms as to the organisation of the War Office, and that the defenders of the old and bad system were wrong. We have said in the past over and over again that no plan of operations for the defence of the Empire had really been carefully thought out and decided upon, and we also said that when the military organisation of this country was put to the test of war it would be found inadequate. The Government will say, "Look at what has been done; 250,000 men have been taken over 6,000 miles of sea, and stores, equipment and supplies have been kept up all the time." I am the first to give credit where credit is due, and so far as I am concerned no words I can utter can convey my appreciation of what has taken place in South Africa; the valour, endurance, and intrepidity of our troops, Regulars and Volunteers, and particularly the Yeomanry, but having said that I ask: Is that enough? Is it right that we should depend on all that in the future? Great armies are not built up in a day. It is only done by laborious years of steady scientific work. If the lessons of this war are taken, the problem of Army reform will be the more easily solved.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton): I wish to take the House back to the question of China. Although great anxiety is felt in connection with the South African War, I would

remind the House that we may sometimes lose the true sense of political perspective. We must recollect that the problems in China are much more difficult and complicated, and fraught with issues of much more importance than those in South Africa. We are face to face in South Africa with only a small population, and we have a problem to solve which we are certain to solve; but in connection with the question of China we are in touch with the oldest and largest civilisation in the world, and we are acting in union with others whose objects we cannot always fully understand. We are extremely nervous in Lancashire as to what will come of the conduct of the Government in this matter. We are extremely anxious that they should take a wise, firm, and right line. One doubt we have in our minds, if I am not speaking disrespectfully of the Government, is this: the general feeling is that we are drifting, and waiting on events without a clear policy. Another fear that we have is that the Government may have allowed itself to be dragged into a line of action distinctly unwise as regards our own interests. I refer to the position in this matter of the German Emperor. I think the Emperor remembers the motto of his famous Chancellor, Bismarck. We ought to consider that the interests in China of others are not necessarily the interests of this country. I would ask the Government to consider in regard to this question what they mean to do in China. You have a great carcass there and you have the European eagles gathered together. Do the Government mean to keep up the present Government, or do they mean to substitute another? So far as I can judge their policy is to maintain the present Government. If that be their policy, I ask them to consider the danger of doing anything to weaken that Government. We must be guided by something more than that. This country will make a great mistake and will greatly jeopardise her interests in China if they allow themselves to be dragged by any desire, even of giving just government, into any step that will weaken the government of China.

The noble Lord who spoke on the question the other night said that we were the wronged. Is that quite true? Let us look at the thing from the point of view of the Chinaman as well as from our own point of view. We have taken piece after piece of his territory. Another is encamped in his back yard and another in the garden. He has heard these men talking together as to how they shall arrange for the disposal of the rest of his property. Is it not a reasonable thing that people with national spirit should feel indignant and angry at this process? It is natural that they should resent this treatment. We have divided up the Empire into spheres of influence, and have not hesitated to talk of it in the most open way. Allowance must therefore be made for the natural irritation of the Chinese, and we must not let our indignation at anything they have done carry us beyond the lines of reasonable policy and due consideration for our own material interest.

The other question to which I wished to refer was in regard to the policy to be adopted for bringing the Boer War to an end. Everybody in the House practically agrees with the Minister for War that the question now before us is not one of recrimination about the war, or of explanations of the philosophy of the war, or of discussion as to whether it was right or wrong to begin the war; but it is

how, in the name of Heaven, can we bring it to an end at the earliest possible moment. During the last session I was fortunate enough to obtain a promise from the Colonial Secretary that in any proclamation stating the terms of peace it should also be clearly stated that as soon as possible there would be granted to these territories the same system of self-government, or one similar to that which prevails in the other South African colonies. I am extremely sorry to hear that such a proclamation has not been issued, and the absence of such a proclamation may have done much to continue the war. It may seem a bold step, but I would ask the Government to consider whether, when such a proclamation is issued, in addition to stating that a condition of self-government will be given to the colonies, a definite time could not be named when that condition of self-government will be given, unless proper reason can be shown to the contrary. The First Lord of the Treasury has discussed this matter as if there were only two courses. He twitted the Leader of the Opposition with being in favour of granting self-government immediately the war was over. That, of course, was a mistake. But the right hon. Gentleman seemed to think that the only other course was a vague promise of self-government at some time or other. If the Government adopt my suggestion it will put upon them the onus of giving a reason for not giving self-government. We are very suspicious of getting a system of self-government crystallised in these colonies. It has been stated again and again that the military system of government is a bad system, and that there must be some system of civil government intervening between the cessation of military rule and the beginning of self-government. But if you allow a form of civil government to settle itself in a territory of this kind it will be extremely difficult to disturb or displace, and I would rather have an inefficient military government for a time than a more efficient civil government perpetuated for a longer period. Another ground upon which I press the wisdom of this step is the remark made by the Prime Minister on this question when he said that "it may be years, it may be generations" before self-government is granted. To dangle before nations a promise of self-government as an inducement to submit, and to add that it may be generations before that promise is fulfilled, is simply to play the fool with anything like business matter. Therefore, I am quite certain it would be a wise thing for the Government to take upon themselves the onus of having to give a reason at the end of a stated period for not giving self-government. There are two reasons why I press this course. In the first place, it is said that it is no use granting self-government to the people until they are fit for it. But people do not become fit for things except by using them. History teaches again and again that the gift of self-government to one community after another has been successful, though the promise was not great, because once you put responsibilities upon people you bring out the virtues which are necessary for the proper discharge of those responsibilities. I am greatly afraid that in years to come, when others are in our places, this gift may be delayed by the plea that the people are not fit for it; and therefore I ask that we should commit ourselves to some definite promise. My second reason is, that those of us who read Continental papers know quite well that our attitude in this matter is

not believed in the world to be honest. I do not believe that we should live for the good of the people of the Continent, or that we should consider the good opinion of anybody, so long as we are doing what is right; but at the same time I do believe that when we find a consensus of judgment against us it should make us consider whether we have done everything we ought, and whether we are really as honest as we claim to be. I am one of the last to desire to run down my countrymen, but I am inclined to think there is a great deal of Pharisaism and hypocrisy about us. Looking back over history I find that whenever there has been a squabble in the world Great Britain, when she has entered into it, has done so with professions of the highest principle, and has emerged from it carrying away the best portion of the swag. This matter involves taking upon ourselves some material burdens, and greatly increasing the difficulties of our political life, and it would be wise for us to make it clear, not merely to the French and German, but also to the American world

;for they, too, do not believe in us; that we are honest when we say, "We want no gold; we want no territory," and bind ourselves to grant to these people at a certain date, unless good reasons can be given to the contrary, those principles of self-government which we have extended to our other South African colonies. I believe that we, as Englishmen, are honest in our desire to give this self-government, and I urge that the strongest pledges should be given that we will carry that desire into execution.

Finally, I would say that in bringing about a peace we have to consider not merely the time when the sword will be sheathed and the guns cease to be fired ;that will be only the beginning of the task;but we have to look forward to the time when there will be a strong and united fellowship of good feeling between the citizens of these lands. How are you going to bring it about? One element of power in the hands of the Government is the element of hope. I beg of them to consider what they may do by giving hope to these people;not by telling them merely that we will give them self-government in some vague, far-off, uncertain time, but by saying that at a certain time, unless we can give good reasons to the contrary, we will give it. You will then put into the hearts of these people the hope that, within their own lives and the lives of their children, they may become free citizens of a great Empire, and united to forward its interests.

Attention called to the fact that forty Members were not present. House counted, and forty Members being found present;

*MR. THOMAS O'DONNELL (Kerry, W.);

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order ! The hon. Member is proposing to address the House in a language with which I am not familiar, but which I presume is Irish, and he will not be in order in doing so. It is an unknown practice in this House, and I must ask the hon.

Member to address the House in English.

*Mr. THOMAS O'DONNELL

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member is disregarding my ruling, and I cannot allow him to address the House in any other language but English.†

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford City): Upon a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask if there is any rule, written or unwritten, to prevent an hon. Member

speaking in the language which is most familiar to him. Of course, one cannot argue this question from the experience of other legislative assemblies, but I may be allowed to point out that in my own experience I have heard in one of the legislatures of the Empire; that of New Zealand; Maori members speaking in their own language, although the language used by the general body of the members was the English tongue. I would respectfully ask you whether there is any precedent recorded in the journals, or other authorities of the House, which makes it incompetent for an hon. Member elected by a constituency to address the House in the language most familiar to him, and which is the language used by the majority of his constituents.

*MR. SPEAKER: There is no precedent one way or the other so far as I know; but during the 600 years Parliament has been in existence, there is no record of any hon. Member having attempted to address the House in any other language but English.

