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IN THE
SECOND SESSION OF THE TWENTY-SEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT
BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN THE FIRST YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HIS MAJESTY KING EDWARD VII.

SIXTH VOLUME OF SESSION.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 14th May, 1901.

The House met at Two of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

PRIVATE BILLS [Lords] (STANDING ORDERS NOT PREVIOUSLY INQUIRED INTO COMPLIED
WITH).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions
for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, originating in the
Lords, and referred on the First Reading thereof, the Standing Orders not
previously inquired into, and which are applicable thereto, have been complied
with, viz.:

Milford Docks Bill [Lords].

New Swindon Gas Bill [Lords].

Shrewsbury Gas Bill [Lords].

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time.

PROVISIONAL ORDER BILLS (NO STANDING ORDERS APPLICABLE).

Mr. SPEAKER laid upon the Table Report from one of the Examiners of Petitions
for Private Bills, That, in the case of the following Bills, referred on the
First Reading thereof, no Standing Orders are applicable, viz.:

Commons Regulation and Inclosure (Skipwith) Provisional Order Bill.

Inclosure (Sutton) Provisional Order Bill.

Ordered, That the Bills be read a second time to-morrow.

BURGESS HILL WATER BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

FOLKESTONE CORPORATION BILL [Lords].

Read the third time, and passed, with Amendments.

GREAT CENTRAL RAILWAY BILL.

HULL, BARNSLEY, AND WEST RIDING JUNCTION RAILWAY AND DOCK BILL.

LLANDRINDOD WELLS URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL WATER BILL.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL (SPITAL-FIELDS MARKET) BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY BILL.

Verbal Amendments made (King's Consent signified); Bill read the third time, and
passed. [New Title.]

RICHMOND GAS BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

SHANNON WATER AND ELECTRIC POWER BILL.

King's Consent signified; Bill read the third time, and passed.

STROUD GAS BILL.

WEST SURREY WATER BILL.

Read the third time, and passed.

BEXLEY TRAMWAYS BILL

BINGLEY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL BILL

BURTON-UPON-TRENT CORPORATION BILL.

As amended, considered; to be read the third time.

GRANGEMOUTH WATER PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL [Lords].

SCOTTISH PROVIDENT INSTITUTION PROVISIONAL ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL [Lords].

Read the third time, and passed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 10).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the Hitchin, the Maldon, and the Upton-upon-Severn and Pershore Joint Hospital Districts, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 10) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to the Hitchin, the Maldon, and the Upton-upon-Severn and Pershore Joint Hospital Districts," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 184.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 11).

Bill to confirm a Provisional Order relating to Stockport, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDER (No. 11) BILL.

"To confirm a Provisional Order relating to Stockport," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 185.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) (No. 2).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Leeds and Lichfield, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) (No. 2) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Leeds and Lichfield." presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills and to be printed. [Bill 186.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 5).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the county borough of Londonderry, the rural district of Fermoy, and the Skule Bog United District, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Attorney General for Ireland and Mr. Wyndham.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 5) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the county borough of Londonderry, the rural district of Fermoy and the Skule Bog United District," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed.

[Bill 187.]

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) (

2).

Bill to confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the city of Dublin, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Attorney General for Ireland and Mr. Wyndham.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER (HOUSING OF WORKING CLASSES) (2) BILL.

"To confirm a Provisional Order of the Local Government Board for Ireland relating to the city of Dublin," presented, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed.

[Bill 188.]

ARDROSSAN HARBOUR ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL.

Order [13th May] for committal read, and discharged. Bill to be considered to-morrow.

AYR HARBOUR ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL.

Order [13th May] for committal read, and discharged. Bill to be considered to-morrow.

FALKIRK AND DISTRICT TRAMWAYS ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL.

Order [13th May] for committal read, and discharged. Bill to be considered to-morrow.

HIGHLAND RAILWAY ORDER CONFIRMATION BILL.

Order [13th May] for committal read, and discharged. Bill to be considered to-morrow.

SOUTH METROPOLITAN GAS BILL.

Reported with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

STANDING ORDERS.

Resolutions reported from the Committee;

1. "That, in the case of the Dublin, Wicklow, and Wexford Railway (New Ross and Waterford Extension), Petition for leave to deposit a Petition for Bill, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to deposit their petition for a Bill."

2. "That, in the case of the Stalybridge, Hyde, Mossley, and Dukinfield Tramways and Electricity Board Bill, Petition for additional Provision, the Standing Orders ought to be dispensed with: That the parties be permitted to introduce their additional Provision, if the Committee on the Bill think fit."

3. "That, in the case of the Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) [Heston and Isleworth Order] Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 129 in the case of the Petition of the 'Brentford Union Guardians of the Poor,' the said Standing Order ought not to be dispensed with."

4. "That, in the case of the Local Government Provisional Orders (No. 3) [Heston and Isleworth Order] Bill, Petition for dispensing with Standing Order 129 in the case of the Petition of the 'Managers of the Holme Court Industrial Truant School,' the said Standing Order ought not to be dispensed, with."

First Two Resolutions agreed to.

Report to lie upon the Table.

BRIGHTON CORPORATION BILL.

Reported, with Amendments; Report to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

PRIVATE BILLS (GROUP L).

Mr. BILL reported from the Committee on Group L of Private Bills, That the parties opposing the Derby Corporation Bill had stated that the evidence of Thomas Kelham, Builder, William Knight, Cowkeeper, Henry Scott, Timber Merchant, Henry Wibberley, Fitter, William Chadwick, Millwright, Edwin Wildsmith, Clerk to Alvaston and Boul-ton Urban District Council, all of Alvaston, in the county of Derby, was essential to their case; and, it having been proved that their attendance could not be procured without the intervention of the House, he had been instructed to move that the said Thomas Kelham, William Knight, Henry Scott, Henry Wibberley, William Chadwick, and Edwin Wild-smith, do attend the said Committee on Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Ordered, That Thomas Kelham, William Knight, Henry Scott, Henry Wibberley, William Chadwick, and Edwin Wildsmith, do attend the Committee on Group L of Private Bills on Monday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

RAILWAY BILLS (GROUP 3).

Mr. SEALE-HAYNE reported from the Committee on Group 3 of Railway Bills, That, for the convenience of parties, they had adjourned till Thursday next, at half-past Eleven of the clock.

Report to lie upon the Table.

PETITIONS.

COAL MINES (EMPLOYMENT) BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Greyfield; Clandown; Ludlow's; and Tynning Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (HIGHER GRADE AND EVENING CONTINUATION SCHOOLS).

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

LAND RATING (ENGLAND AND WALES) BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Bacup; and Tynemouth; to lie upon the Table.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

Petition from West Ham, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour, from Wolverhampton; Woodhall Spa; and Horn-castle; to lie upon the Table.

MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Greyfield; Avon Level; Bishop Sutton; Clandown; Tynning; and Ludlow's Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

POLICE SUPERANNUATION (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petition from Argyll, against; to lie upon the Table.

REGISTRATION OF FIRMS BILL.

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

ROMAN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN IRELAND.

Petitions against establishment, from Grantown; Dundee; Broughty Ferry; Peebles; and Carnoustie; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Seething and Mundham; Tooting; Lenton; North Shields; Middleham; Saltley; Rossendale; Stacksteads; Barton; Wal-asey and New Brighton; Birmingham; Hatherton; Wallasey; Middleton; Acocks Green; West Hartlepool three); Worsboro' Dale; Holling-worth; Horncastle; Broadchalk (three), and

Barford St. Martin; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN BILL.

Petition from Thornbury, against; to lie upon the Table.

Petitions in favour, from Stockport (four); Brighton; Birmingham; Oswaldtwistle; Colne; Dumfries, and Olton; to lie upon the Table.

SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Muiravonside; Slains (two); and Auchterarder to lie upon the Table.

SHOPS BILL.

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

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

GAS COMPANIES (METROPOLIS).

Copy presented, of Accounts of the Metropolitan Gas Companies for the year 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 174.]

EMIGRATION AND IMMIGRATION.

Return ordered, "of Copy of Statistical Tables relating to Emigration and Immigration from and into the United Kingdom in the year 1900, and Report to the Board of Trade thereon."; (Mr. Gerald Balfour.)

SECONDARY EDUCATION.

Return ordered, "for every county and county borough which possesses an organisation for the promotion of Secondary Education (Section 7 of Directory of Board of Education), of the constitution of such organisation and the date of its recognition by the Board of Education."; (Sir Ughtred Kay-Shuttleworth.)

QUESTIONS.

SOUTH AFRICA; CRIMINAL LIBELS ; CASE OF MR. CARTWRIGHT.

MR. SAMUEL EVANS (Glamorganshire, Mid): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether he can now state whether Mr. Albert Cartwright, the editor of the South African News, of Cape Town, has been sentenced to twelve months imprisonment for a criminal libel on Lord Kitchener; whether the sole charge against Mr. Cartwright was that he had republished a letter which had appeared three weeks before in the Dublin Freeman's Journal in full and in the London Times in part; whether during those three weeks any contradiction had been given by the Government to the statements contained in the letter; whether Mr. Cartwright published the denial of those statements given by Lord Kitchener immediately such denial was made known; whether, under the Cape prison regulations, Mr. Cartwright is debarred from the privileges of a first-class misdemeanant in this country; and whether permission both to see his wife or receive books has been denied to him by the Cape authorities; and whether the Cape Attorney General is now on his way to this country; if so, whether on his arrival he will discuss with him the possibility of advising some mitigation of the sentence passed on Mr. Cartwright.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES (Mr. J. CHAMBERLAIN, Birmingham, W.): I have seen the report of this trial in the Cape newspapers, and the facts as to the nature of the charge, the sentence, and the publication of Lord Kitchener's denial appear to be substantially as stated by the hon. Member. I am not prepared to modify in any respect the answer which I gave to the hon. Member on

the 2nd instant; or to interfere with the administration of the law in a self-governing colony. I am not aware of the actual treatment which Mr. Cartwright is receiving, which is a matter entirely within the sphere of the Cape Government.

JAMESON RAID.

MR. ALFRED DAVIES (Carmarthen Boroughs): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if he will state who are the present Transvaal Government to whom Boers are to send unpaid claims for damages caused by the Jameson raid, previous to their being entertained for payment by the British Government.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: I think the hon. Gentleman must have misunderstood what I said before. Certainly I have never said that claims will in any case be entertained by the British; that is, by the Imperial Government. What I said was that, if there were any such claims which could be substantiated, which, personally, I do not believe, they

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might be sent to the Government of the Colony. The hon. Gentleman asks me what is the Government of the Transvaal. It is the Transvaal Administration in Pretoria. At the present moment the head is Lord Kitchener until Sir A. Milner returns, when he will be the head. The question is one entirely for the Government of the Colony.

MR. ALFRED DAVIES: Will the right hon. Gentleman say whether or not he did say that these claims would be entertained by the Transvaal Government?

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: If you will permit me, Sir, I desire that there should be no misunderstanding. Entertained, yes; that is to say, if there is any claim of misericordiam on the part of any person, formerly a burgher of the Transvaal, who has been injured and was not compensated by his own Government; although the circumstances under which he was injured took place five years ago, I have no doubt it would be entertained; that is, considered; by the existing Transvaal Government. Whether it would be favourably entertained is another matter. It is not a matter for me; it would be a matter for the local Government; and undoubtedly it would be entertained entirely upon the merits of the case.

BRITISH INDIAN SUBJECTS; RETURN OF CIVILIANS TO THE TRANSVAAL.

SIR MANCHERJEE BHOWNAGGREE (Bethnal Green, N.E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies if any reply has been received to the inquiry he has addressed to Sir A. Milner regarding the refusal of permits to British Indian subjects to return to the Transvaal from Natal; and, if so, will he state what the reply is, and if the permits have been issued to them as they have been in the case of other refugees for some time past.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: The following is the reply received from Sir A. Milner; "Two representatives of Indian traders have been given permits, one from Durban,

one from Cape Town. Statements in telegram of Indian Committee incorrect. No one allowed to come up except required for reopening of mines and for necessary trade. Great majority of European refugees' shops still closed, including nearly all the small ones. All civil permits to men issued on the condition that

recipients join Rand Rifles. This does not seem advisable in case of Indians, and to allow them up without this restriction would cause great discontent. No women allowed up at present except wives of certain classes of officials or Government employees."

CHINESE LABOUR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Colonies whether the Imperial Government will be able to exercise control on the question of Chinese labour in Rhodesia and the Transvaal; and if he can state what is the amount of poll-tax levied on Chinese in the various Australian colonies.