MR. LEAMY (Kildare, N.): Upon a point of order, I should like to ask if it is not a fact that when the Irish Chieftains came over to England representing the Irish Parliament; which was being

† Mr. O'Donnell gives the following translation of the two sentences spoken by him in Irish: "Mr. Speaker, as an Irishman from an Irish-speaking constituency, a member of a nation which still possesses a language of its own, and is still striving bravely for freedom." At this point the Speaker interposed, after which the hon. Member resumed: "Is it not true that Irish is my native language, the language of my ancestors, the language of my country?" absorbed by this Parliament at the time of the Union; they were allowed to speak in the Irish language, although the English representatives spoke the English tongue. If that is so, why should an Irishman not be allowed now to talk in his own language.

*MR. SPEAKER: I must remind the hon. Member that Irish Members have now sat continuously in this House for 100 years, and they have never before thought it to be a grievance to be prevented from speaking any other language but English. I have no doubt that the hon. Member for West Kerry, with the usual eloquence of his countrymen, will be able to address the House in English if he pleases, quite as well as in Irish. A claim of this kind, if it is to prevail, must first be established by a Standing Order of the House.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Is it not within your own knowledge that so recently as the year 1896 the hon. Member for the Rhondda Valley actually addressed this House in Welsh?

*MR. SPEAKER: I remember the incident to which the hon. Member refers. The hon. Member for Rhondda used a Welsh word or quotation in the course of his speech, but he did not make a Welsh speech to the House. But I must adhere to my ruling. The rule of the House is as I have stated, and I hope the hon. Member will conform to it.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: If I may be allowed to offer advice to my hon. friend, I should advise him to bow to your ruling, but refuse to address the House in English upon this occasion, I reserving his right to address the House in Irish.

MR. DALY (Monaghan, S.): If the Government had only taken the advice which I

gave them upon a former occasion with regard to the situation in South Africa a great deal of money would have been saved. The Government has been disgraced owing to the fact that for the last fifteen or eighteen months some 250,000 men have been trying to conquer 25,000 farmers. This war is a disgraceful war, provoked for the purpose of benefiting land-grabbers and stock-jobbers. It is a stock-jobber war, and actually certain Members of the Government and their families will benefit by this war in the supply of stores and ammunition. I believe that the opinion of every Member on the other side of the House is the same as that of the noble Lord who spoke a few minutes ago, and who let the cat out of the bag when he said that many people had gone out there for the purpose of settling down, and of acquiring large tracts of rich and fertile land. The acquirement of land in this way is simply grabbing the property of others, and as long as I am a Member of this House I shall protest against any such system of grabbing the property of others. The speech of the right hon. Member for South Aberdeen reminded me very forcibly of what Ireland has suffered in the past when the land was grabbed from the people. Now the Boers will be driven into the worst parts of the country, and you will place speculators on the rich lands formerly owned by the Dutch farmers. I should be very glad to see this unjust and wicked war terminated, but I do not see that there is much chance of this when we read that De Wet is invading Cape Colony. So far from these 250,000 men having succeeded in beating the Boers and keeping them in their own country, the Boers are actually invading the English colony, and it is a disgrace to us that such an extraordinary army of English soldiers, about whose valour and perseverance we have heard so much, has not been able to prevent the invasion of our colonies. With regard to this war, and the mistakes which have been made, some people blame the War Office, others the Colonial Office, and some say that the provision for nursing the sick and wounded was at fault. It does not matter to me who is at fault, for I believe this war to be unjust and unholy, and I shall have the greatest pleasure in voting against the adoption of the King's Speech, and in every way I can I shall oppose the voting of money for the prosecution of this war in the future.

There is another matter which I regret has not been mentioned in the King's Speech, and that is in regard to the action of the Local Government Board in Ireland. If there is anything which affects the district councils and the board of guardians at the present time in Ireland in discharging their public duties it is the extraordinary and arrogant manner in which they are interfered with by the Local Government Board. During the time when ex-officio members predominated on boards of guardians there was very little chance of the Local Government Board poking its nose into the affairs of local bodies, but the moment popularly-elected bodies came into being the Local Government Board rendered it almost impossible for them to prosecute their business in any sort of a decent manner. Since the election of district and county councils in Ireland they have increased the salaries of the assistant county surveyors in some cases by 75 per cent., and when I put a question to the late Chief Secretary for Ireland as to why this was done, his reply was that they were very much underpaid in the time of the grand juries. So long as the grand juries were in power the Local

Government Board never thought it worth their while to interfere with the salaries of these officials. The moment these popularly-elected bodies get the management of local affairs, then the Local Government Board step in and say, "These men have been underpaid in the past, and we will make you pay 75 per cent. of an increase in their salaries." The action of the Local Government Board has made it almost impossible for these public bodies to transact their business and give satisfaction to those who have elected them on these local councils. If the Local Government Board had contributed anything to the rates in these localities in Ireland, then they would be justly entitled to interfere and say what salaries ought to be paid. But it is not fair for them to step in and increase salaries towards which they are not going to contribute anything. The Local Government Board seems to have one object in view, and that is to try and increase the rates in Ireland and endeavour to bring discredit upon popularly-elected bodies. I will give one instance which occurred in my own district. There is a poor dispensary district, where for the last four years we have had a doctor at a salary of £;100 a year, and the guardians found that during the time that the doctor was away on his holidays they had to pay £;3 3s. for a substitute. The board of guardians therefore decided to raise the doctor's salary by £;20 a year. The Local Government Board said, "No; we cannot sanction this." But last year there was a secretary elected for the county council, and it was made a condition of his election that his salary was to be so much, and that he should do the whole work with three assistants. But he was not six months in office when he said he wanted another assistant. A representative of the Local Government Board came down and said, he must have assistance, and the result was that, although several members of the county council protested against it, an additional assistant was given and an addition to the secretary's salary made at a total cost of £;160. The reason of the refusal of the increase in the one case was that half the money would come from the Treasury, while in the other case, where the increase had to be given, it came out of the rates. I say, therefore, that I regret that no mention has been made in the King's Speech that there is to be no improvement in the management of the Local Government Board.

I am glad to see the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary for Ireland in his place. I have read some of his speeches in Ireland, and I think he will make an effort to be conciliatory, both in regard to the district and the county councils. If he does so, he will be remembered for a long time in that country. In many places these councils are doing their best to make local government in Ireland a success, but owing to the insensate obstacles thrown in their way by the Local Government Board, it is absolutely impossible for these local bodies to do their duty with satisfaction to themselves and the country. I hope that the right hon. Gentleman will see that the Local Government Board will give more satisfaction to the popularly elected bodies who are doing their work without fee or reward, while a few well-paid officers domineer over and scout the ideas and views of the popularly elected councils. The right hon. Gentleman must be aware that owing to the action of the Local Government Board there are any number of appeals pending in the Superior Courts, and I ask the

right hon. Gentleman to meet the county councils and district councils in Ireland sympathetically; and I will pledge my word that they will ask very little but what will be for the benefit of the ratepayers, and with the sole idea of carrying out the ideas of the electorate which they wish to carry out. If he does this he will do a great deal to smooth the way of these bodies, which has hitherto been somewhat rugged.

DR. FARQTHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I wish to express my appreciation of the tone of the speech of the right hon. the Secretary for War. I am very glad that he has stamped his approval on the devoted and admirable work done in South Africa by the Royal Army Medical Corps. In the face of difficulties, complications, and dangers complete success in the performance of these duties was almost impossible. The prime difficulty was that the Department was far too undermanned. That is not only my own opinion, but that of the Hospitals Commission. In their report the Commission stated that the deficiency in the staff of the Royal Army Medical Corps and of the staff of officers associated with them had been urged on the authorities before the war without avail. I am very glad to hear from the Minister of War that he has it in contemplation to initiate inquiry into the whole working of the organisation of the Royal Army Medical Department. We have heard about the purely military titles conferred upon the officers of the Department in answer to their desire that such arrangements should be made. It was perfectly well known that unless that concession had been made the supply of candidates for the service would have dried up from the medical schools. I have not been able to satisfy myself whether the system is a success or not, but the Secretary for War seems to think that it is a success. As one who took part in the agitation which led up to the conferring the titles, I can say that the unanimous opinion of the Army Medical Department was that some such recognition of military rank was necessary in order to enable the surgeons to carry on their work to a successful issue in the time of war. Whereas the medical practitioner has had admirable opportunities for the exercise of his profession and of gaining fresh experience as he goes on, the army doctor sees very little, the range of experience is very small and meagre, and the opportunities of working at his profession scientifically are few. What we have urged over and over again, outside the House and inside the House, is, that the medical officers of the Army should get periods of leave, when they might learn the advances in the science of their profession at the post graduate courses in the great centres of medical study throughout the country. The leave might extend to three months every two years, and, in that way, the army surgeon might become once more as efficient as when he started practice in his profession. Of course, all these things will be worked out when the new Commission is instituted. I am very glad to hear from the right hon. the Secretary for War that that Commission is to be founded on a large and generous spirit, and that he has taken into his counsels the leaders of the profession, from whom, I have no doubt, he will learn what is best both for the student and the army doctor. I have no doubt that the result will be that the Royal Army Medical Corps will once more become a popular branch of the service.

*MR. MURPHY (Kerry, E.): As a humble Member of the House, sent here by the common people to try and seek justice for them, I feel considerable disappointment at the treatment given to the hon. Member for West Kerry. It would be a satisfaction and a pride if we were permitted to speak in the language which is dearest to our hearts, the language in which we were taught to lisp at our mother's knee, and in which we can best express our thoughts. But while we are deprived of the opportunity of using that language, and compelled to resort to a foreign tongue, I have come to the conclusion that hon. Members care as little for our wants as for our language. The Irish language, however, has survived; a new effort has been made to cultivate it, and perhaps a time will come when hon. Members opposite, as well as Irishmen, will take an interest in its study and use. I do not appear in the House in my present attire for the purpose of outraging the traditions of the House. I come here as I live and move amongst my own people, in order to show exactly what I am; one of the humble, ordinary folk who have to work for their living; and to make my appeal to you here for justice. I must confess, from my first impressions of this Assembly, I am not too hopeful of any good result from my presence here. I must say that when I came amongst the hon. Members who occupy seats on the one side or the other of this House, I expected to find men whose first desire and intention would be to try and learn the various points in connection with the different questions that would come up for discussion. But, after two or three days experience in the House, I find that too many hon. Members seem to be more anxious to learn the ins and outs of the smoking-room and the dining-room.

I would not have intervened in this debate were it not for the purpose of joining in the appeal in behalf of the people I represent, and asking you to confer on them at least some of the rights to which they are entitled. When I came to the House I expected to hear that in His Majesty's Speech from the Throne some concession was to be made to the feelings of Catholic Irishmen in regard to our faith, which is as dear to us as our very lives. But an oath which contains one of the most direct insults to that faith has still to be taken by the King. And yet we are asked to be loyal, and to shout "God save the King." That, in itself, is one of the strongest and most painful arguments that could be used by an Irishman in regard to the inefficacy and hopelessness of Parliament. However, I do not believe that all hon. Members, even on the Tory benches, possess coldness of heart or want of interest in Irish affairs. I believe that some amongst them have good hearts and good intentions, and that if we could only get at their hearts and make them see the condition of things as they really exist in Ireland, and show them that such conditions ought not to continue, I believe they would do justice to Ireland. But if they will not do justice to Ireland, the Irish Members will, I hope, make it impossible for them to do justice to England also. That is the purpose for which we have been sent here, and we shall knock at the door of Parliament until justice has been done to our people; not asking as gentlemen who have had a university education, but with the honest voice of men who have sprung from the people, who feel with the people, and who take a pride and glory in belonging to the working masses of the

land. The other evening the right hon. Gentleman the Member for the Sleaford Division was speaking about Manchester beer. The only thing I remember about Manchester is that twenty-three years ago three honest Irishmen were offered there as a sacrifice to British tyranny, and for their loyalty to Ireland. We are not much interested in Manchester beer, or in the affairs of China, or even in the Transvaal, although we sympathise to a great extent with the brave Boers, and protest against the injustice perpetrated against them by England. But I would say to the right hon. Gentleman who gave us such an extraordinary amount of statistics with reference to the consumption of beer in Manchester, that if he wants to get a good glass of beer he should go where you go for your finest soldiers; to Ireland, and he will have a good chance of getting it. Not that I would like to see any Member of this House, or the people generally, indulging to any extent in the beer of any country. I may say it would be a pleasure and satisfaction to me if all the beer were poisoned. I have heard of Army chaplains, and sometimes of Navy chaplains, but in future we apparently shall have a "Beery Chaplain" in this House. I wish sincerely that hon. Members would come here for the purpose of trying to understand the statistics relating to the population and condition of Ireland with as much exactness as those relating to Manchester poisoned beer. While I listened to the right hon. Member for Sleaford and watched him holding out a cup of that poisoned beer for the investigation of right hon. Gentlemen on the Ministerial bench, I could not help thinking that there was, perhaps, in the mind of the right hon. Member just the suggestion of a wish that someone upon that bench would drink it, so that a vacancy might be left for him to occupy.

I noticed, however, that the noble Lord the Financial Secretary to the War Office displayed a courtesy and a kindness towards these benches that I did not quite expect, and he paid a high tribute to the gallantry and nobility of character of the Boers. I could not help feeling, therefore, that there was at least one man on the Treasury Bench whom I should not like to see taking a cup of that poisoned beer. His testimony, of course, was to a certain extent depreciated by the conclusions he drew. He told us that the Boers went into the war with the distinct object of killing. I suppose everyone who goes into war does so with such an object, unless it be that some Englishmen go into it for the purpose of running away at the first opportunity. However, we sympathise with the Boers in the struggle they are making, as we believe, for the simple and sole purpose of gaining their liberty. Although they are doing it in a different way, they are, like ourselves, fighting for their liberty. We believe that they are fighting against the capitalists who have been instrumental in bringing about this war, and they have done so with energy and manhood against frightful odds. They have not been beaten yet, although in the end their liberty may be dragged from them; but while there is an Irishman left we will always speak in their favour and against the tyranny and injustice perpetrated against them. In my own poor county of Kerry we have a labouring population which has been continually depleted by emigration. When I listened to His Majesty's Speech read from the chair, I hoped to hear some indication that at the beginning of a new reign, of a new era, of a new century something was to be done for the Irish

race, so that our men and women would be permitted to live in their own land without having to go abroad, surrounded by dangers and difficulties which few of them are aware of. When crossing from Dublin to Holyhead, one of the persons who accompanied me was a young Irish girl who was leaving her country to seek her fortune in the large city of Manchester. I hope when she gets there that she will not be induced to touch any of the poisoned beer. If any hon. Member had been with me on

board that boat and had seen that young girl; and remember, she was only one of thousands who are leaving our native land year after year; he would certainly have felt one touch of nature in his heart, and have evinced a strong desire to give us in Ireland an opportunity of managing our own affairs, so that our boys and girls should not be compelled to leave their native home in order to get a living elsewhere.

I have spoken much longer than I intended, and I have merely striven to give expression to a few of the sentiments in my heart. I want you to understand that though you have thrust the Irish people to their knees, they are living still; and that until the right to manage their own affairs which they ask for is conceded, and until they are placed in a position to legislate for themselves, so that the Irish people of every description are able to live in their own land, they will continue coming and knocking at the doors of the British Parliament demanding that right for Ireland.

LICENSING LAWS.

*MR. WHITTAKER (Yorkshire, W.R., Spen Valley): I rise to move an Amendment to the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne, in order to express regret that there appears to be no intention on the part of the Government to deal adequately with the question of reform of the licensing laws. There is no need for me to dilate on the evils of intemperance. It is recognised that drinking is our country's curse; our enemies say it is our national characteristic, and all right-minded people deplore it as a great dishonour. It is admitted to be a potent source of crime and poverty, and it is a great barrier across the pathway of social and moral progress. It confronts and baffles and defeats all philanthropists and reformers. Statesmen, judges, magistrates, doctors, ministers of religion, guardians of the poor, governors of gaols and workhouses, and that innumerable band of men and women who render priceless service to their fellows by constant, self-sacrificing, and largely unseen work among the poor, all unite in describing intemperance as the giant evil of our day and generation. Not only do the drinking habits of the people destroy their health, corrupt their morals, and waste their resources, but the liquor traffic itself; that swollen tyranny; has become a kind of British Tammany, a widespread source of political corruption, a distinct danger to the State, and a menace to the purity of our local and national public life. That is the social evil and the political danger with which it is the object of this Amendment to ask the Government to deal.

The Amendment expresses regret that there is no indication in the King's Speech of any intention to at all adequately attempt to discharge an immediate, urgent and obvious duty. There is an announcement in the King's Speech, but it is by no

means easy to say precisely what that announcement means. The general opinion is that it means extremely little. It is clear that no reform in the licensing system, as a whole, is intended. Lord Salisbury says;

"It may be matter for regret that our licensing system has reached its present condition, but how, without injustice to the individual, without injury to the public weal, and without exaggerating the influence of Parliament, this state of things can adequately be remedied we do not at present see."

That is a pitiable confession of impotence and incompetence. It is quite true that he goes on to suggest that somebody else may see a remedy, for he says;

"In any case the remedy is obvious. Legislation is not the monopoly of the Government, and if the noble Earl will propose Bills on these and other subjects we shall consider them with sympathetic interest and we shall be glad to find a way out of the labyrinth of our troubles."