MR. J. CHAMBERLAIN: Any legislation passed in Rhodesia and the Transvaal will require the sanction of the High Commissioner and of the Administrator of the Transvaal, who is subject to the instructions of His Majesty's Government. A poll-tax of £10 is levied in New South Wales, Tasmania, and New Zealand.

AUSTRALIAN CONTINGENT; HOSPITAL TREATMENT.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL (Donegal, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware of the feeling of indignation prevailing in Australia over the disclosures of the Australian contingent as to their hospital treatment in South Africa; that men of this contingent when in bed at the hospital at Woodstock, suffering from wounds and disease, were ordered to get up at once and go aboard the transport; that the Imperial officers declined to provide ambulances, and that it was only by borrowing money that cabs were provided to take the men to the ship, as the contingent were without pay for months and everything belonging to the sick men had been stolen when they were unable to protect it; and whether the War Office has any explanation to offer for the treatment awarded to this contingent.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): No, Sir. I am not aware of the allegations made in the question, for which the hon. Member gives no authority, and I do not believe them to be accurate.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that I am not permitted to give my authority on the Paper? I will give my authority if he likes.

THE PLOT TO KIDNAP LORD ROBERTS.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the principal witness at the trial of Lieutenant Hans Cordua, a German who went to the Transvaal in 1895, and who was sentenced to death by court-martial in Pretoria last August and shot for an alleged conspiracy to kidnap Lord Roberts, was one Gano, a Spanish half-breed and a member of the English secret service; is he aware that Cordua swore that Gano inveigled him into the plot by pretending to be a pro-Boer in the British employ, plied him with drink, and procured for him the khaki uniform in which in company with Gano he crossed the British lines, and that it appeared from the evidence that all the Boer prisoners who were approached in regard to this plot refused to have anything to do with it; at whose suggestion and by whose permission was Gano given liberty to move amongst the Dutch and their friends with bottles of whisky, khaki uniforms, and the countersign to pass through the British lines; and whether this plot was one of the causes of the issue of a proclamation by Lord Roberts

that all burghers in districts occupied by British troops would be regarded as prisoners of war.

MR. BRODRICK: Gano referred to in the question was a police agent, and necessarily had facilities for movement about Pretoria and the neighbourhood. Through his agency the plot was discovered. Lord Roberts's proclamation was due to the continual disregard of their oaths by surrendered burghers.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the second paragraph, or must I repeat it?

MR. BRODRICK: I do not know the exact details.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Had this man the power to appear in khaki in order to seduce others from their allegiance?

[No answer was returned.]

BOER PRISONERS AT ST. HELENA.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that 900 of the Boer prisoners who surrendered at Paardeburg and were subsequently conveyed to St. Helena were confined for more than a week after their arrival at St. Helena in a densely overcrowded ship in the harbour at Jamestown till the camp was ready for their reception, and that the prisoners were so weakened by their prolonged confinement on board ship under unhealthy conditions that they took, on landing, six hours to march to the camp, which was only a distance of five miles; that some of the prisoners now in St. Helena, before they reached that island, had been imprisoned for over three months in ships, fed on biscuits and bully beef, shut down from air, only allowed one hour in the twenty-four on deck, packed tightly, without change of clothes day or night, in ships which had been used for cattle and were infested with vermin; and will he state what provisions have been made for the preservation of the health of the Boer prisoners at St. Helena.

MR. BRODRICK: The statements in the question are not confirmed by the information at our command. In all cases the number of Boer prisoners conveyed to St. Helena has been in each ship far below the accommodation of the ship. The food they receive is the same as that given to our troops, and the health of the prisoners at St. Helena is good.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Mr. J. R. Green is responsible for the statement.

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order!

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: The right hon. Gentleman asked for my authority just now.

IMPERIAL YEOMANRY; NETLEY HOSPITAL; CASE OF PRIVATE LEE.

MR. J. P. FARRELL (Longford, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he is aware that evidence was submitted in the course of the inquiry into the alleged ill-treatment of Private M. Lee, late of the Imperial Yeomanry, in Netley Hospital, to support the charge that the probationer in charge of the ward said that when he had done with him he would have no more fits; whether he is aware that Lee's bodily health has been seriously injured by the treatment received; and can he state what punishment has been awarded to the offending official.

MR. BRODRICK: The evidence does not appear to show that the surgeon on probation who attended Private Lee used the expressions attributed to him, or that Lee's

health has been seriously injured. But the treatment, with whatever good intentions applied, is not sustained as applicable to the case by high authorities, and the surgeon's experience does not justify us in continuing his services.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Will any steps be taken to punish this probationer for the outrage?

[No answer was returned.]

ARMY RESERVE OFFICERS.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can explain why, while under the provisions of the Army Orders, Army Reserve Officers called out for service are placed at the bottom of their rank in the regiment or corps to which they may belong, but are eligible for promotion when so serving, the re-employed Reserve Officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps are not included within the provisions of such Orders, but are placed outside the general list and excluded from promotion; and will he see that the privilege extended to Army Reserve Officers of other branches be likewise conferred on the re-employed Reserve Officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps.

MR. BRODRICK: The Medical Reserve of officers should, when re-employed, be shown in the active list of the Medical Staff, and this will be carried out in future editions of the Army List. As the hon. Member has been told on a previous occasion, they are eligible for promotion during employment.

ROYAL GARRISON RESERVE REGIMENTS.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War, having regard to the fact that in the new Royal Garrison Reserve Regiments now in course of formation, the War Office are accepting the service of Militia Officers as lieutenants for terms of three, four, six, or twelve months; will he say whether these Officers are, at the expiration of these terms, subject to dismissal in order to make way for Officers of the Regular Forces; and on what principle are appointments to be made to the higher commands in these regiments, and will such appointments, or any proportion of them, be offered to the higher ranks of the Militia.

MR. BRODRICK: Militia Officers posted for duty for a limited period will rejoin their own units at the expiration of their service with the Royal Garrison Regiment, unless re-appointed for a further term. It is not possible at present to say from what source their relief will be drawn. The Officers for the higher appointments have been selected from the half-pay list and Officers of the Army Reserve.

PROPOSED NEW GARRISON BATTALIONS ;COST OF MARRIED ESTABLISHMENTS.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the probable approximate cost of the married establishments of the eight garrison battalions proposed in his scheme of Army reform.

MR. BRODRICK: Any estimate given could only be an exceedingly rough one, as the battalions are now in process of formation. When the eight battalions have been completed it is calculated that the total cost of lodging money and separation allowances may reach £75,000.

RECRUITING STATISTICS.

CAPTAIN NORTON; I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can give the number of recruits enlisted for the Regular Army and also for the Militia for the months of January, February, and March of this year, as well as for the same months in the years 1899 and 1900; and whether he can give similar information with respect to the month of April.

MR. BRODRICK: The hon. Member will find the information, except as regards April, for which month the Returns are not yet complete, in a Return presented to Parliament on Friday last.

PAY OF PRIVATE SOLDIERS.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can state in what year the British private soldier first received a supply of food in addition to pay at the rate of 1s. a day.

MR. BRODRICK: In September, 1873, the soldier received a free ration of bread and meat and one shilling a day, but out of this he had to find his groceries. It was not until the 1st April, 1898, that the soldier, by the grant of a 3d. messing allowance, received a shilling a day clear of any deduction for food.

ROYAL MARINES; PROMOTIONS FOR SERVICE IN CHINA.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he has now received the necessary information from the War Office with regard to the dates of the brevet promotion to lieutenant colonel of the two majors Royal Marine Light Infantry for service in China.

THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W): I regret to say that this information has not yet been received.

ROYAL MARINES; PROMOTIONS FROM THE RANKS.

MR. KEARLEY: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can explain why Royal Marine officers who secure commissions from the ranks are ineligible for the appointments of barrackmaster and paymaster equally with other officers of the corps.

MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: The interests of the service have not hitherto made it desirable that these officers should be appointed to the posts in question. I must point out that there is no analogy in this respect between officers of the Army and officers of the Royal Marines, there being no equivalent in the corps of Royal Marines to the Army Service Corps and to the Army Pay Department; in both the last named corps there is a special line of promotion.

CHINESE IMPOST TARIFFS.

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the Government will refuse to agree to any increase in the impost tariff in China above the existing rate of 5 per cent. unless it is accompanied by reform of likin; and whether the chambers of commerce will be consulted upon the whole question of fiscal reform in China.

*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Viscount CRANBORNE, Rochester): His Majesty's Government have expressed themselves as opposed to any increase in the impost tariff beyond what is required to raise the duties to an actual 5 per cent. ad valorem except in connection with reform in the treatment of foreign trade. In regard to fiscal reform in China, His Majesty's Government

will certainly avail themselves of expert advice; recourse has already been had to such advice during the recent negotiations.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT; BUILDING BYELAWS.

MR. BOND (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the President of the Local Government Board whether, in revising the model bye-laws for buildings in rural and urban districts, he will provide for the insertion of a clause giving power to the local authority to dispense wholly or in part with the observance of such bye-laws in particular cases; and whether, when bye-laws are submitted for approval, he will in all cases endeavour to obtain the insertion of such a clause.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): The proposal of my

hon. friend is not one to which I can accede. I may, however, state that I have the whole subject of building bye-laws under consideration, and it is my wish that the requirements of the model series should be such as may be regarded as generally reasonable.

INSTRUCTION IN FORESTRY.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether he can state how many students attend lectures on forestry in institutions which receive Government aid.

*THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF AGRICULTURE (Mr. HANBURY, Preston): There are four institutions receiving Government aid at which lectures are given on forestry. During the year 1900–1 there were eight students at Cambridge attending such lectures, four at the Durham College of Science, twenty-four at the Yorkshire College, and seventeen at the South-Eastern Agricultural College at Wye.

PROPOSED PIER AT ARMADALE.

MR. JOHN DEWAR (Inverness-shire): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether the Congested Districts Board have yet arrived at a decision in regard to the proposed pier for Armadale, Inverness-shire.

*THE SOLICITOR GENERAL FOR SCOTLAND (Mr. SCOTT DICKSON, Glasgow, Bridgeton): I am informed by the Congested Districts Board that on 23rd April last they informed the county clerks of Inverness that they would be prepared to grant a substantial proportion of the estimated cost (£3,800) of this pier in the event of a Provisional Order being obtained from the Board of Trade for its construction.

LINLITHGOW PROSECUTOR FISCAL.

MR. JOHN WILSON (Falkirk Burghs): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that the sheriff of Linlithgow has appointed to the office of procurator fiscal or criminal prosecutor for the county of Linlithgow a Mr. John Main, who is not qualified for the position, being neither a law agent nor having any other legal qualification further than having been a clerk to the previous procurator fiscal at a salary of £120 per annum; and whether the appointment, which is disapproved of by the law agents resident in the county, has been sanctioned by the Secretary for Scotland.

*MR. SCOTT DICKSON: In answer to the hon. Member, I am aware that Mr. Main has been appointed procurator fiscal at Linlithgow by the sheriff of Midlothian. It

is not the fact that he is not qualified for the office. It is not, and never has been, a necessary qualification for a procurator fiscal to be an enrolled law agent. The gentleman in question has had thirty years experience as procurator fiscal depute in various parts of Scotland, and had possessed the confidence, to which they testified, of the various sheriffs under whom he served; and in particular had, as depute procurator fiscal in Linlithgow since 1892, acted to the entire satisfaction of the sheriff who has now appointed him. In these circumstances the Secretary for Scotland had no hesitation in approving of the appointment.

SCOTTISH PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE.

SIR JOHN LENG (Dundee): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether it is proposed to communicate to this House the proceedings and decisions of the Parliamentary Commissions on Private Bills and Provisional Orders in Scotland; and, if so, can he say when and in what form this will be done.

*MR. SCOTT DICKSON: As the hon. Member is aware, every Provisional Order under the new Scottish Procedure must, before it can become law, reach the House as the Schedule to a Confirmation Bill. The proceedings and decisions of Commissioners under the new procedure are reported in the official journal which is issued from time to time by the Scottish Office, the reports taking as nearly as possible the form in which reports on private Bills appear in the Votes and Proceedings of the House. I shall see that the journal is regularly filed in the library for the information of hon. Members. I shall also take steps to have copies supplied to the Vote Office.

SCOTTISH EDUCATION DEPARTMENT REPORT.

SIR JOHN LENG: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether any provision has or can be made for supplying to the educational authorities in Scotland generally the information contained in the Report of the Scotch Education Department for the past year.

*MR. SCOTT DICKSON: In answer to the hon. Member, I am informed that the Department does not supply to any educational authorities Reports which have been placed on sale. The Report of the Scotch Education Department is on sale, and can be obtained directly, or through any bookseller, from Messrs. Oliver and Boyd, Edinburgh.

HIGHLAND RAILWAY MAIL CONTRACTS ;SERVICE TO KYLE.

MR. JOHN DEWAR: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that on and from the 1st July next the Highland Railway Company propose to run a train from Inverness at 9.50 a.m. which will convey the mails from the south and admit of their reaching Kyle of Lochalsh at 1 p.m., instead of at 1.50 p.m. as at present; and that it is also proposed to retime the present early morning train from Kyle of Lochalsh so as to admit of its reaching Inverness in time to start with the mails for the south at 8.50 a.m., instead of at 11.10 a.m. as at present; and, in view of the fact that these changes will enable the Post Office to give an improved postal service to Skye and the outer islands, will he consider the expediency of taking steps for a rearrangement of the mail steamer service to and from Kyle, so that the people of Kyle and the outer islands may reap the full benefit of this

improvement in the mail train service on the Highland Railway.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.): The Postmaster General is aware of the improvements which the Highland Railway Company propose to make in the train service between Inverness and Kyle from the 1st July next, and he is fully alive

to the desirability of rearranging the mail steamer services to and from Kyle so that advantage may be taken of the improvements in the train service. The hon. Member may rest assured that the necessary steps will be taken in the matter.

ARBITRATION UNDER THE LABOURERS ACTS AT MALLOW.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM (Cork, N.E.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that the Mallow District Council, in February last, recommended the appointment of Mr. James Byrne as arbitrator under the Labourers Acts in respect of the Mallow District Labourers Order, 1900 (Part 1), and that out of the number of eighty owners and occupiers who would be affected by the arbitration seventy-six voted for and only four against Mr. Byrne's appointment, but, notwithstanding this support by the interested parties on both sides, the Local Government Board have refused to appoint Mr. Byrne; and whether, in view of the fact that all the parties interested in and to be affected by the arbitration are practically unanimous, he will endeavour to give effect to that desire by the appointment of Mr. Byrne.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): May I at the same time ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, in respect to the Mallow Rural District Labourers Order, 1900, whether he is aware that the district council adhere to their recommendation as arbitrator of Mr. James Byrne, J.P., and will he state upon what authority and on what grounds the Local Government Board seek to set aside that gentleman, and to appoint Mr. Leahy, of Newcastle West; and what are the special qualifications possessed by Mr. Leahy to fit him for the position of arbitrator in these proceedings.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): Mr. Byrne resides within the rural district, and it is not the practice of the Board to appoint, as arbitrators, persons who are so directly associated with the locality. In the event of arbitration proceedings

in neighbouring districts the question of selecting Mr. Byrne will be considered. In answer to the next question, Mr. Leahy is a member of the Institute of Civil Engineers. He has been previously employed as arbitrator.

MR. WILLIAM ABRAHAM: Was the objection now put forward to the appointment that which was submitted to the local authority?

MR. WYNDHAM: I cannot say. The objection appertains to the principle, and not to the person.

MR. FLYNN: What power have the Local Government Board to set aside the decision of a local authority?

MR. WYNDHAM: In all cases of arbitration it is usual to select an arbitrator who is not intimately connected with the matter in dispute.

ACHONRY (SLIGO) DISTURBANCES.

MR. O'DOWD (Sligo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland if he is aware that on the evening of Wednesday, 1st May, the police

at Achonry, in the county of Sligo, attacked several persons, and that a man named Hubert Judge received a wound on the forehead from the stroke of a policeman's baton, and that several others were injured on the occasion; and whether any explanation can be given of this occurrence.

MR. WYNDHAM: An attempt was made at ten o'clock on the night of the 1st instant to hold a demonstration in close proximity to a grazing farm of which the owner and his workmen were entitled to protection from intimidation. The police had previously warned the promoters that no such demonstration would be permitted. But the warning was ignored, and the police were obliged to disperse the assemblage. The police were struck with sticks and stones. They are not aware that the man named was struck, and, so far as they can ascertain, no person in the crowd was injured.

CAPTAIN DONELAN (Cork, E.): Who instructed the police to interfere with this meeting?

MR. WYNDHAM: They acted under general instructions. In no village in England would such a demonstration have been permitted.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): Have they general instructions to pull down placards?

MR. O'DOWD: Did the police use their batons on this occasion?

MR. WYNDHAM: I understand that the affair has been exaggerated. The meeting was convened at ten o'clock at night in order to intimidate certain persons. That would not be permitted anywhere, and we do not intend to permit it in Ireland.

ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY ;MUSKETRY TRAINING.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he can explain why a number of officers and men of the Royal Irish Constabulary recently sent to the School of Musketry at Hythe for rifle drill and to qualify for certificates of proficiency to act as musketry instructors, instead of undergoing the course with the Martini-Henry rifle, with which the constabulary force were recently supplied, are undergoing the course of instruction with the Lee-Metford or magazine rifle; is it contemplated to re-arm the Irish constabulary force and place them on the same lines as the military as regards equipment; and, if so, on what grounds is the contemplated alteration based.

MR. WYNDHAM: In process of time all forces are armed with weapons of a newer pattern, since it is inconvenient and extravagant to continue the manufacture and inspection of separate types. I am unable to give even approximately the date on which Lee-Metfords will be issued to the police.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): Are we to understand, then, that magazine rifles are to be issued to the Royal Irish Constabulary?

MR. WYNDHAM: I should say that that will inevitably be the case in the course of time. As the Martini succeeded the Snider, the Lee-Metford must succeed the Martini. We cannot go on making obsolete weapons.

MR. DILLON: Will you consider the desirability of depriving Irish police of rifles altogether?

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Were these men sent to Hythe to be instructed in the use of the magazine rifle? Is the Royal Irish Constabulary to be made an absolutely military force?

MR. WYNDHAM: There is no intention of doing that.

MR. SWIFT MACNEILL: Were the men sent to Hythe to be instructed in the use of the rifle?

MR. WYNDHAM: They go every year, and if the hon. Member tells me that they fired with the magazine rifle, I have no doubt it is true.

MR. JOYCE (Limerick): Will the Government arm the English constabulary with these rifles?

AGRARIAN OFFENCES IN LEITRIM ;CASE OF DANIEL MCGOOHAN.

MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that a man named Daniel McGoohan, of Corlaban, South Leitrim, was convicted by a jury at the Sligo Winter Assizes in 1898 of an alleged agrarian offence on the 19th September, 1898, the chief evidence against him being that of Sergeant Sheridan, of the Royal Irish Constabulary; and seeing that on his release from prison in December, 1898, McGoohan made an affidavit before Dr. Mulcahy, J.P., Ballinamore, asserting his innocence, and that a few months ago Sergeant Sheridan was dismissed from the police force for placing threatening notices in a prisoner's pocket in the county Clare, whether there will be a complete inquiry into McGoohan's case.

MR. WYNDHAM: The hon. Member has raised an important question which deserves and shall receive immediate

consideration. It is one, however, upon which it would be improper for me to pronounce any opinion until I have had the opportunity of fully considering all the facts of the case.

IRISH BUTTER AND FRAUDULENT SUBSTITUTES.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY (Limerick, W.): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture, having regard to the fact that the pyramid box in which Irish butter is packed is an Irish invention, that no other country has adopted it, and that packages of other butter-producing countries are quite different from it, and seeing that quantities of adulterated butter, not of Irish make, are sold in these boxes, will he take steps to prevent butter not of Irish make being sold in these boxes in the future.

*MR. HANBURY: Pyramid boxes are not I am informed used only for Irish butter. Danish and Swedish butter are also quoted as sold in pyramid boxes, according to the official conditions of sale fixed by the committee of the Home and Foreign Produce Exchange. If the butter or the box not being Irish is marked as Irish it would appear to be an offence against the Merchandise Marks Act.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the butter, not of Irish make though packed in Irish pyramid boxes, found by the public analyst to contain an undue percentage of water and boric acid, sent by the firm of Lemaire and Classy, of London, to Mr. Robert Gibson, of Limerick, for sale, and for the sale of three samples of which a successful prosecution took place at Limerick Petty Sessions, was sent to his order in Dublin, and that on its arrival at the Kingsbridge terminus in Dublin thirty samples of it were taken by the Public Health Department in that city; and can he explain why prosecutions have not been instituted in Dublin, as in Limerick, against the principals or agent to prevent this fraud on the Irish

butter trade.

MR. WYNDHAM: The Department of Agriculture is informed that the public health authorities in Dublin were advised that no legal proceedings could be taken in respect of these packages of butter sent from Limerick, inasmuch as the butter was not exposed for sale in Dublin.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: Cannot the right hon. Gentleman take any action in the matter?

MR. WYNDHAM: It is evident it would be of no effect.

CAPTAIN DONELAN: What became of the butter? Was it confiscated?

MR. WYNDHAM: I cannot say, but the Department is doing all in its power to do what is proper in these cases.

MR. O'SHAUGHNESSY: I beg to ask the President of the Board of Agriculture whether, as the firm of Lemaire and Classy, of London, aver that the maker of butter, not of Irish make but packed in Irish pyramid boxes, containing an undue percentage of water and boric acid, maintains it was carelessly and not fraudulently made, he will institute an inquiry into the matter, to clear the reputation of the said firm, who say they bought and paid for the butter as pure and with a guarantee of purity, and in the public interest to ascertain who the maker of the butter is.

*MR. HANBURY: In consequence of a communication from the Irish Department inquiries are now being made as to the makers of the butter referred to in this question and the channels of its distribution in Great Britain. It would not facilitate possible legal proceedings to make any further statement at the present moment.

ANCIENT LAWS OF IRELAND.

MR. BOLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury whether he is aware that since the year 1865 only four volumes of the ancient laws of Ireland have been published, and that the last of these was published twenty-one years ago; will he state what progress has been made in the compilation of the two remaining volumes, the publication of which has been promised on three occasions during the last three years, and also when the volumes will be put in the hands of the printers with a view to publication.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The facts are as stated in the first paragraph. Of the two remaining volumes, I am informed that the text and translation of Volume 5 is all in type, but the index and preface are not yet complete. Volume 6 now only needs its preface, but this is not yet ready, nor is the index of subjects yet in a fit stage for the press.

MR. BOLAND: Can the hon. Gentleman say when Volume 5 is likely to be published?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: It was decided some time ago to publish the two remaining volumes together. I am afraid I am unable to name a time, but I shall be glad to see them published as early as possible.

INNISKEEN POSTAL SERVICE ;SUNDAY ARRANGEMENTS.

MR. DALY (Monaghan, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that the inhabitants of Inniskeen, county Monaghan, are inconvenienced owing to having no Sunday morning delivery of letters at Inniskeen or Sunday evening collection at this railway

junction; and whether he will inquire into this alleged grievance.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The Postmaster General will have inquiry made on the question of establishing a Sunday post to and from Inniskeen, and will inform the hon. Member of the result as soon as possible.

LONGFORD POSTAL SERVICE.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, what report has been made on the subject of a midday delivery of letters to Lisryan, Barlahy, and Aghnaccliffe, county Longford; and can he state whether any effort will be made to meet the wants of the inhabitants as to collection and delivery of letters in this district.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: It would not be practicable to serve Ballinalee and Aghnaccliffe by car from Street Crossing as suggested by the hon. Member; but the Postmaster General has now sanctioned a day mail service by car from Lismacaffrey to Lisryan and Granard, which will afford a second delivery and collection at Lisryan and will much improve the service at Granard. A letter-box will be erected at Smear, from which a collection will be made shortly after midday; but the provision of boxes at the other places mentioned, or of a second post to or from Aghnaccliffe, is not warranted.

MR. J. P. FARRELL: Is the hon. Gentleman aware that the place where it is proposed to place this wall box is inaccessible to three-fourths of the people of the district?

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: If the hon. Member wishes to make any representation of that kind it will be convenient both to the Postmaster General and myself if he will send them in in writing. Of course, I have no detailed knowledge in these cases.

PATENT ACTS.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the Government propose to introduce legislation to carry out the recommendations of the Committee appointed by the Board of Trade to inquire into the working of the Patents Acts on certain specified questions.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): As the Report of the Committee as a whole contains recommendations of considerable importance which have not yet been fully considered, there is no prospect of our being able to give effect to them by legislation in the present session. If time permits, it will be satisfactory to deal with the point which has formed the subject of international agreement, and that connected with compulsory licences, and with this object a Bill will be prepared.

"VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS"; REPORTS OF SUPPLY.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, in view of the inconvenience caused to Members by the Reports of Supply not being specifically described on the Notice Paper, and to enable Members to know early in the day what Votes are intended to be reported, such Votes will in future be specifically described in the Orders of the Day circulated in the morning.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Arrangements have been made to render available for Members in the Vote Office copies of the resolutions to be reported.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS: Cannot copies be sent out with the Votes and Proceedings in the morning?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That may not be possible. But the dates of the Supply to be reported always appear on the Orders of the Day.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS: But we cannot tell which Vote is to be taken.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe): There is a precedent for what is asked. In the case of effective Supply the different Votes to be taken are indicated.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): Surely if a paper containing the details can be placed in the Vote Office, it can also be sent round with the other Papers?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: That is a point I shall be happy to inquire into.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): May I point out that the Supply obtained on any given day may include Votes for different classes. We have no means of recognising them except by referring back to the Votes. Cannot the same be done as is done in the case of effective Supply?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I will consider if any sufficient advantage is to be gained by putting further notices on the Paper. It is not desirable to overcrowd them.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: It would only mean a single additional line.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire Ilkeston): Can the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House say definitely what Votes he proposes to take on Friday?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I have not the full details with me. Vote 7 in Class 2 will be the first taken however.

NEW BILLS.

COMPANIES (CERTIFICATES).

Bill to provide for the issue by Companies of Share and Stock Certificates, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Gordon, Sir Robert Reid, Mr. Wallace, and Mr. Henderson.

COMPANIES (CERTIFICATES) BILL.

"To provide for the issue by Companies of Share and Stock Certificates," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 189.]

SEWAGE AND DRAINAGE (LOCAL AUTHORITIES.)

Bill to enable Local Authorities to deal separately with the Sewage and Drainage of their districts, ordered to be brought in by Sir Walter Foster, Sir Francis Powell, Mr. John Burns, Dr. Robert Ambrose, Mr. Cripps, Dr. Thompson, Mr. Lawson Walton, and Mr. Brynmor Jones.

SEWAGE AND DRAINAGE (LOCAL AUTHORITIES) BILL.

"To enable Local Authorities to deal separately with the Sewage and Drainage of their districts," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday next, and to be printed. [Bill 190.]

STEAMSHIP SUBSIDIES.

The Select Committee on Steamship Subsidies was nominated of, Sir Charles Cayzer, Mr. Evelyn Cecil, Mr. Cust, Colonel Denny, Mr. Duke, Mr. Field, Mr. Joyce, Mr. William Lawrence, Colonel Milward, Mr. Norman, Mr. Nussey, Mr. Price, Colonel Ropner, Sir Edward Sassoon, and Mr. Alfred Thomas.

Ordered, That the Committee have power to send for persons, papers, and records.
Ordered, That five be the quorum.;(Sir William Walrond.)

ARMY ORGANISATION.

[SECOND DAY'S DEBATE.]

Order read, for resuming adjourned debate on Amendment to resolution proposed [13th May], "That it is expedient that six army corps be organised in the United Kingdom, with the requisite staff, stores, and buildings; that a Reserve for the Militia be enrolled not exceeding 50,000 men; that the establishment of the Yeomanry be raised from 12,000 to 35,000; and that eight regiments be enrolled for garrison service.";(Mr. Secretary Brodrick.)

And which Amendment was;

"To leave out from the word 'That,' to the end of the Question, in order to add the words, 'this House, while desirous of supporting measures for improving the efficiency of the Army and securing Imperial defence, is of opinion that the proposals of His Majesty's Government are in many respects not adapted to the special wants of the Empire, and largely increase the burdens of the nation without adding substantially to its military strength.'";(Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman.

Question again proposed, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

Debate resumed.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham): It is with a deep sense of responsibility that I rise to oppose the Amendment of the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition. I do not propose to discuss its precise terms; indeed, I should apologise for applying such a term as "precise" to anything so nebulous, but I must say I think it was a serious tactical error on the part of the right hon.

Gentleman to bring it forward. Constituting as it does a direct vote of censure on the policy of the Government, it must necessarily drive army reformers on both sides of the House into their respective party lobbies; and what might have been a helpful and patriotic discussion has been perverted into a mere party fight. This is much to be regretted. Still I presume the Leader of the Opposition had good reasons for his action, which must at any rate have earned the gratitude of the Secretary of State for War. While I do not propose to discuss the terms of the Amendment, I think I am entitled to suggest that we should weigh the value of the opinions of the right hon. Gentleman on this matter. When it comes to estimating the importance of his approval or disapproval of the Government scheme I must confess I do not think his own military record in the past has been particularly inspiring. While those of us who had the privilege of serving under him during his tour at the War Office have most pleasant reminiscences of him personally, I must say I think his administrative record may be fairly summed up as a deft and tactful blending of the *suaviter in modo* with the *debiliter in re*. And if he, himself, had ever shown the slightest practical enthusiasm for the cause of military reform his criticism on this occasion might have carried more conviction to his hearers. But it is difficult for us to forget the reasons which led to the defeat of the last Liberal Government, and more particularly to his own disappearance from

office in the year 1895.

I do not propose to inquire very closely into his criticisms of and strictures on the scheme now before the House, because I think that that task has been sufficiently performed by the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. But there are two points to which I think I ought to refer. The right hon. Gentleman asked, "In what possible circumstances could we ever have to send three army corps abroad again?" In reply to that I will only remind the House of a point with which, perhaps, every military student in this House is familiar, namely, that the Russian scheme for the invasion of India contemplates the British Empire reinforcing its present garrisons there by exactly three army corps. In fact, I believe that the Russian scheme of attack on India is drawn up mainly on that assumption. This alone goes to show that we should have the power to

send 120,000 men, or three army corps, out of this country in case of need. The second point to which I must refer is one upon which I feel bound to express a protest against the unmerited slur which the Leader of the Opposition cast upon the officers of the Volunteer force. He stated that the weak point of the Militia and the Volunteer forces (and especially the Volunteers) is to be found in their officers. I cannot say what has been the experience of the right hon. Gentleman in Scotland; but, speaking for my own part of the country; the south of England; and the headquarters of a big Volunteer brigade are located in my constituency; I venture to say that the weak point does not rest with the Volunteer officers, and I feel sure that the remark of the right hon. Gentleman will be deeply resented by Volunteers throughout the country.

I now pass to the speech of the hon. Gentleman the junior Member for Oldham. I was deeply impressed with its sentiment and real eloquence, but at the same time I must confess that I was deeply disappointed with its substance. I cannot but believe that its principles are curiously unsound. But it had one unexpected result. I see that my hon. friend has already been hailed by the chief organ of the Radical party, in tones of deep emotion, as the future Prime Minister of the Liberal party, and whilst I am sure we should be exceedingly sorry on this side of the House to lose the benefit of his services, I at the same time think he would be doing a really patriotic service to both parties if he were to consider the advisability of lifting up again that "tattered flag" which now lies so low in the dust. I think that those who listened to his speech must have been struck in the first place by its marked hereditary flavour. I have myself such a respect for the genius of my hon. friend that I cannot help expressing the belief that the opinions he gave utterance to in that speech were more the outcome of filial sentiment than of his own deliberate judgment. And I venture to say to him that it is not well to confuse filial piety with public duty, and he must not think that he can succeed in a policy in the advocacy of which a "certain splendid memory" failed. I sincerely sympathise with his expression of sentiment on this occasion, but this is not the time to parade or pursue family traditions. It is rather the time to take occasion by the hand and strenuously to support any Minister who is honestly endeavouring to reform and improve the Army.

My hon. friend's text was economy and retrenchment. Of course, those are most praiseworthy virtues, but I think it is a great mistake to elevate them into a mere fetish, blindly to be worshipped. I cannot help thinking that, after all, insurance is the best and truest form of economy, and that this great expenditure upon our Army and Navy is the best form of national insurance. My hon. friend says we are paying too high a premium, and asks, why has it gone up so tremendously of late years? Simply because, as in business, the risk has increased, and with it the cost of insurance. My hon. friend pointed out, very truly, that since the year 1886 our naval and military expenditure has doubled, and he asserted that there has been nothing in the action of foreign Powers to justify that increase. I say, on the contrary, there has been very good reason. The relative strength of foreign Powers on the Continent has greatly increased in that period, and in proof of that I may be allowed to quote a few figures. Since 1886 the expenditure of Germany on her navy has quadrupled, that of Russia has more than doubled, and that of France has gone up over 60 per cent. Thus in the case of those three great nations combined the expenditure upon their navies in the period mentioned has more than doubled. It may be said, "What has that to do with our Army expenditure?" My reply is that it has a very great deal to do with it, because the armies of the Continent cannot be a danger to England until their naval strength has been sufficiently developed to enable them to land those armies upon our shores.

I suppose it is not in order to refer specifically to the Amendment of my hon. friend the Member for Oldham, because he did not move it. But I think he himself will admit that the speech which he delivered last night was originally designed to introduce that Amendment, and therefore I am at liberty to refer to certain points in it.

He spoke of the extraordinary pressure existing at the War Office, and made a curious insinuation, which can have no other meaning but that on account of the pressure the present Secretary of State and Commander-in-Chief are not sufficiently compos mentis to undertake Army reform. A cursory inspection of the Secretary of State will, I think, sufficiently dispel that delusion, and I am not aware that either physically or intellectually the powers of Lord Roberts show any fatal diminution. The hon. Member for Oldham then advocates postponing the "final decision" on questions of military reform. What does he mean by that? There can be no such thing as a final decision in military reform. There can never be finality in military matters. You cannot even stand still. You must either go forward or backward, and I believe that in this case we are going forward. He talked about postponing military reforms until "calmer times," but is our military house to remain in disorder while we are waiting for these calmer times? How does he know that we have calmer times ahead of us? Suppose the times grow stormier? Are we still to wait? The Chief Secretary has likened my hon. friend to a blunderbuss, but I feel rather inclined to liken him to a cautious old lady who finds it so difficult to make up her mind to cross Piccadilly that when eventually she does start she has reached such a distracted and disorganised frame of mind that she must inevitably fall a prey to the first passing omnibus. Both my hon. friend and leader of the Opposition seem to fear

that if we get a stronger Army under this or any other scheme it will turn our heads and incite us to assume the role of a provocative bully among the nations of the world. How many more times is this ancient and time-worn fallacy to be brought before the House? It has been paraded over and over again, and it has been shown equally often that it is based on a complete misconception. It is the foolish boy who has acquired a cheap new pistol for the first time that is a danger to the community, and not the experienced man who acquires the best weapon in the market, who is thoroughly well versed in the use of it, and who, if he is

attacked or if he finds it necessary to meet any act of aggression, uses the weapon in the most effective way. I hope we shall not hear any more of this danger of having a strong Army. It is easy to scoff at military expenditure in times of peace, and to acquire a cheap popularity by advocating the cutting down of that expenditure. But a million pounds saved in times of peace will often turn into ten or fifty millions wasted in time of war, and it is little satisfaction to a wounded or ruined nation that it can hang to the nearest lamp-post the so-called "economists." who misled it in times of peace.

Now I pass on to some of the details of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme. I cannot help feeling that, possibly with the very best intentions, hon. Members have gone the wrong way to work in criticising this scheme, seeing that, because they differ from it in certain details, they attack it root and branch. Hon.