We have some idea what the sympathetic interest of the Prime Minister is worth. We know his treatment of the Children's Bill last year, and how he treated the Motion of the Bishop of Winchester. One thing is clear from the King's Speech, and that is that it is results and not causes that are to be dealt with. That is not what the nation desires or requires. By all means check and punish drunkenness, but the Government should grapple vigorously with the system which facilitates, promotes, and largely creates the evil. Drunkenness in public-houses is already an offence

against the law. It is a violation of the licence to permit it. Are we to understand from the Prime Minister that it is so prevalent, glaring, and scandalous as to be the most obvious and urgent reform? If so, what is to be said of the authorities that permit it and under whose supervision it has grown up? It seems to me that we ought to deal with this licensing question thoroughly, but the Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Treasury have made it quite clear that the Government does not mean to grapple with this question seriously.

What is the position? In 1896 they appointed a Commission. In 1899 the Commission reported, and the Majority Report; it issued two Reports; after expressing the opinion that drunkenness has materially decreased in the last twenty-five years, went on to say;

"Yet it is undeniable that a gigantic evil remains to be remedied and hardly any sacrifice would be too great which would result in a marked diminution of this national degradation, nor is Parliament likely to remain satisfied with leaving things as they are or to trust wholly to the influence we have described."

That is the portion of the Report which indicates the extent of the evil. It is a gigantic evil and national degradation. I may say, on behalf of myself and my colleagues who signed the Minority Report, that we all agree with that statement in the Majority Report, and I must remind the House that on the Commission sat eight chosen representatives of the liquor trade.

MR. T. W. RUSSELL (Tyrone, S.): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, is there any method by which we could compel the attendance of some member of the Government? The Ministerial bench is empty, and this is a most important debate.

MR. CAINE (Cornwall, Camborne): Should I be in order to move the adjournment of

the House?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order ! The hon. Member cannot move the adjournment whilst another hon. Member is in possession of the House.

*MR. WHITTAKER: I was pointing out to the House that on the Commission were eight chosen representatives of the liquor trade. They signed the Report that there is a gigantic evil, and also that Parliament is not likely to rest satisfied with leaving things as they are. That was the opinion of eight representatives of the liquor trade. Is there an hon. Member in this House who does not endorse those statements? Yet the Government practically refuses to do anything, and makes a suggestion which is obviously so trifling as to be absolutely ludicrous? Therefore, I beg to move this Amendment, which practically declares Parliament will not rest satisfied to leave things as they are. It is twenty-five years ago since the Secretary for the Colonies used these words; "Temperance reform lies at the bottom of all further political, social, and religious progress. Drink is the curse of the country. It rains the fortunes, it injures the health, it destroys the lives of one in twenty; I am afraid I should be right in saying of one in ten; of our population, and anything which can be done to diminish this terrible sacrifice of human life and human happiness is well worthy of all the attention and study which we can give it."

And then he went on to say;

"The agitation will go on without us if not with us. If we are silent the very stones will cry out. If there is in the whole of this drink business any single encouraging feature it is to be found in the growing impatience of the people at the burden they are forced to bear, and their growing indignation and sense of the shame and the disgrace which it imposes on them."

The Home Secretary only the other day said that in his opinion things were growing worse rather than better, and yet the Government is practically silent, and the Prime Minister at one time gibes and flouts and sneers, and at another wrings his hands and pleads impotence and incompetence; whilst the Home Secretary prattles ancient nonsense about better dwellings for the poor. It is enough to make the very stones cry out. Thirteen years ago the Government then in power thought it needed dealing with. Eleven years ago they made another attempt. In 1894 the Colonial Secretary said "temperance was the most urgent social reform." In 1895 he said "there is a grievous scandal existing, to which it is the duty of statesmen to devote attention." In 1896 the Government appointed a Royal Commis-

sion, which was an admission that this question needed dealing with; and only the other day the Home Secretary said;

"It had been said, and he thought without exaggeration, that intemperance was one of the greatest evils which could possibly be inflicted on a country. It was indisputable that it filled our prisons and crowded our workhouses, that it lowered vitality, that it prevented the breadwinner from putting forth the strength that was necessary for the purpose of maintaining his family, and that much of the wretchedness and distress in this country was owing to the extent to which, unhappily, intemperance existed. They were, he thought, justified in saying that all parties in the country, to whatever section of the temperance

party they belonged, or indeed whether they belonged to any section or not, were agreed that the evil was a great one, and that it would be a great blessing to the country if means could be found to mitigate, if not altogether to remove, that great evil."

Then why do not the Government take some action? It is a year and a half since the Commission reported. We cannot be charged with being unduly hasty. The Prime Minister and the First Lord of the Treasury have indicated one reason, which is that the Commission was not unanimous. Of course they were not. They could not be unanimous, and I venture to say it was never intended that they should be. The constitution of the Committee was too absurd to hope for unanimity. But I say if the fact that a commission does not agree is to be taken as an excuse for burking a question, it will always be easy to avoid dangerous and difficult legislation by appointing a commission which never will agree on a particular subject. The excuse is too paltry, and would never be put forward except by a Government which, in proportion to its majority, has less courage and backbone, and is more flabby than any I have ever known.

It is a plea of incompetence. They do not wait for unanimity on other questions; when they give doles to parsons for tithes, doles to aid agricultural rates, and subsidies for sectarian schools. They do not stipulate for unanimity then, nor is there any demand for it when they desire to shovel money into the pockets of their friends. It is only when they are called upon to grapple with a gigantic evil and a national degradation upon which a body of men fatten who claim to have

put the Government into power and to be able to put them out again that they stipulate for unanimity. The First Lord of the Treasury and the Home Secretary have stated that there is no unanimity as to a remedy; but there is unanimity that something should be done. The Commission does disclose where the shoe pinches; it discloses weaknesses, defects, and failures in the law; it shows the evils to be grappled with, and it is the duty of the Government to propound the remedy. That is their duty and responsibility, and they cannot shuffle it on to the shoulders of anyone else. The Government asks for a plan, but it is not our business to supply one. I remember years ago in this House the Colonial Secretary, speaking with true commercial instinct on another question, saying what he would do when he sat on the Treasury Bench and received the fees. It is the duty of the Government to suggest a remedy, and of the House to accept or reject it. Have they not a plan? I seem to remember during the last and the previous election that the supporters of the Government went to the polls with the plea that they were in favour of reasonable and practical temperance reform. Those men must have had some definite idea of what they were talking about. Where is their scheme? If they do not produce one they are charlatans and political humbugs. I venture to say there is a good deal of unanimity upon this matter. Of course, if the Government stipulate that the trade must be unanimous, they probably demand the impossible; but it is a novel doctrine that those who fatten on abuses and wrongs must be consenting parties to reform, or nothing can be done.

The Times pointed out some time ago that it was not to be expected that the

trade would agree to temperance reform, which means the checking of drinking, and consequently less profits, but if there is not unanimity there are many points of general detail upon which the Commission is unanimous, and still more of general principle. The Home Secretary demands unanimity, and when the points of agreement are suggested he doubts if licensing reform will do much good, and branches off to better dwellings, and through it all chews the cud of compensation, and his own fiascos in 1888 and 1890. I am not surprised that he was frightened at the deputation which waited upon him, and made their foolish proposal. They practically asked him to revive the absurd, discredited, and discarded proposals of twelve or thirteen years ago. It was not unreasonable for the right hon. Gentleman to refuse to consider their scheme. With regard to points of agreement, take the question of watch committees. There was absolute unanimity in the Report that representatives of the liquor trade should not be members of watch committees. Let me remind the House what a scandal there was at Manchester. In that case it was found that there a superintendent of police had some property bequeathed to him, a brothel and a beerhouse. He would not allow the police to bring charges against the keeper of that house, and set them to raid other establishments to promote the business of his own: and when eventually a summons was obtained against the keeper he withheld the summons so that the keeper might escape, and when finally the matter came before the magistrate at Manchester, I never read more scathing language than he used in connection with this man's conduct. Moreover, this superintendent of police, while himself a married man, with a grown-up family, had cohabited with a woman who was a beerhouse keeper, and took her to the Isle of Man for a holiday. That was brought to the attention of the watch committee; but did they dismiss him? No. They merely censured him. It was only after a public outcry that he had to go, and then they awarded him a pension, though after another public outcry that pension was refused. The chief constable of the city had to go in consequence of that scandal, and at the next election the watch committee was purified. Yet the Government of the day conferred a C.B. on the chief constable, and this year the chairman of that watch committee was knighted. At the very time the Commission was sitting the mayor of the borough of Wigan was a publican who held premises in a district in which the police had to go in couples at night, and who had admitted that he had sold drink illegally. At Derby, too, there was another terrible exposure; and anybody who read the evidence taken before the Commission would understand why they unanimously recommended that it should be made illegal for anyone connected with the trade to sit on a watch committee. Another unanimous recommendation was that no one who acted as solicitor to brewers should be allowed to act as clerk to any bench of magistrates. Justice must be purified at its source by removing liquor-dealers and brewers from the watch committee. These are anomalies that ought to be remedied. As to Quarter Sessions, there is a belief that the present condition of things is extremely undesirable. The magistrates who review the decisions do not know the localities or the conditions under which the licences are dealt with. There is agreement that the bona fide traveller nuisance needs to be dealt with; there is very

large agreement as to the serving of children, and there is agreement that the licensing authority should have control over all licences. There is also unanimity on the Commission as to providing legal assistance for the police in carrying out their duties with regard to licences. There is also agreement that the hours of sale on Sunday should be very much reduced. There; is not agreement as to the actual hours, the majority;twenty out of twenty-four ;reporting in favour of two hours at noon and two at night. There is agreement as to the necessity of some restriction upon clubs, and there is also agreement as to the necessity for greater power as to snugs, screens, partitions, back doors, and side entrances;those abominations that respectable men ought to be ashamed to resort to. They facilitate people sneaking in unseen to get liquor if they are ashamed to be seen doing it. The baker or the butcher does not want a side entrance or a back door. The publicans want these entrances because they know that the people who go into these places are ashamed to be seen. The people who own these public-houses are not ashamed to facilitate those people in doing what they are ashamed to do. The screens and partitions inside mean that when they get inside they are afraid of being seen by one another. If I had time I could tell you some terrible stories of what has occurred behind the screens. I have ventured to name a number of points on which there is unanimity. There is no question of compensation in connection with these things. If the Government cannot see its way to anything further, these are some points on which they might do something. The Home Secretary referred to reduction in he number of houses. The recommendation of the Commission is unanimous that there ought to be a reduction. The Home Secretary questioned whether, after all, it would be of very great value to reduce the number, He says there has been a great reduction in the number during the last twenty-five years, and yet public-houses are now worth more than before, and that more drink is consumed now. Well, of course the houses are worth more. If you have fewer of them and a larger population it does not necessarily mean that there is more drinking. You may have fewer houses, and a smaller total sale, but each of the fewer houses may sell more liquor. It is the monopoly that sends up the value.

I shall now deal with the point whether, in spite of the reduction in the number of houses, there has been an increase in drinking. I challenge the fact entirely, and I will undertake to prove that there has been a diminution in drinking as the number of licences has diminished, and that until there was a diminution in the number of licences there was a steady increase in the consumption of liquor. The Home Secretary gave the period of twenty-five years, and I will take his own period. I will take the bulk of my figures from the statistical abstract issued by the Department over which the Home Secretary previously presided with such distinguished credit. Between 1874 and 1899 there was a diminution of 15,000 in the number of public-houses and beerhouses. During the same period the consumption decreased 15 per cent. in spirits, 30 per cent. in wines, and 4 per cent. in beer. At the same time, the consumption of tea, went up 41 per cent., sugar 47½ per cent., and tobacco 31 per cent., showing that the decrease in the consumption of liquor was not due to a diminution of the prosperity and the spending power

of the people. I will go back twenty five years prior to 1874. During those twenty-five years there was an increase in the number of public-houses, and the consumption of spirits went up 21 per cent, of wine 130 per cent., and of beer 60 per cent. Everyone knows that facilities do increase drinking. If they do not, why is not anyone who wants a licence allowed to have one? There is not a single bench of magistrates in the country which grants licences to every applicant. Every Committee and Commission which has investigated the subject during the last seventy years has recommended a diminution in the number of licensed houses on the ground that an increase in such houses facilitates drinking. The trade continually enlarge their premises because they know that facilities increase drinking, and they will tell you that clubs do promote drunkenness. The Registrar-General gives statistics every ten years, which show that the mortality amongst publicans and their servants is greater than in any other trade. Why is that? Because the men are under more temptation than anybody else; they are constantly face to face with liquor, and the result is that they drink more than other people. The terrible increase in drinking amongst women during the last twenty-five years has been due to the establishment of grocers' licences and refreshment houses. It is very proper that better dwellings should be provided for the people, but my firm opinion is that temperance is the most important factor in social reform. Is there no drunkenness in the dwellings of the well-to-do? Ask our doctors and the clergy. In the north of England I know something of colliery villages, which have been built near great pits. The conditions of the people in these villages are the same. The houses are all alike and men work at the same trade and earn the same rate of wages. Go through the streets of these villages and you will find some of the houses utterly miserable and neglected, while others are clean and respectable. Make inquiry, and you will find that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the dirty houses are occupied by intemperate people. Does the right hon. Gentleman mean to say that if you take the drunken family out of the dirty home and put them into the house of the sober family it would alter their way of living? I say that the drunken family would soon alter the condition of the clean home. It is since 1876 that a reduction in the number of licences has taken place. Up to 1876 from 1828 there was a steady increase, and from 1876 there has been a considerable decrease. The twenty-five years prior to 1876 was a prosperous time in this country, and pauperism was diminished one half during that period. Our exports rose from £71,000,000 in 1850 to £223,000,000 in 1875. There was a great increase in the education of the country during the same period, and the sanitary conditions under which the people lived were greatly improved. During that time licences increased by 15,000. In spite of better sanitary regulations and Factory Acts, drunkenness and crime increased, and, what is very important, the death rate stood still. Our sanitary legislation made no change on the death rate of the country, it was in 1876 that licences began to go down; drunkenness and crime also went down, and the death rate fell from 4 to 5 per thousand. I suggest that formerly the evils of intemperance more than counterbalanced all the improvements in the other directions.

The Prime Minister deprecated changes the effect of which could not be seen. I venture to say that here are changes the effect of which can be seen in diminished drinking, and in the improved condition of the people. We have never during the past century reversed any restrictive legislation with regard to the liquor traffic. The Licensing Commission does not suggest that we should go back on the restrictive legislation we have passed. All the forecasts as to the failure of Sunday closing have been refuted and disproved. Many of the reforms recommended in the two Reports are already in operation in Scotland, and they are a success there, and the people of Scotland are asking for more. But there is the difficulty of compensation. I venture to submit that this is not an insuperable difficulty. What are the conditions under which compensation could be agreed to? First, it must be so arranged that it will not block the way to further temperance reform. It must also secure some immediate or early substantial reform, and it must not come out of the public pocket. I am not going to argue the question of legal right. That has been settled by the law courts of the country long ago, and is now beyond dispute. With regard to the question of compensation, eight of the members representing the trade on the Commission signed the recommendation that the compensation should come from the trade itself. Both the Majority and the Minority are absolutely unanimous on that point. The fact disposes of the legal claim, because no one who had a legal claim would ever suggest that he should provide the money himself. It has been alleged that the temperance party were foolish to reject the schemes of 1888 and 1890, but the truth is, those schemes were impossible, because they were inadequate, because they endowed public-houses, and because they blocked the way to future reform. As a matter of fact, many more public-houses have been got rid of without those reforms than would have been the case with them. In London those proposals of 1888 and 1890 would have provided money enough to buy up between 150 and 200 public-houses in seven years. But in seven years in London since that time we have got rid of 600 licences. Therefore, when people say the temperance cause lost much by not accepting those schemes, they do not know what they are talking about. The temperance party ought not to accept any measure of compensation that will not give them a much bigger reduction than they are now getting. It should be an essential part of any scheme, too, that it should not block the way to future reform. I am satisfied that a workable and satisfactory scheme of compensation, by means of funds raised from the liquor trade, could be arranged. The great bulk of the temperance people will not oppose a reasonable scheme, if the way to further reform be not blocked, and the whole of the money required comes from the trade. Lord Peel's scheme is only one way of grappling with the problem. If the trade wish to pay more money to each other that can be arranged. To say that extreme men prevented legislation is childish nonsense. No body of extreme men could in this country prevent reasonable, just, and effective legislation. My object in proposing the amendment is not to press on the Government any particular scheme of reform; all I wish is to press upon them most earnestly to do something. I do allege that the responsibility is theirs, and the amendment calls upon them to undertake the responsibility and to discharge the duty. I

know the question is a difficult one, but the greater will be the honour to those who deal with it. And they must not talk as though they were giving something to temperance men as an advantage, as though we, as a class or section of the community, were going to gain something by it; they must not talk as though we were really primarily and specially responsible for the evil. We are interested in dealing with this matter only as citizens anxious to get rid of a great evil in our midst. If there be any class of men upon whom the burden of responsibility with regard to the liquor traffic does not rest it is those of us who touch not the stuff. Our hands are clean, at any rate; we do not necessitate the business from which this evil flows: and to talk to us as if we were specially responsible for dealing with it is little less than an impertinence. Those are responsible who necessitate, countenance, and justify the traffic. The responsibility is theirs, and if they will but shoulder that responsibility and attempt to discharge the duty which lies upon them, temperance men will help them in so doing.

The Government should grapple with this question. I am not the man to advise the liquor trade, but I venture to suggest that the trade itself will do well to get the question settled. We who sit on this side of the House will be in power some day, and there are more ways of killing a cat than by hanging it. We can destroy the value of the monopoly in public-houses if the trade will not consent to some reasonable method of doing it. High licence fees and a free licence to everybody who will pay the fee will knock the bottom out of the public-house monopoly in twenty-four hours. It can be done, and the trade need not look to another place to protect them, because it could be done in a Money Bill. Temperance men want something doing; we are anxious to have this gigantic evil dealt with. The country wants something doing, and I venture to think that the trade itself is somewhat weary of the uncertainty and unrest which the continual agitation is causing it. The opportunity, therefore, is favourable; everybody is in a mood for a reasonable settlement. Let the Government but pluck up their courage to deal with this question, and they will secure a great triumph. I beg to move the Amendment standing in my name.

*MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): After the able speech of my hon. friend it will not be necessary for me in seconding the Amendment to do more than emphasise one or two of the main conclusions to which his speech inevitably led. I feel some diffidence in referring to Lord Peel, but perhaps. I may, without presumption, be allowed to say that I think he has rendered the country a great service through his chairmanship of the Licensing Commission, and that future history will count his name memorable, not only because of his having been a great Speaker of this House, but because he very courageously grappled with a very difficult problem and made an important contribution towards its solution. My hon. friend has already pointed out that the main conclusion to which this Commission came was somewhat remarkable, namely that there, was rampant in this country a gigantic evil in regard to intemperance, and that hardly any sacrifice would be too great which conduced to reduce its power. That was a strange conclusion to come from a Commission so constituted. That body had upon it representatives of every phase and section of opinion on the subject. Another

fact which ought to be alluded to is that, with regard to that inquiry, we had an absolutely open door; there was nothing in the shape of a press censor in connection with it. Every section of public opinion had an equal right and opportunity of laying its views before the inquiry, and yet the result of three years examination of the problem was an emphatic verdict of condemnation of the existing licensing system. The Commission aroused in the country an extraordinary amount of interest, by reason of the fact, I believe, that the matter has now become a national question. The conscience of the country has at last been touched upon this point, and the temperance problem has passed from the region of uncertainty and doubt into the domain of fact. Anyone who has seriously considered the conditions surrounding the problem will at once see that that is an element in the case of the greatest importance. The Amendment points out that there is at the present moment in the country a widespread desire for legislation in the direction of temperance reform. The evil is admitted; no one doubts it for a moment.

I would very briefly lay down three general propositions with regard to the Amendment: first, we are dealing with an issue of national importance: secondly, that the condition of things in regard to it is so grave that it demands the abandonment of political considerations; and thirdly, that there is no time to be lost, but that action ought to be taken in the direction of legislative interference without delay. We are dealing with an issue of national importance. I am not going to weary the House by going over ground which has been already covered, but evidence from every quarter substantiates this proposition.

Judicial and criminal statistics, the records of crime, disease, and insanity, the opinion of the medical profession, the statistics of the Registrar General, the annual colossal and annually increasing drink bill, and, more than all, if you go below the surface of things you will find that this poison of drunkenness is prejudicially affecting what I might call the higher life of the country. As evidence upon this point we have the unanimous judgment of the Royal Commission.

I would draw the attention of the Home Secretary to the very strong words he made use of the other day in replying to a deputation to which reference has already been made. The right hon. Gentleman admits that drunkenness fills our prisons, crowds our workhouses, lowers the vitality of the country, prevents the maintenance of families, and causes much of the distress and misery of the people. In the face

of such facts no Government are justified in declining to propose legislation dealing effectively, at all events, with the most glaring defects in our licensing system.

Then the position, I take it, is so grave that it demands the abandonment of political considerations. The time has come for us to look at this problem from the national standpoint. Is not this the history of every great reform? In regard to all big questions is it not the case that a point comes when the politician must be merged in the citizen? This is the case with regard to questions affecting national defence. I am glad to think that with regard to the Army and the Navy we have at all events in this House reached a point when those matters are dealt with from a national and not from a political standpoint. And

is not this curse of drunkenness the great enemy of our home life that our country has to fear? I want to give one or two of the reasons why I think the Government have not so far been able to show any indications of their determination to deal with this question. One reason I would submit is a want of information on the part of leading political statesmen of the day as to the true and real condition of things, My hon. friend the mover of this Amendment has referred to the action taken by the late Lord Randolph Churchill in years gone by. Many speeches in regard to temperance reform made by that gentleman are memorable to this day, and I think the reason of that great interest was the fact that he took an opportunity of seeing for himself something of the havoc which drink is doing in regard to the life of this metropolis. Another reason put forward for the inaction of the Government is this. In his speech to the deputation the other day the Home Secretary said that he was unable to promise any great things with regard to legislation on temperance lines, because of what he called the opposition and the difficulty of carrying a Bill through Parliament. Is that a valid excuse for a Government with a majority of 134 behind its back? Clearly the opposition to which the right hon. Gentleman referred is not a Parliamentary opposition. My hon. friend has already dealt so clearly with the plea that nothing can be done because of the want of agreement or all points in the Commission that I will not dwell upon that point; I would only emphasise, the fact that it is not true that there is a want of agreement upon many of the main points. We are agreed as to the necessity of a drastic amendment of the laws relating to the administration of the trade, and also as to the necessity of a great reduction in the number of public-houses. Even if we had not been able to come to an agreement upon those points, I do not think that any Government, having regard to the circumstances of the case, are not justified in shirking the responsibility of taking effective action in regard to the matter. But what is the real reason that; we cannot get any real and substantial reform? It is because of the unfortunate alliance between the party opposite and those who represent the drink trade. I do not say that there are not on the other side of the House a large number of hon. Members who take as great an interest in temperance reform as any Member upon this side. I further believe that this alliance is not generally of their own choosing; it has grown up owing to the application of one of the leading political doctrines of their faith to an interest in the country which has assumed gigantic and alarming proportions. But nevertheless the fact remains that, speaking generally, Members on the other side of the House are more or less pledged to resist temperance legislation. Until this alliance is severed we cannot hope, so far as legislation coming from the party opposite is concerned, to have an adequate solution of the question. There was also a general agreement on the Commission with regard to the amendment of the Sunday Closing Act in Wales, and with regard to Local Veto the Chairman's Report recommended that after a certain period of time that principle should be applied to the Principality.

My concluding point is that we have arrived at a condition of things which demands immediate action. I was reading the other day a very interesting article

which appeared in the Lancet. It points out that during the last twenty years, whereas there has been a diminution in the death rate in all other groups, in the group dealing with deaths from drink there has been a substantial increase, the rate of mortality rising from

45 per cent. per million to 77 per cent. per million. The writer of the leading article, who cannot be in any way regarded as attached specially to temperance reform, makes this observation ;

"No temperance lecturer can be more profoundly convinced than we are ourselves of the terrible mischief which is being done to our country at the present day by alcoholic indulgence."

If we are not touched in regard to this matter by questions affecting humanity, perhaps some of us may be affected by other considerations. In looking forward to the future, it is important for us to watch very carefully what is taking place in regard to the trade and the economic position of this country. I believe the time has come when we should throw aside the subtleties of political controversy and have united action upon this question, which is of vital concern to the nation. There is apparently in this country at the present day a serious lack of earnestness in regard to social questions. The air is filled with the word and spirit of Empire. I have more than once candidly admitted that there is no one who takes a greater pride in the glory of the British Empire than I do, but I cannot close my eyes to the unalterable fact that if we are to maintain our prestige and our position abroad as an Empire who must see to it that our house at home is set in order. One of the most essential reforms in my judgment for the strengthening and the uplifting of the home life of the country is an effective measure of temperance reform, and I believe it is in this way alone that in this century the British Empire can be made, not only in name but also in deed, the greatest power for good in the world. I have very great pleasure in seconding the Amendment.

Amendment proposed;

"At the end of the Question, to add the words,;' But we humbly express our regret to Your Majesty that, having regard to the Reports of the recent Royal Commission on the Licensing Laws and the wide-spread desire which exists that some effort should be made to diminish the evil, which they describe as gigantic and a national degradation, there is no indication in Your Majesty's Gracious Speech of any intention to deal at all adequately with this subject.'";(Mr. Whittaker.)

Question proposed, "That those words be there added."

*COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, Ince) protested against the references made, by the hon. Member for the Spen Valley Division to Wigan. He had no hesitation in saying that neither the chairman of the watch committee nor the Mayor of Wigan would encourage drunkenness any more than the hon. Member opposite.

*SIR WILLIAM HOULDSWORTH (Manchester, N.W.): Those of us who sit on this side of the House, and yet have much sympathy with the views expressed by the mover and seconder of this Amendment, feel that they have two difficulties to contend with in dealing with this question on this occasion. One is that an Amendment to the Address is generally viewed as a vote of want of confidence in the Government,

and, that being the case, if the hon. Member goes to a division, we, shall have some difficulty, I am afraid, in following him. The second difficulty is that we are in ignorance at the present moment as to exactly what it is His Majesty's Government have in their minds in regard to carrying out the statement of the King's Speech in reference to this licensing question. Many of us have examined it very carefully, and have endeavoured to conjecture what it meant, but we have failed to derive very much comfort from it, or, in fact, to imagine what the proposal is. I am one of those; and there are a considerable number on this side of the House; who, while not anxious to press upon the Government drastic and impracticable measures, do earnestly believe that the time has come when progress should be made with regard to temperance reform. I venture to say, notwithstanding some remarks of the seconder of the Amendment, that there is a very large body of Members on this side of the House who will support the Government in bringing forward, and vote in this House for moderate and reasonable measures of reform, which, after all, although moderate and reasonable, may be very beneficial indeed and pave the way for further legislation in the future,

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS: I am sorry to interrupt, but that is exactly what I endeavoured to say. I acknowledged the fact that there were a large number of Members on the other side heartily in favour of temperance reform.