Members would do better if they devoted their energies to improving, if possible, the Government scheme, rather than by putting forward great projects of their own. One fact does not seem to be sufficiently recognised in this connection. The scheme before us is the only one advanced by a responsible authority; therefore we cannot very well displace it, but we may do a great deal to improve it. There is, in fact, no alternative scheme, because there is no alternative Government. For that we have the authority of the chief Opposition whip. I know that the right hon. Gentleman the Member for East Fife does not agree with him; but, of course, that is not surprising. And I must confess that, looking across to the other side of the House, I do not see that ideal Secretary for War, who would eclipse the present holder of the office by the brilliancy of his reforms. I therefore propose to make the best I can of the present Secretary for War. In discussing this scheme, I must admit that one of my chief objections to it was removed last night by the statement of the Chief Secretary for Ireland that the army corps are not to be of the continental pattern, but more in the nature of great military commands for the purpose of decentralisation. That, I think, is an extremely important admission. And

when it comes to the vitally important point of selecting the generals for these great commands I hope it will be remembered that it will be necessary to pay such a salary as will secure the best possible men for these positions. It occurs very often that the best men cannot take such posts because of the great expense attached to them, and I therefore trust that these commands will be paid in such a way that the best men in the service, however deficient in private means, will be able to take them. I must say I think that the idea of an army corps organisation for defence will bear inspection, because it will help to

encourage the Auxiliary forces, which are too much neglected at the present moment. But for over-sea purposes the case is different. You cannot ship an army corps over sea. It never has been done, and never will be done. I know it is contended in very high places that the first duty of our Army is home defence, but that is an ancient and exploded heresy. The defence of the British Empire does not merely consist in the defence of these islands. While it is necessary, of course, in the last fatal resort that we should have an organised force to repel a foreign invasion, the real defence of the British Empire, in almost all conceivable contingencies, will be not in these islands, but on the frontiers of the enemy beyond the seas. On these grounds I would advocate the transfer of one of these first three army corps to South Africa, where it would be near the strategic centre of the Empire, and in a position to reinforce India at the shortest possible notice, instead of being cooped up in these islands with no suitable facilities for the war training of either officers or men. I really think that this point should commend itself to the Secretary of State for War. It does not materially alter his scheme, because it would merely substitute for the mixed force which he proposes to have in South Africa one of his first three army corps. I myself also believe that this plan would open up a new field for recruiting. It is said by some that the Dutch in South Africa would not enlist in the British Army after this war, but that is contrary to all our experience, which shows that when we have conquered even the most irreconcilable foes they have shown every desire to enter our forces.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): Can the hon. Gentleman give an instance of a civilised and white nation having done that?

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: I presume the hon. Gentleman would call the Highlanders of Scotland a white and civilised nation. I believe that for some time to come we should have no difficulty in recruiting from the white races in South Africa, because after the war it is certain that there will be a large number both of British and Dutch who will be sadly in want of employment, and who would welcome the chance of serving in the Army.

Now I come to the really crucial point of the whole scheme, and that is the provision of the men. The Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant in his speech yesterday said that the most important thing was to get "a proper design for your house," and that "it did not matter much about the material." But I think he would need the bricks; and the bricks of this scheme are, after all, the men. The Secretary of State for War has hitherto observed a somewhat sphinx-like silence on this point, but doubtless he will break it on Thursday. I do not believe that the explanation of his silence is that he is trying to lead us on to conscription. He is well aware that conscription is entirely inapplicable to foreign service, and that our Army must be a foreign service army. Therefore the only alternative, in my opinion, is to improve the inducements held out to men to enlist. One way is to increase the pay. The official rejoinder to that is that it is "all a question of money." I do not believe it is all a question of money in the sense of providing more money. It is rather a question of the better distribution of the money already voted. The present Estimates show an enormous force on paper, a considerable portion of which must necessarily be

ineffective. If we trim down that force to its effective strength we shall have a smaller force on paper, but a vastly more effective force in reality, and it would not be necessary to trim it down very far. I have already indicated in the public press how I believe that money would be actually saved to the public purse by this means, and I will not again inflict my views, in detail, upon the House. Briefly, my contention is that we should offer a rate of pay equivalent to 1s. 8d. per day (to grown men only, of course), and to supplement that by subsequent progressive increments. If that were done for men of good age and of good physique, intelligence, and character, you would not be committing yourself hopelessly to raising the pay of the entire Army until you got a clear indication of how that scheme would work. My contention is, in any case, that it is useless to have a vast army on paper, and I may again refer to the analogy of China. A favourite device of the Chinese is to make paper guns and paper forts, in order to intimidate the foe, but I most strongly deprecate this slavish adherence of the War Office to Chinese methods. Moreover, paper guns and forts in China cost nothing, whereas our paper soldiers cost £60 a year each. The official explanation of this is that boys will grow and become efficient soldiers. Of course many of them do; but meantime it is a ridiculous misrepresentation to include those boys in the effective strength of the Army. It would be far better to strike them off altogether, and to use the money now wasted on them in giving better pay to the rest of the Army. I think it is more important that we should have a slightly smaller Army on paper than to retain a large portion of the Army as a kindergarten or a cadet corps.

I know my noble friend the Financial Secretary to the War Office regards this portion of my scheme with very critical disapproval, and I know that his argument will be, "How do you know, if we did raise the pay, that we should get the men we require?" Well, of course, it must be to a certain extent an experiment, but I have brought forward the only evidence there is on the subject; namely, the evidence of the American army, and we would only be following the inexorable law of supply and demand. Why should the wages of the Army alone remain stationary when the wages of every other trade have increased steadily for a hundred years? Why should the apprentice in the Army be paid the same wages as the trained man? The principle of progressive pay is, in any case, very important, even if you

do not increase the minimum wage. The Secretary of State for War said that it was of the "utmost importance that we should get in future men of better intelligence," and, I think, in this connection it would interest the House if I called its attention for a moment to perhaps the most efficient army we have ever had in this country; I mean Cromwell's army. Macaulay, referring to that army, says that "the pay of the private soldier was much above the wages earned by the great body of the people," and that its ranks were consequently composed of men of superior education. He then adds;

"In war this force was irresistible. It never found, either in the British Islands or on the Continent, an enemy who could stand its onset."

So, increased pay was the means adopted by Cromwell to secure high-class and

intelligent soldiers, and if it was important to get that class of man in his time, it is infinitely more important in these days. And in reply to this demand for evidence I would ask the Financial Secretary to bring forward, if he can, any particle of evidence to show that a good class of men will enlist in the future at a rate of wages which is much below the current wages in the labour market. It is sometimes contended that the pay of the soldier was raised three years ago, and that that did not benefit recruiting. That is a delusive argument. The pay was raised nominally, I admit, but it was raised in such a way that unless the recruit had a fair smattering of mathematics he was not aware that he was any better off than under the old system. The soldier was only relieved of certain stoppages which he had always regarded as unjust; and even now he does not get a clear shilling a day. To have any effect, you must increase the pay by a good round sum; something which the recruit can understand. It will not be sufficient to promise him a pension, the contingency is too remote, and if you want to get a good class of recruit you must make the immediate prospect of a soldier's life more attractive than the life you are asking him to leave. Having done that, you must also, of course, abolish rules and restrictions which may be suitable for boys, but which are not suitable for grown men. I hope the Secretary of State will study the privileges given to soldiers of the United States army, such as separate dining rooms, oilcloth tablecloths, and glasses and knives. Men care a great deal about these things, and they cost very little. The privilege of being allowed to wear plain clothes on certain occasions, extended to men of good character, is especially appreciated in the American army, and to be deprived of it is considered to be a most serious punishment. I will not press the necessity of getting the same high standard physically that at present obtains in the American army. I do not think it is necessary. If we get men of twenty years of age, well developed and with intelligence, that is sufficient. I think that it is important that we should get men as nearly twenty years of age as possible, because then, as soon as they have received a smattering of training they can be sent abroad to foreign stations, if necessary. Against this it is said, "But how magnificently our boys did in South Africa." Of course they did well, but the best work, I maintain, was done by the men of the Reserve. The Chief Secretary, in his speech, drew a moving picture of the casualties at Pieters Hill at which it was found that every man found dead close up to the Boer trenches was a Reservist, and this, I think, goes to prove my contention. The next thing, and it is of great importance, is to encourage the private soldier to bring his friends into the Army. Why should not every soldier be turned into a recruiting agent, and get, say, a 5s. bonus when he brings in a good recruit? Why should recruiting be restricted to a few men? It would be a great incentive to soldiers if they really knew they could increase their allowance by bringing their friends into the Army. I think it was somewhat of a mistake on the part of my right hon. friend to announce in the way he did the rates of pay to the specially selected Volunteers under the new scheme. It is generally believed in the country that these men are to receive 5s. a day, whereas, as a matter of fact, most of that money will not be given to the men,

but will go towards the expense of keeping them in camp, and they will not get much more than 1s. 3d. to spend on themselves. If that were generally known, the right hon. Gentleman's statement would probably not have such a bad effect on recruiting for the Regular Army.

There are numerous other important points upon which I should like to touch, but I do not wish to take up the time of those who wish to follow me. Amongst other vital points, however, there is the question of the formation of the general staff. That is a point upon which the Secretary of State has not committed himself either way, and it is quite compatible with the present scheme. Then there is the position of the Commander-in-Chief, a most vital point in any scheme of military reform. The question of musketry training I brought before the House on another occasion. Since then I have received a copy of the new regulations of the United States army on the subject, and I find that a sum of 37s. 6d. is allowed to each soldier, every year, for ammunition, which gives him something like 400 rounds for practice, so that it is little wonder that their shooting is better than ours. Now I am anxious, in conclusion, to make my position with regard to this scheme quite clear. I do not pretend that the scheme is an ideal one, or that it is the best which could be evolved, and it certainly does not represent finality in military reform; but it does contain many valuable points, and it seems to me that it would be a fatal mistake on our part to decline to accept those points simply because the whole scheme is not the best that could be contrived. The situation, as I see it, is like a tug of war with men pulling on both sides. When we get a few inches of the rope on our side of the line we dig our heels into the ground and pull again. We do not, because we cannot get the other side over the line with one pull, throw down the rope and say we will not play any more. The present state of affairs presents a unique opportunity. We have the nation aroused and eager in the cause of military reform; we have a Parliament specifically charged with this very task; we have a popular Commander-in-Chief, and a Secretary of State who is strong and fearless, and deeply impressed with his opportunities. And yet the hon. Member for Oldham asks us to neglect these

vast opportunities and to postpone this matter until "calmer times" !
MR. WINSTON CHURCHILL (Oldham): No. I said postpone the grandiose portion.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: I do not know what my hon. friend means by the grandiose portion, but I think instead of condemning this scheme in toto the more patriotic course would be to give the right hon. Gentleman our general support in the lobby, and at the same time to express the confident hope that he will welcome any serious criticism that is passed on the scheme and remedy its more serious defects. I do not for a moment believe that he intends to force through this scheme as it stands at the moment without modification. I believe when he comes to speak he will explain many things that we have not understood with regard to the details of his proposals, and if he does that, I for one, to use his own historic phrase, am prepared to put my money on the right hon. Gentleman and to support him in the lobby. Let him adopt as the motto of his scheme "Esse quam videri," and if he does that he will not only have smoothed his own path in

the future, but he will have earned the lasting gratitude of both the Army and of the country.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): It is only fair that on this great question of army reform a few words should be heard on behalf of the Irish party, because the military policy of the Government has cast upon Ireland a burden which she can ill bear, staggering, as she has already been for many years, under the weight of over taxation. But before I address myself to the question now being discussed by the House I desire to offer the hon. Member for Oldham the testimony of my enthusiastic admiration for the speech he made last night, and I speak now not in the ordinary sense of one who has listened to a brilliant speech, but as an old Member of the House, who has sat here for twenty years, and I say it is not often that we listen to a speech of true sentiment and great eloquence, and when we do I think it is the duty of the older Members of the House to offer their congratulations. There are some of us here who remember performances of his father in the days of his greatness in this House, and perhaps the hon. Member for Oldham will pardon me if I say his father never did better than he did last night, and I have not seen a young Member of this House spring so suddenly and decisively to the front rank of debate. The hon. Member for Oldham has received but grudging praise from his own side of the House. I heard just now the hon. Member for North Fareham hint, in no gallant way, that the fate of the hon. Member for Oldham decorating a lamp post;

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: No, no.

MR. DILLON: That was the fate he held out to economists. And the hon. Gentleman the Member for Oldham treated the matter as an economist. If the power of eloquence would influence the people of this country, I know no one more qualified to exercise the power than the hon. Member for Oldham. And I, speaking on behalf of the Irish party, would invite the hon. Member for Oldham, for the sake of days long gone by, when we and his father, although politically opposed, always continued good friends, when he is threatened with that fate to take refuge in Ireland, where I guarantee he will receive protection. The hon. Member for Oldham was good enough to say in the course of his great speech that during the last five years the only protest against this ever-growing burden had come from these benches, and these benches alone. And he spoke the truth. We have been no parties to this burden, which in my opinion is fraught with great danger, and which is at the present moment drawing the life blood from Ireland. We have been told that the additional taxation to which this country has been subjected by reason of this expenditure is a mere fleabite to the wealth of England, and that it would show the world how vast are the resources of England; but if hon. Members sometimes visited, as I do, some of the working-class districts, they would find that the working men are beginning to count the cost. But this to Ireland is a vital question, a question of life and death. During the last five years, on this matter of increasing armaments alone, upwards of a million has been added to the taxation of Ireland, in spite of the constant protests of three-fourths of the representatives of that country in this House, and in spite of the fact that whatever may be the views of this country on Imperialism and mad enterprises in

all parts of the world, Ireland does not share them. And so far as Ireland is concerned we shall continue to resist every stage of this fatal error, fatal as I believe to Great Britain, and ten thousand times more fatal to Ireland. It is a remarkable fact in this great question of army reform that whereas in this country while the war fever was passing over the country recruiting increased enormously in Great Britain, in Ireland the contrary was the case. Ireland used to be one of your largest recruiting fields, and you always looked to that country as a successful recruiting ground for your Army. But the recruiting returns of Ireland have fallen largely because of our hatred of Imperialism. While the war fever in this country has been passing over the land and has made the war popular here, it has had the opposite effect in Ireland. An insurmountable difficulty in Ireland is that the supply is drying up, and I believe that process will go on, and you will have to build your future schemes of Army reform on the calculation that Ireland, as a recruiting field, will have to be less looked to by this House. It is my deep conviction that this increase of the military forces of this country will act and react upon the foreign policy of Great Britain. This is bound to be the result if you persist in increasing the number of general officers and others, and also the number of your soldiers. At present life in the Army is rather dull and idle, and the men are always eager for war. They are always a strong power in favour of warlike enterprises, and the more you increase the number of your great military officers and the rank and file of the Army the more will you increase the tendency towards warlike enterprises. Therefore, I say that every million which you add to the military expenses of this country is increasing the risk of great wars, and this fact is used as an argument in favour of the addition of fresh millions to our military expenditure. We are told of the "commitments" of this country in three or four continents, and we hear about the designs of Russia in regard to India and Manchuria. We know that there are large sections of the community clamouring for increased armaments and for a forward policy in China. Suppose we did go to war with Russia, what use would our six army corps be? They would be simply of no account, and our military expenditure would immediately be doubled and trebled within one year in such a warlike enterprise. It is the liability of these enterprises which is so calmly quoted by military gentlemen and Jingo newspapers as a reason why we should increase our Army without limit. There is another consideration to be borne in mind, and it is the growing spirit which every man who loves peace, and who believes that the State should be conducted with a view rather to peace than to war, must watch with alarm; I allude to the tendency of great officers in active command to apply themselves to politics. I do not think we have ever had before such exhibitions of this nature as we have had lately. They spring from this growing military spirit, and from the pass to which things have been brought. These great military officers have come to look upon the House of Commons with contempt, and as a body which ought to vote any amount of money which they may require. It is no use for me now to go through the catalogue of speeches of that kind which have been made recently in this country. There is hardly a military officer who has returned from South Africa who has not

delivered political speeches and criticised the action of the Government. The very last speech of this kind was delivered by a very distinguished man, Sir Reginald Pole-Carew, who stated that, although he was not sanguine as to the result of the war, he was satisfied that there must not be any further negotiations. That statement was made in face of the fact that we have been told that;

*MR. SPEAKER: This has nothing to do with the question before the House.

MR. DILLON: I will pass from that subject, which I think I might have been allowed to allude to, because the hon. Member for Oldham, in his speech, took a very wide scope in this direction. Perhaps some other opportunity will be afforded me of dealing with this subject.

I turn now to the question of the lessons which have been learned from the South African war. We have heard it stated that one of the reasons why these reforms are to be applied to the Army without waiting for the first necessary reform; namely, the reform of the War Office, which has now been thrust into a back seat; is that we shall avail ourselves of the lessons of the war. The chief ground on which this precipitate action is taken is that we have been taught great lessons from the South African war, and we are told that we should avail ourselves of those lessons while they are fresh in our memory. I was reading, the other day, a book written by a gentleman who has had great experience in military matters, and he approached the consideration of the war with a perfectly open mind. This book was written by Count Adalbert Sternberg, who, at the commencement of the war, offered his sword to the British Government, and they refused it, whereupon he went over and offered his sword to Dr. Leyds and afterwards fought with Cronje. He came home from Cronje's camp to England, and he was entertained by the First Lord of the Treasury and the Secretary for War. If any members of the Irish party had been seen talking to Dr. Leyds we should immediately have been denounced as the King's enemies. He must have been considered a man of distinction and ability, or else the First Lord of the Treasury would not have entertained him. His book is an exceedingly interesting one and well worthy of consideration. He says the great lesson of this war ought to be to teach Continental powers to seek quality in their armies rather than quantity. He goes on to say that there was a great blunder committed by the English

during this war in the quality of the men they sent out. He says;

"What is the use of a battalion 1,000 strong, none of whom can hit anything, and who could not hit a house at 100 yards? Give me 50 Boers, and I will bet 1,000 such men will not dislodge them from their position."

He goes on at great length to elaborate this as the main lesson of the war, and I believe he is right. The main lesson of the war is that quality is what we ought to seek for, and not quantity. I am now speaking from a purely military point of view. This is the great lesson of the war, and I say that from the beginning to the end of this grand scheme, which is to put £2,000,000 or £3,000,000 on the Estimates, and which will cost the country many millions more in the course of the next two or three years, there is not a shadow of evidence that the Government have considered this main lesson of the war, and there is no

proof of a decision to improve the quality and cut down the quantity. The one remedy of the Government is to increase the number of the Auxiliary forces without any reference to the quality. The military men, who generally monopolise these debates, will no doubt look with contempt and scorn on an ignorant outsider taking part in these debates and putting forward his views. But what would the gallant officers opposite have said if a farmer like De Wet or Delarey had undertaken to lecture them on the art of war? And yet De Wet, Delarey, and Louis Botha have all given the British officers a great many lessons in the art of warfare. It has often happened in the past that an ignorant outsider, if he has a little common sense, can give even an expert some hints and make useful observations upon a matter of this kind. I said that the chief lesson of this war was the fact that what the Government should seek for is quality and not quantity. In no single important battle have the English soldiers succeeded except where they outnumbered the Boers by three to one, or ten to one. In the only case in which a signal victory on any considerable scale was won by the British army, that of Paardeberg, the British troops outnumbered the Boers by ten to one. Even with 40,000 men against 4,000 the British were afraid of Cronje, and they only succeeded in forcing him to surrender by bombarding him for seven days with 100 guns.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, West Houghton): Will the hon. Member kindly give us his authority for stating that the strength of the British force at Paardeberg was 40,000?

MR. DILLON: I may be wrong, but I gathered that impression from the despatches; but, in any case, it will not be denied that at the one great British victory, which was won at Paardeberg, the Boers were greatly outnumbered, and they had suffered heavily from a rearguard action. Upon the first occasion, when you closed with the Boers before Paardeberg, they defeated the British army, who outnumbered them by eight or nine to one, and you were afraid to close with them until you had bombarded them at Paardeberg for seven days with 100 guns. This war has shown that the Boers are more than a match for the English soldiers man to man.

This appears to me to be the great lesson of this war, and it can only be accounted for by two or three considerations. In the first place, I do not question the bravery of your men, but they were not equal to the Boers in physique, and they were not the quality of men which you ought to have in the British Army. In the second place, your men were not trained. I admit that our information upon these matters is very imperfect, but the noble Lord himself is the man who is mostly responsible for this state of things. It is an extraordinary thing, which ought to be explained, that the British Army was unable to cope with these Boer farmers except when they had an enormous majority on their side. Your men were insufficiently trained, and they were not good marksmen, and your officers had not been sufficiently trained to have sufficient initiative under the conditions in which they were placed. My third reason is that the system is bad as regards the training and education of the British officer, and one thing you will have to look to in the future is a total revolution in the system of officering

the Army, so that the ranks of the officers will be thrown open to everybody, and not kept as a kind of society preserve for wealthy men who can afford to draw large sums of money from their fathers' estates. Those appear to be the chief lessons which are to be derived from the war in South Africa. These proposals for the reform of the Army have been brought up by the Government without the slightest regard to anything that has occurred in South Africa. I should say that the first thing the Army requires is such a reform and change in the War Office as will remove all the abuses which have been admitted on all sides. No-body has a word to say in defence of the War Office, for the system there has resulted in one of the greatest scandals that has ever occurred in connection with the War Office, namely, the collision between Lord Lansdowne and the late Commander-in-Chief in the House of Lords. I cannot conceive how any Government can have the face to come to this House and ask the heavily-burdened and long-suffering taxpayers of this country to find more money for the War Office to spend without grappling with the problem of the reorganisation of the War Office, and without dealing with the dispute which arose between the late Secretary of State for War and Lord Wolseley. The difficulty which the Government have always felt is a social difficulty, and the social influences are so strong that even this strong Government shrinks from tackling the reform of the War Office.

You have also to deal with the question of recruiting. No one who examines the Return of the Inspector General of Recruiting can deny the importance of this question, and you cannot get the proper number of suitable men for your Army unless you make some change in your system of recruiting. If you want a really effective Army, you will have to substantially increase the pay of the soldiers, not by 1d. or 2d. per day, but by some substantial sum, and you must reduce the paper number of your Army. I am now speaking from the point of view of getting value for your money. If you cut off 50,000 men from your paper number, and devote the money to

increasing the pay, then I believe your Army would be much more effective as a fighting weapon. If you desire to have an effective Army you must make the career of the soldier one which will induce any self-respecting and superior man to enter the Army. You can only do this in one way, and that is by democratising the Army and teaching the common soldier that it is possible for him to rise, step by step, through the various grades to the rank of officer, and convincing him that no obstruction will be thrown in his path. You might improve recruiting perhaps by offering 1s. 3d. or 1s. 9d. per day for a period of three years. At the end of three years, if the men were healthy, well-behaved, and free from disease, they might be given the option of serving for a longer period at an increased rate of pay, with the knowledge that if they were sufficiently intelligent a certain number of them would be drafted into the military colleges and educated as officers. If you intend to have a genuine spirit in the Army you must do something of this kind. We know that some officers are promoted from the ranks, but it is only done occasionally. I believe General Hector Macdonald was a case of this kind. But, generally, the men who are promoted in this way find themselves in a foreign atmosphere, and it is altogether a false system. This

class distinction should be as far as possible abolished, and it can only be abolished in the way I have indicated, combined with a reasonable increase in the pay of officers and men. We want such regulations in the Army as will teach the young gentlemen who now join the Army with a thousand a year to spend that they are not wanted. If you must have these Line regiments, which are really useless, then why not set a few regiments aside for millionaires and other wealthy people, and let the rest of the Army be worked upon democratic principles. If the principles adopted by the British Army had been applied to the Boer Army in South Africa, I suppose that men like De Wet and Delarey, and some of the best of the Boer generals, would have been serving in the ranks, and some incompetent gentlemen from Johannesburg would have been the officers in command. If the principles upon which the British Army was organised had been enforced among the Boers many of the men who have come so much to the front would have found their upward progress blocked and barred by wealthy but incompetent men, and they would have struggled in vain against social influences. These appear to me to be the chief grounds for instituting a real reform of the Army.

I desire now to say a word or two with reference to recruiting. I have already stated that, in my opinion, the seriousness of this question is greatly increased by the fact that the Irish supply is drying up. God knows it is time that they did dry up. Irishmen fought your battles in the Peninsular War, and for nearly a whole century half the British Army was composed of Irish Catholics. And what have we got for all this? The homes of our people have been desolated, and the population of Ireland, where you looked with assurance for your best soldiers, whose physique is never questioned, has been reduced to one-half by persecution and outrage. And now, when there is not a battlefield in Europe upon which the bones of Irish soldiers are not lying, the Catholics of Ireland are set down as superstitious idolaters. But this policy is bearing its fruit, and you will not have so many superstitious idolaters recruited from Ireland in the future. It has been a miserable failure, and why? Because you have flouted our people, and at the same time you ask them to come into your ranks. You have now got to go to Scotland to get recruits for your Irish Guards. The Report goes on to say that the situation is most critical, and that unless something is done it will be impossible in years to come to get the number of men actually required. It is not only a fact that recruiting generally is falling off in Ireland, but the recruiting has fallen off on account of the war fever and directly proportionate to it. This is because the Irish people hate the war and consider it unjust. There are three districts in Ireland where recruiting takes place. In the Dublin recruiting district the total number passed for the Regular Army in 1897 was 1,709; in 1898, 1,693; in 1899, 1,504; and in 1900 the total fell off by about 200 men. In the Cork district the falling off was still heavier. The numbers were: 1,300 in 1897; 1,391 in 1898; 1,166 in 1899; and 965 in 1900. You have a steady falling off in the recruiting in every part of Ireland except in the city of Belfast. I desire to bring this fact under the notice of the Government as evidence of the true feeling of the Irish people in regard to this war. Without

pretending to have any great enthusiasm for the British Army, I have stated honestly and frankly what I believe to be the only lines upon which you can get an effective Army in this country. Under other circumstances Irishmen might take an interest of a different character in this matter, but under present circumstances it is only in the spirit of aloofness that I can address myself to this question to-day. On the other aspect of this; question; which ought not to be left out; I allude to the consequences which arise from the spreading of Imperialism and a desire for foreign adventure and increased expenditure on armaments; I am proud and glad to say that the voice of Ireland is practically alone in this House, with the exception of a few labour Members and the hon. Member for Northampton. I hope that the tattered banner, which they have so eloquently held up during the past five years, will once more be raised, and that those who are anxious for the greatness and the prosperity of the people of this country, and who are the true friends of justice, will rally round that flag.