*SIR WILLIAM HOULDSWORTH: I am glad if I misunderstood the hon. Member. The Home Secretary the other day seemed to be very much afraid of entering upon legislation connected with the licensing law, and apparently he gave as his reason that he would have to face the difficult question of the reduction of licenses coupled with the thorny subject of compensation. I hope that that was not really the Home Secretary's own feeling. I think he was a little misled, perhaps, by the deputation which appeared before him, because I rather think that that deputation had not so much in their minds the reforms that many of us have in our minds; they wished to impress upon the Home Secretary the very reasonable and beneficial character of the scheme of reduction and compensation which they recommended. I venture to suggest that we should leave aside for the present that large question of reduction and compensation. I am in favour of the reduction of licenses, and I believe it will be essential, but there is a great deal of work to be done before we get to that question. If we put that in the fore-front of anything we attempt it will only block the way and prevent us doing a great deal of good which might pave the way to such a reduction coupled with compensation. It is sometimes said that piecemeal legislation is bad legislation. I do not think it is. I can fancy that in regard to some subjects piecemeal legislation may do harm if it is ragged legislation, but I think we could show the Home Secretary that on this question there are a number of reforms which are simple and complete in themselves which might be taken up and carried into law without interfering at all with further progress, and which would be most beneficial.

The question of compensation is always I dragged across the path of temperance reform, but the Report of the Royal Commission consisted of five parts, and in the first part, relating to England and Wales, there are forty-three

recommendations which have nothing to do with the question of compensation at all. Indeed, it is only when we come to the fifth part that the question of compensation is dealt with. My hon. friend opposite has suggested some reforms which, I agree, will be most beneficial and are demanded. Having been a member of the Royal Commission, I venture to say that the hon. Member has not exaggerated in the slightest degree the evidence that was brought before us. I am quite prepared to stand by the words the hon. Member has used, and to say that in many parts of the country the present administration of the licensing laws is in a scandalous condition. That is not a question of temperance reform. It is a question of the reform of the administration of the present law; and if the Government are afraid of entering upon purely temperance legislation, surely they ought not to be afraid of reforming the administration of our existing licensing law.

I will not weary the House by giving a long catalogue of the various reforms that are suggested in these Reports. A large number of them, as the hon. Member pointed out, were unanimous recommendations by both sides of the Commission, including the trade, and I venture to say that the trade ought to be bound by the action of their delegates in regard to them. I also believe that the Majority Report in many of its recommendations not only represents what temperance reformers desire, but represents the opinion of the public outside; that these are reforms which should be undertaken at once by the responsible Government of the country. One simple reform that might be undertaken; it is so simple a matter that I am almost ashamed to mention it; is the holding of the licensing session in March instead of August and September, when the renewal of licences and the granting of new licences is very loosely done, because in the various localities the people are away at that time of the year. Then there is the reform that a licence should not be renewed in the case of a house under £12 rateable value. Off-licences should be under the control of the licensing authorities, and the distance in regard to bona-fide travellers should be extended. Then there is the power to arrest for simple drunkenness, and of dealing with habitual drunkards. There is also the important question, unanimously recommended by both sides of the Commission, as to the limit of age at which children should be served with drink. I believe that public opinion has been thoroughly roused on this question, and that it has a great deal of sympathy from many who have no liking whatever for what is called ordinary temperance reform. It is strongly felt that if we cannot in our generation remove the stigma of drunkenness, which unfortunately attaches to our nation, we should endeavour to prevent the next generation from falling into the evil. There is in addition the very important question of clubs, which is not exclusively a temperance question. I do not know whether the Home Secretary will venture to take that question up. I feel that the more the number of public-houses is decreased the more the growing evil of clubs will increase. The proposals of the Commission with regard to clubs are not at all drastic. They do not interfere with bona-fide clubs, but would put a stop to bogus and drinking clubs which are often set up for the sole purpose of drinking, and carried on by some publican who has lost his licence. The regulations proposed would improve

the condition of working men's clubs, many of which are admirably conducted and free from the stain of drunkenness, but many of which would be better for the public eye being turned upon them.

These and many other recommendations I think the Government might take up, and I trust the Home Secretary and the Government will take a more courageous attitude on this subject. Up to a certain point this is becoming less and less a party question, and it will find a great deal of support from these benches. I have had an opportunity during the past few weeks of ascertaining the views of a large number of Members on this side, of the House, and I am surprised to find the change that has taken place in public opinion on this question since I first entered this House. We are not fanatics. We will be found to be most reasonable, but if the Government does not move we shall have to be unreasonable. I do not ask for a comprehensive Bill. I simply ask the Government to deal with some of the urgent reforms recommended in the Report of the Royal Commission, and to give their support to any private Bill introduced for this object, which would, without their assistance, have only a remote chance of becoming law.

MAJOR JAMESON (Clare, W.) contended that instead of reducing the number of licences the Government should go to the root of the question and see that what was sold in public-houses was good and wholesome. Much of the spirits sold in this country was imported from Germany, Sweden, and Denmark, and was manufactured from sawdust and shavings by what was known as the sulphuric acid process. It was this sort of stuff that produced the mischiefs of which so much complaint was made, and at a recent exhibition it was used to clean the elephants with. If attention was not given to this matter they in Ireland would have to seriously consider the question whether they should in the future produce barley or sawdust. He hoped the House would pause before taking away the vested interest in licensed houses such as was admitted to exist in Ireland, and not run amuck against all licensed houses with so-called temperance reformers. The great check in Ireland was that if anyone broke the law he lost his licence. He denied that there was any widespread desire to deprive of licences a class of traders in commodities which bore the brunt of taxation. If the temperance party had their way they would reform the trade off the face of the earth, and then they would have the greater evil of unlicensed public-houses or shebeens. If the House would see that arsenic was not put in beer, and that whisky was not made from sawdust, it would do far more towards promoting temperance than by reducing the number of licences, and taking the bread out of the mouths of people who were conducting their business in an honourable way. Would England like to have its trade interfered with, simply because of the fads of some gentlemen who did not understand the question? [An HON. MEMBER laughed.] That laugh was probably the exhilaration of adulterated tea. The licensing question was one of the most serious questions of the day, because the trade was the backbone of the taxation of the country. He did not remonstrate with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the question of licensing, but on the subject of foreign spirits which were not taxed, and he asked that when the question of licensing was being considered, the Government should also

consider the question of the sale of deleterious compounds produced in foreign countries, and sold in this country under names which they had no right to bear. He never heard of Danish whisky, or Swedish whisky, or German whisky, but compounds from these countries were bottled in bond, and fraudently imposed on the public as Irish whisky. He objected to that, and he felt sure that the Government would consider it before interfering with the vested interests in a trade which had always found money for taxation. It could not be shown that the licensing system in Ireland was a bad one. The drink bill in Ireland was £;2 14s. per head, but the sober people of England spent £;4 5s. per head. In Ireland they had not only a better licensing system, but they had better stuff. They were always asked in Ireland to take their opinions from England, and to go to England for sobriety and licensing reform. They declined. They did not want English licensing; they did not want English liquor, but they asked England to take theirs. They did not wish licensed houses to sell as an Irish commodity a compound made in Germany or Denmark. There was one thing that the Government should consider, and that was whether they were going to rob people who had invested money in a trade which was always sanctioned by law. If the Government abolished all licences to-morrow, how would the teetotalers like to see tea and soda water taxed? They would then be all found drinking London water. He would conclude by making an entreaty to the Government to deal with the question of commodities. If they found that adulteration was rife, and that the public health suffered, then let them not spare such licensed houses as sold such compounds, because they had broken the law. But as long as licensed houses carried on their trade in a fair and honourable manner, any Government worthy of the name of a government would not interfere with them, notwithstanding all that the faddists of the nation might say.