LORD STANLEY: I rise with much diffidence and trepidation amid the shower of blunderbuss slugs, shells of high velocity, and paper pellets. I am asking the leave of the House to allow me to go over the ground which has now been traversed, and I will as far as lies in my power endeavour to meet some of the criticisms which have been made against this scheme. Any one who does not know the House may think that for the Government at the present moment there is a certain element of danger. An Amendment has been brought forward by the Leader of the Opposition as a vote of censure on our scheme; and tagged on to it are several other Amendments, mostly, I admit, by hon. Members on this side of the House, dealing with

questions connected with the scheme. But any one like myself, who has had the experience of being a Whip in this House knows that there is little danger of those hungry Members on this side rejecting the loaf; of those who are hungry for Army reform rejecting this bread, although they may think it not quite up to their requirements, for the empty platter of the opposite side. There is one thing that is very apparent also, and it is that the number of Amendments on the Paper would make any Secretary of State realise that it is hopeless to expect that any scheme will meet with the approval of everybody. I am perfectly convinced that if we were living in the old days, and one of the gods from above had come down with a heaven-born scheme, I should have been perfectly prepared to have seen at least six hon. Members of this House who would have controverted every statement in it. But I will now pass on to the general line of opposition contained in the particular statements which have been made by hon. Members and right hon. Gentlemen on the opposite side.

The right hon. Gentleman who moved the Amendment a few days ago indulged in chaff as to the comfort he found in sitting on a fence, and when we saw this Amendment we realised that warily and very gingerly the right hon. Gentleman was preparing to come down from his comfortable seat on one side, and we watched to see on which side he would come down. But at present we are left in extraordinary doubt, for while the Amendment shows him to have come down on one side, his speech shows him to be equally ready to come down on the other. If the

right hon. Gentleman should ever go back to his post at the War Office, where he was once, I think, the most popular gentleman, personally, who ever occupied it, he would find no difficulty in suiting his policy of inaction or action to either the Amendment or the speech, which ever suits the occasion. What is it that the right hon. Gentleman criticises in our scheme? The right hon. Gentleman makes two suggestions, and, if I may say so, two sneers. First, as to the suggestion that the garrison battalions should go to South Africa, it is not often that the War Office is allowed to claim credit for getting a little ahead of a suggestion, but that is the case in this respect. The wording is expressly drawn so as to include non-tropical stations, and if I may say so without any breach of confidence, at the time when it was intended to form these garrisons I myself very strongly urged that South Africa should be one of the stations to which they should go, and I have every reason to hope that in future some of them will be stationed there. I believe the climate is good for man, woman, and child, and I look to the establishment there of English families as a pledge for the future security and peace of the country. Another suggestion made by the right hon. Gentleman is that more latitude should be given to men to be out of uniform, which he thought would be very much appreciated. I must say that I was very much in agreement with the right hon. Gentleman on that point, but at the same time I would not like such a course to be authorised if it would give any colour to the supposition that to wear the uniform of this country is in any way a disgrace. Sooner would I see a man proud of his uniform, and the people of this country if possible educated to regard that uniform not as a badge of slavery, but as a badge of all possible honour.

The right hon. Gentleman has referred to what my right hon. friend has said as to the appointment of officers to the generals' list, but when my right hon. friend made his statement he was thinking not only of the past but of the future. Only a few weeks before my right hon. friend in the exercise of his office, and on the direct advice of the Commander-in-Chief, had removed an officer from his command. I will draw the right hon. Gentleman's attention to the fact that although that was done by the Secretary of State, with the advice of the Commander-in-Chief, an ex-Secretary of State for War has voted that the whole question should be reopened. As to the education of officers, the right hon. Gentleman gave expression to what was, I think, an ill-merited sneer at the public school training of this country. I cannot possibly agree with the right hon. Gentleman on this matter. I am one of those persons who was educated at what may be called a military public school; Wellington College; and I am bound to say the result has not been satisfactory. But that is entirely due to myself, and not to the methods; occasionally extremely drastic methods; which were tried to instil knowledge into me. The system of the education of officers is one very difficult to alter. There is not the slightest doubt that the present officer is, in many respects, the highest ideal you can possibly have of a regimental officer. He is bold to a fault, and, above all, he is a leader of men; and it is impossible to deny the fact that he has gained these qualities, or to a great extent gained

them, through his public school training. But a Committee is now considering the question of the education of officers, and I feel perfectly certain that if they should recommend a particular form of education better suited to the needs and interests of boys who are intended to become officers, the headmasters of the public schools of this country would be willing to adopt it; and, further, it is the duty of the Government not only to give that advice to the headmasters, but to introduce any reforms proved to be necessary at Sandhurst, Woolwich, and the Staff College, to ensure that officers receive that training which will best equip them for the efficient discharge of their duties in the Army. The right hon. Gentleman also criticised the name "army corps" and the name "Imperial Yeomanry." My right hon. friend the Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant dealt very exhaustively with that point, and I think he was able to remove some, at all events, of the misapprehensions of the right hon. Gentleman with regard to the army corps. The right hon. Gentleman objected to the name "Imperial Yeomanry" because it did not possess, at present at all events, that Imperial character he would like to see. A large proportion of the Yeomanry force which went out to South Africa were yeomen, although they were not trained in the Yeomanry ranks, and they proceeded to the front, together with the trained Yeomanry, as the "Imperial Yeomanry." That force has won for itself a name in South Africa which is just as distinguished as the name borne by any of the regiments in His Majesty's service; and the Government propose to retain the name "Imperial Yeomanry," in the hope of inducing that class of men to serve in its ranks who hitherto, in time of peace, have not joined the ordinary Yeomanry. Complaint has also been made that the colonies have not been included in the Imperial Yeomanry. But the Government intend to bring forward a scheme to establish in the colonies a force composed of the same class of men, under the same rules and regulations, and fighting, if necessary, in the time to come under the same flag, under the same name, which a portion of them have certainly helped to make historic.

Through the speech of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Forest of Dean there seemed to me in listening to it, and still more in reading it, to run the hint that there was some disagreement, or at all events that there was not agreement, between the Secretary for War and the Commander-in-Chief. It is said that one man cannot serve two masters, but it is also proverbial that it requires an exception to prove the rule. I am endeavouring at the present moment to be the exception. In the position which I occupy I am bound politically to my right hon. friend the Secretary for War, and I am bound in every way it is possible for a man to be attached to another to my late chief, the Commander-in-Chief; and I found it perfectly possible to serve these two masters, because they are proceeding absolutely hand-in-hand together towards what they believe is the goal of success in the administration of the Army. I can say emphatically that if I found myself in a position in which I would have to follow my right hon. friend personally and put myself in opposition to the Commander-in-Chief, I should not have the slightest hesitation in putting myself out of the position in which I could not do justice to either of them. I might be regarded as a political barometer to show the temperature and the state of the weather between

the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of State, and I can assure the right hon. Baronet that the barometer has "set fair," and is likely to remain so.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I have no complaint to make of the words which the noble Lord has used; far from that; but to prevent any possible mistake I will repeat what I did say. I did not allege that there was a difference of opinion between the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of State. What I said was that the public utterances of the Commander-in-Chief, not only some time ago, but last week, showed that this scheme could not be his scheme.

LORD STANLEY: The Secretary of State first submitted a scheme to the Commander-in-Chief, but it was very different from the scheme which the united efforts of both have now put before the country. I know, because I saw both. The right hon. Baronet also alluded to a particular article which I had written advocating conscription. It is a terrible thing to have one's sins finding one out. That article was not a contribution to a recent review. The right hon. Baronet has said before that a frank candour sometimes disarms criticism. I have not the slightest objection to frank candour in the present case. It was, in fact, merely a paragraph written almost at a moment's notice to that distinguished but now defunct paper the Bloemfontein Friend. I would be equally frank in saying that although it represented my views at the moment, I would not go so far as to say it does not represent my views now. If I had known then that I was going to stand at this Table now I would not have been so candid. The right hon. Baronet, if I may say so without offence, reminds me irresistibly of a plaything of one's schoolboy days. He reminds me of the squirrel which used to be kept in a round cage, and which goes round and round with a great deal of satisfaction to himself and to those who are watching him, but no amount of hard work seems to get him any further forward. The right hon. Baronet is always perfectly consistent in that he is always ready to say, "This is a bad scheme," no matter whatever the scheme may be. Most people cannot help getting a sort of satanic delight in being able to say when anything goes wrong, "I told you so." The right hon. Baronet lives in a perpetual state of "I told you so." He is always ready to say it at times when the scheme has failed, but he is just as often ready to say it before the scheme has even been tried. In his yesterday's speech he was always harping on the one string; "This is a bad scheme; this is a scheme which has no good point in it;" and the reason he gave was that it did not embrace the whole of his scheme, and that what we want is elasticity. What he claims is that we should try to make a difference between the terms on which men should be called to enlist; and when he does that he absolutely refuses to see that we are trying, and have tried, to make different terms of enlistment, but that we are forced to go about that very slowly and very cautiously, because the slightest failure would bring us face to face with the fact that men whom we have enlisted for three years would refuse to go for ten, and we should be brought to a standstill in regard to our reliefs from India, with no possibility of our being able to get men for our annual requirements and for Ireland. I would be glad to see elasticity given to the terms of enlistment if combined with elasticity there was absolute safety that

the primary purpose of our Army, the sending of reliefs to India, were secured; but that I doubt.

I now turn to my hon. friend the Member for Oldham. Listening to him last night, I am bound to say that I did not hear much that dealt with the reform of the Army. The impression that the hon. Member's speech conveyed to my mind was that that form of oratory which has brought pleasure to everybody who heard him and, I trust, profit to the hon. Member himself in another continent, has not been wholly forgotten. He preached economy, but he showed us no way of attaining it. He said he advocated reform during his election, but the only reform he now preaches is reduction, and I doubt whether that was the reform which his Lancashire constituents believed he had in view. He speaks of the possibilities of war and its attendant horrors, but at the same time he urges that we should make no preparations to meet that war. One cannot help thinking that his speech was a quixotic attempt, which we must all admire, to take up again the cry of his distinguished father,

and to try and assist what is a fallen cause and bring it back to life; in fact, to bring back this country to the state it was before the late Lord Randolph Churchill resigned his position as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The hon. Member says that he is raising the banner of economy. It is nothing of the kind. It is the banner of false economy. It is the banner of diminishing our safeguards in order to procure a favourable Budget, and of endeavouring to minimise in every possible way the dangers that beset this Empire, simply with a view of not putting on the taxation which would otherwise be required. The hon. Member went on to ask what was the cause of this revolutionary feeling with regard to the Army, what had brought about this great increase, what had made the country demand it, and what has made successive Governments give it. I will tell the hon. Member in one sentence, and that is a sentence in the very letter he quoted last night. Lord Randolph Churchill, in that letter, used a phrase which has been the motive for all this increased expenditure. It was this: "I remember the vulnerable and scattered character of the Empire and the universality of our commerce." Lord Randolph's political extinction on that occasion drew attention to the fact, which had never been brought home to the country before, and never would have been brought home to the country except by some such method as Lord Randolph adopted, and from that day to this there has sprung up and has grown, not by the desire of Governments, but by the desire of the people who place those Governments in power, a determination that at all costs, and at whatever expenditure that may be required, "the vulnerable and scattered character of our Empire," in whatever part of the world it may be, should be defended. The hon. Member said that the result of this scheme would be that we would scamp the Navy, and fall between two stools. Does the hon. Member remember that at the time Lord Randolph Churchill objected to expenditure it was not only Army expenditure but also Navy expenditure? He then objected to eighteen millions for the Navy, which has now, I think, grown to something like thirty millions, and when the hon. Member tries to hold up this fallen banner, as he calls it, of economy he should remember that the Navy and the Army were equally dealt with when that banner fell, and that while we have doubled the expense of

our Army it has not increased so much as our Naval expenditure, to which Lord Randolph Churchill equally objected.