SIR MARK STEWART (Kirkcudbright): In a somewhat amusing speech the hon. and gallant Gentleman stated that the people would not drink Scotch whisky in Ireland. I would reply that we would not drink Irish whisky in Scotland, a liquor which I heard described in this House as "a torchlight procession down one's throat," and I think no one accustomed to Scotch whisky would favour it. I do hope that some good will come, of this debate. The matter is one in which the whole country is of one way of thinking, although not much was said about it at the General Election. I believe in every constituency, certainly in every Scotch constituency of which I have knowledge; and I have knowledge of a good many; it was held that legislation on the lines laid down by the Royal Commission must take place; and it would not be well, under these circumstances, for the Government, with its great majority, to do nothing during the present Parliament. I think, however, that the tone of the proposer and seconder of this Amendment was somewhat harsh as regards the position of the Government. I do not condemn the Government. They have introduced a sentence on the subject into the King's Speech. What that may be worth I do not know, but it may be worth; and I rather think it will be worth; a great deal more than some hon. Members seem to think. Therefore I give the Government every credit for yielding to the wishes of the country, provided that they see, as I am satisfied they do, the great urgency and importance of the question. It is not that

Englishmen attach any great importance to drastic measures. I have been in Parliament for, more or less, twenty-five years, and I have never yet seen one of those great reforms foreshadowed at the commencement of any session carried into law. Almost the only measure of any utility affecting Scotland which was carried during the last twenty-five years namely, the closing at an earlier hour at the wish of the town councils in the burghs, was really carried by myself.

The hon. Baronet the Member for North-west Manchester foreshadowed several important measures. It is true they were small ones, compared with the larger measures foreshadowed by the Royal Commission; but if several of them were passed in the present Parliament we should be much the better for them, and I believe they

would tend to give us a more sober people, and to put licensing reform on a much better basis. Those of us who know anything about licensing in Scotland know it is not a question of liquor, but really a question of administration, and if the question of administration is better attended to in the measures which; the Government may give us no one will be more satisfied than I will be.

*MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I think the Irish Members are entitled to some explanation from the Government on this licensing question, so far as it affects Ireland. We have heard from these benches eloquent speeches on the temperance question. I, for one, do not object to home rule for England in temperance matters. If you want legislation to deal with the evils existing in England, let it be confined to England. The general rule on these temperance matters is that Gentlemen from the Liberal benches bring forward temperance measures, and apply them not to England but to Ireland. Ireland is used as a, place to experiment upon, and as a kind of dumping ground for temperance fads. I think, therefore, the Irish Members are entitled to know from the Government, if they are really serious about bringing in temperance legislation, whether it is to apply to Ireland. You passed a Sunday Closing Act for Ireland, but there is no Sunday Closing Act for England. We who have experience of the working of the Sunday Closing Act in the West of Ireland know that that Act has closed no house which would not have been closed if it had never come into operation. All the respectable houses would close of their own accord on Sundays, and as a matter of fact, the Sunday Closing Act has really been a Sunday Opening Act for all low-class public houses.

The hon. Member who introduced this amendment referred to the police corruption in Manchester, Wigan, and other cities in this country. We know that in Ireland police corruption on a smaller scale has also occurred. From my own experience I know that the police, instead of enforcing the Sunday Closing Act with an equal hand and with equal justice, use it as an engine very often for political and personal spite. A certain

class of publicans are harassed, whereas another class are allowed to sell as much as they like on Sundays. I myself, having been appointed a magistrate under the Local Government Act, had to complain about the conduct of the police in this very respect. But I could obtain no satisfaction. In fact, other magistrates and myself have been sneered at because we are Nationalists. If you put in force any law of great severity it is almost bound to lead to corruption

on the part of the men who are called upon to administer it. If, therefore, you increase the restrictions at present existing, how are you to guard against corruption on even a wider scale? On that ground alone I object to any further attempts to make people sober by Act of Parliament, or to make them temperate by methods of coercion. The ordinary individual would not drink a glass of whisky more simply because there were a hundred public-houses in a street instead of ten. Of course foolish and stupid people will get drunk no matter what legislation you may pass, and to say that because a few idiotic individuals get drunk the reasonable habits of ordinary men are to be hampered is a proposal which this House should not tolerate. My reason for interfering in this debate is simply to object to any further extension of licensing restrictions to Ireland. If you want them in England I will not object. The hon. Member who moved the amendment referred to the terrible drunkenness prevailing in some parts of England. I have had some experience of that myself. I remember attending a meeting held in a colliery village in the North of England; it was called a "village"; of 10,000 inhabitants. The day happened to be pay-day, and I never saw such a state of drunkenness before. After the Irish meeting was over, which I attended, I remember that every place I went to, I saw nearly every man, woman and child in a drunken condition.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Durham, Mid): As one of the Members for Durham I should like to know the name of that village. I venture to say that the hon. Member cannot find a village in the north of England which in any way comes near his description. I hope he will use more careful language.

*MR. TULLY: I have great personal respect for the hon. Gentleman, and I do not wish to hurt his feelings particularly. If he would like the name of the village I will give it to him afterwards.

MR. JOHN WILSON: I wish to have it now.

*MR. TULLY: It was in the village of Hetton-le-hole.

MR. JOHN WILSON: It is untrue.

*MR. TULLY: I was a witness of it myself. When I was looking for a car to take me to the station, every place I went into appeared to be crawling with drunkenness, and I could not get a vehicle to carry me to the nearest railway station there were so many people drunk in the place. I do not object to any coercion, any Crimes Act you may introduce to put down intemperance of that description. I never saw any thing like it in Ireland, and I hope I never shall. I hope in this matter the Government will confine their legislation to England. When we brought forward the question of the over-taxation of Ireland the hon. Gentleman who moved this Amendment was one of our most conspicuous and able opponents, and although he would not give us Home Rule in the matter of financial relations I am quite willing to give him Home Rule in the matter of temperance legislation. I have seen it stated that one of the methods of dealing with this question is to wipe out all public houses under a certain valuation in Ireland without compensation. There is also another proposal. In obedience to some circular or mandate issued from Dublin Castle, the county court judges in Ireland; a respectable body of men; were summoned to meet, and came to the conclusion to recommend to the Government that all licensing business in Ireland

should be taken out of the hands of the local magistrate and put into the hands of the county court judges. I object to giving them any further power in these matters. I think they are entirely unfitted to deal with licensing questions in Ireland, by their political as well as their legal training. Moreover, they have quite enough to

do at present. The cry never went up in Ireland for abolishing the jurisdiction of ordinary magistrates until, owing to the operation of the Local Government Act, men like myself, elected by the votes of the people, were able to take our seats on the magisterial bench. And because such men have become magistrates it is suddenly discovered that everything wrong is now done by the local magistrates and the Government are accordingly asked to abolish their jurisdiction and to hand over the question of licensing to the county court judges. Another proposal is to, hand over the licensing administration of Ireland solely to the paid magistrates.

I think that is equally objectionable. In fact, if I had to choose between the two classes I should prefer the county court judges. Whatever chance of fair play or independence or consideration for the people that might be looked for; and it might be very small; would be found among the county court judges rather than among the promoted policemen who figure as resident magistrates. I think the Secretary of State for the Home Department outlined recently a very wise alternative scheme, by which the vice of intemperance could be dealt with in a satisfactory manner. He said that if intemperance was to be combated the people must be housed in proper houses. I am very glad to see that the King is identified with that question, and I hope that during the opening years of his reign legislation regarding it will be passed, because it is on the lines of improving the dwellings of the poor that you can effect real temperance reform. When we consider the miserable slums in which these people have to live, and the miserable cabins in Ireland, often with nine or ten persons in a single room, is it any wonder, that, worn out with hard and constant toil, these people should at the end of the week seek some respite by recourse to indulgence in drink? As long as the poorer classes are housed;

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon Member would not be in order in discussing the housing of the working class on an Amendment having reference to licensing reform.

*MR. TULLY: I do not, in any way, wish to disregard your ruling, Sir. I was merely pointing out an alternative to that raised by the motion. In my experience the gentlemen who so strenuously advocate the question of temperance are generally employers who are trying to get more out of their men at lower wages. They think that by preventing the working men from spending money on drink, they will be able to get them to work for less wages. There is nothing straightforward about them, although they pose as possessing a monopoly of all the Christian virtues, whereas any of us who differ even slightly from, them are sinners who ought to be cast out into the wilderness. My experience of these gentlemen is that they make their temperance fads a stalking horse for their own profit, and for the purpose of getting more work out of their workpeople. I think, however, if these temperance fanatics are compared to the men who resist their ideas it will be found that the latter are just as straightforward and as

anxious for the good of the people. My own experience is that whenever we put forward in our local bodies any housing or water scheme the men who oppose it are generally those who are distinguished as temperance advocates. I am certain the House will not consent to any legislation on this question unless men of all classes and all parties assent to it. It seems to me that the gentlemen who are most desirous of promoting temperance legislation are the gentlemen who will give no freedom of opinion to others, and who will allow no one to differ from them without calling them vile names.

It being midnight, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed to-morrow.

DECLARATIONS OF HEADS OF STATES.

Address for "Return of the various Oaths or Declarations touching religion which are made on their accession to power by the Heads of the following States: Great Britain and Ireland, Empire of Germany, United States, France, Austro - Hungary."; (Colonel Nolan.)

Adjourned at two minutes after Twelve of the clock.