With regard to the hon. Member for Fareham, I will deal with his speech later, but there is one point he raised which I think he must have missed. He mentioned that it would be a good thing to reward a private soldier for bringing in a recruit. If he will look at paragraph 89 of the Recruiting Regulations he will find that that is already in force. Before discussing this scheme it is necessary to make it clear what we require an army for. There are three things which it seems to me are required, and as to which generally we shall be agreed. The first is for the defence of our home shores; the next is for the defence of our Colonies; and the third is a mobile force of attack. With regard to the first and second, we shall probably be generally agreed that a large force will be required to strengthen our Army in India, and that other forces will be required to strengthen our various coaling stations and Colonial possessions. It is probably with regard to the third requirement; a mobile force for attack; that we shall have most difference of opinion. Do not let me for one moment be thought to differ from those who look upon our Navy as being our first and principal line of defence. It has been so, and it must be so, and if we did not implicitly believe that we should have to ask for a much larger force than we are now asking for. What we want to do is this. We want to have a force that will be able to act in co-operation with the Navy. What has brought about the vast increase required with regard to the Navy? It is the protection of our waterways and our various Colonies and markets, which are almost synonymous. We have seen that these Colonies would require protection, and we have taken, so to speak, time by the forelock. We have done our best to place ourselves in command of the sea, and to keep open the waterways to our Colonies, but during the past few years while we have been strengthening our Navy other Powers have been strengthening their navies too, and at the same time, with perhaps a single exception, they have been acquiring possessions for themselves in the shape of colonies. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition, speaking some years back, said: "What do we want two army corps for? Surely not for foreign service. Who is going to send two army corps to the Continent?" We are separated from our neighbours on the mainland of Europe, but there is not another continent where we are not placed side by side with a foreign Power; and just as we have endeavoured to strengthen our position with regard to the safety of our waterways to the colonies, so the possession by other nations of colonies gives us undoubtedly weak spots in which to attack them, or, if attacked, to allow us to make some sort of counter attack; and it is to have a force available to assist the Navy in such an operation that it is proposed to have a force ready immediately on the outbreak of war to take the field. My knowledge of military history is small, and my memory is defective; but, at the same time, I cannot remember any great war of which it can be said that it was brought to a successful conclusion by acting entirely on the defensive, or a war in which a navy has been able to play not only a predominant, but the whole part. We have only got to look to quite recent years to know that. The superiority of the Japanese over the Chinese navy was soon apparent. The superiority of the

American navy over the Spanish navy was equally, or even more, apparent, but in each case a force of men had to be landed to give effect to the advantages which had been gained by the navy. It is with such a view that we are putting forward the principle of having an army corps ready to embark for abroad. When I say an army corps, it may not be necessary that a whole army corps should go; but I mean that for purposes of administration it is a good proposition to lay down, although only a part of an army corps, which may be thought necessary to effect our purpose, may be sent abroad.

I have ventured to lay down the general principle, and I should like now to refer to the methods by which these requirements are to be met. There are three possibilities. The first is to proceed on the old lines of pay, while trying to give rather more elasticity to enlistment, and at the same time endeavour by granting more money to the Auxiliary forces to secure them as an efficient aid to our Regular forces. The second is an increase of pay; and the third is conscription. The third is not before us, but at the same time it would not be right when we are putting forward these proposals that we should not have in view any alternative that may have to come before the country. To a certain extent I am a supporter of such a system. I cannot help thinking that it is the duty of every man in this or any other country to be prepared to take up arms in defence of that country. I think that it is a duty imposed upon us by citizenship, and I frankly and fairly admit that I should like to see a man at some period of his life instructed in such a way that, if he were called upon, he would be of service to his country. I admit that that is not a popular opinion, and it is not before the House at this moment, but I am entitled to hold my opinion. There is, to my mind, the one great disadvantage that conscription is an effectual bar to the colonising power which has made us so great an Empire.

Now I come to the scheme for increase of pay, and I think the whole argument on that point must be taken on the scheme that the hon. Member for Fareham has proposed. It is a taking scheme, because it is based on the precedent of a country which had similar views to our own and regarded voluntary effort as being indispensable. But we must remember that when we come to give an increase of pay we are going into a reform from which there can be no drawing back, as there might be in any other reform. Therefore, we must weigh two things; what is the expense to the country? and will the hon. Member's object be attained by the increase? I will ask the House to listen to a few figures which deal with the question of expense. To arrive at the good conduct pay of the scheme proposed by the hon. Member it would require on the Imperial establishment an increase of £;491,000 a year. To secure 9d. a day extra pay on the establishment which the hon. Member has put down, but which is not quite the same as that which appears in the Army Estimates, would require an increase of £;2,422,700 a year. The additional charge for abolishing stoppages would be, on the Imperial establishment, £;573,000 a year. That gives a total of £;3,487,000 a year increase. Then we must not overlook the burden that we should put on the Indian Empire. I should like the hon. Gentleman to take that into consideration in proposing his scheme. Does the hon. Gentleman know that his scheme would put

upon the Indian Government a charge which it might not be possible for them to meet, and that it might eventually fall upon this country? The increase in the Indian establishment would be £1,391,000 a year.

*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I can only say that the Government of India do not think so. That was the evidence before the Expenditure Commission. The whole of their evidence was that your army is more costly than theirs would be.

LORD STANLEY: Then I will leave that point entirely out of consideration. This large increase of pay of £3,487,000 should not be made unless, to a certain extent, it could be justified by results; and I ask the hon. Member to compare the increased pay with the ordinary wages of the class whom he hopes to attract into the Army. At the end of his seventh year a private soldier would be getting 2s. 2d. a day, or about 15s. a week, all found. I do not wish to labour this point and put forward all the advantages. I will take it on this basis alone.

After all the requirements for barracks and so forth are paid, how much would the man have to put into his own pocket? Fifteen shillings and twopence is roughly the amount the soldier would have to spend at the end of each week. Let us see how that compares with the wages of the classes whom it is desired to induce to come into the Army. I have obtained from the Board of Trade statistics relating to various trades which might furnish us with men for the Army. I have also asked an hon. Member of this House what he thought would be the amount that a labourer or an artisan; a single man; would spend for his keep, lodging, clothes, and food, and he told me that it might be 16s. in the case of the worst paid men and 18s. in the case of the better paid men.

MR. KEARLEY (Devonport): What do you allow an agricultural labourer's wages to be?

LORD STANLEY: I will deal with that later. If we take 18s. as the amount that would be spent, there is only one class of men; painters; who would not be left with more than the amount under the proposed scheme. There is no other class of men who would not be getting more to put in their pockets than the 15s. a week which this large expenditure would give to the private soldiers. As to the labourers, the Board of Trade Returns give 17s. 6d. a week as the wages of agricultural labourers and 25s. 6d. a week as the wages of other labourers. I venture to say that the present pay given to the soldier compares very favourably with the wages received in those two classes.

*MR. ARTHUR LEE: But you do not get the men.

LORD STANLEY: We have been able to keep a large Army in South Africa and to keep up the drafts for that army, and, as the right hon. Gentleman pointed out in the middle of last year, the battalions in South Africa were above establishment.

And we are able to compare favourably in the pay to those classes to which I have referred, but the hon. Member, as I understand, says those are not the only classes; that he wants to compete for a higher class of men. That being so, I venture to say that this large expenditure will not enable him to compete satisfactorily for the class of men whom the hon. Member wishes to get into the Army. I know the hon. Member for Fareham claimed that there would be a large saving to offset this expenditure; but that is problematical. I know the hon. Member

agrees with me that this saving is entirely dependent on our being able to attract the better, class men, which, I trust, I have shown to the House to be doubtful, even if the increase the hon. Member asked for was given. I am prepared to admit that we might have to give some increase of pay in the Army, but I do not think it would be a great success; and before that question arises I am justified in putting forward the strong objections which I personally have to a large burden being put on the country without its being likely to attain the desired results.

The third scheme is the scheme which has been put forward by my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for War, and it is based on what, after all, is the chief lesson of the war. The chief lesson of the war is this; that in this Kingdom there are hundreds and thousands of men who are not willing to bind themselves down to the Army or the Militia, but who are willing; very willing; to come forward to undertake their country's service in time of danger. The great object of my right hon. friend's scheme is that we should give every possible facility to the men who have so well supported the Empire to, at all events, fit themselves in those branches of the service which they are willing to join, before any further emergency arises for which their services may be required. To my mind, the Volunteers and the Yeomanry are worth every penny of the money that can be spent upon them. In my opinion nothing would give one greater satisfaction than to think that the result of this part, at all events, of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme had met with the response which I am sure the Volunteers of this country are prepared to give it. I know there are some who think that the number of Volunteers ought to be increased. I entirely disagree. I do not think the number should be increased, but I do think the efficiency should be brought to a higher standard. If we are dealing, as in this country, with voluntary enlistment, we must depend for our home defence in a great part on our Volunteers, our Yeomanry, and our Militia, and I would infinitely prefer to rely on a force of half the strength with double the efficiency. Some critics of

my right hon. friend have said that his speeches on the Army Estimates and on a subsequent occasion showed that he looked upon the scheme as a cast-iron one. I am sure I have the authority of my right hon. friend for saying that it is nothing of the kind. It is a big principle, it is a big foundation on which to endeavour to build up our Army; but it is not put forward with a view to refusing any criticism which may be made, or any improvements which experience may show to be necessary. No criticism which may be brought forward will be rejected unheard, no reform that experience and practice shall show to be an improvement will be cast aside. While we ask hon. Members on Thursday to give a vote for the general principle of this scheme, we ask them to do more than that; we ask them, with the influence which so many of them have in the Auxiliary forces, to give this scheme a fair chance, and, coupled, as I hope, with local authority, to try to assist my right hon. friend in perfecting what he believes to be the best way in which the voluntary Army of this country can be brought to a state of efficiency in order to meet the requirements of the great Empire of which it is the safeguard.

MR. FREEMAN-THOMAS (Hastings): I should not have ventured to take part in this debate if it were not for the fact that I was a Militia officer for a number of years, and naturally take an active interest in that branch of the service. I therefore beg the indulgence of the House for a few minutes; and my feelings are such that I am sure it will be for only a few minutes; while I express my views on this subject.

In the first place, believing this scheme to be one of the gravest national importance, I shall, so far as I am able, not consider the matter from the point of view of party politics, but look upon and deal with the scheme in an honest and straightforward manner from a large, Imperial point of view. I am bound to say honestly that I cannot think that this scheme, if carried into effect, will be satisfactory. Having lived for some years in Australia, and having had an opportunity of visiting

His Majesty's colonies, I am convinced as strongly as anybody of the desirability of binding together and strengthening the ties between this country and the colonies. If I thought for one minute that for the purposes of the binding together and strengthening of the ties; in fact, if for the safety of the Empire it was necessary, or would be necessary, to put forward this scheme and spend this money, I should conceive it to be my duty to vote for it. But I do not believe it is necessary; and if the expenditure were necessary, I believe it would be spent on a scheme which is, in the main points, unsatisfactory. I think it is an unbusinesslike scheme, and, notwithstanding the extremely frank statement of the noble Lord the Financial Secretary of the War Office, I honestly believe it is a scheme that has been brought forward in too much of a hurry, and under the pressure of that tide of Army reform of which we have heard so much of late. I have said that this scheme is an unbusinesslike scheme, and it is so for this reason. On Tuesday last I asked in this House the Secretary of State for War if we could have any estimate with regard to the amount that would be required to be spent on the barrack accommodation for the purposes of the six army corps proposed under this scheme, believing; I think rightly; that this expenditure is outside the thirty millions sterling which are to be spent on this particular scheme, and, therefore, will come under a different Vote. I received from the Financial Secretary of the War Office an answer; couched in those terms of ambiguity which, in my short Parliamentary experience, I have discovered seem almost necessary in answering questions if the answers exceed the monosyllable "yes" or "no"; to the effect that he was unable to give me the estimated cost of this barrack accommodation, but that the War Office would make use of the barracks they already had. I supposed, of course, that the War Office would make use of the barracks they already had. But I do believe that before embarking on a scheme of this sort we should know absolutely the entire liabilities that are likely to be involved in the scheme, and before I voted, under any circumstances, for a scheme of this sort, I should want to know exactly how much we were going to spend; not to be asked to vote £30,000,000 now, and then be bound, under the circumstances, to vote another large sum later on.

The two principal points with regard to the proposal before the House

are; firstly, is the formation of these six army corps likely to be satisfactory; and, secondly, are we likely to get the recruits we require for the purposes of those six army corps. With regard to the first three army corps, if we are to have them, I have very little to say. I have no complaint to make. It seems to me that to this extent they are satisfactory, that the generals in command will have a permanent body of men under them, and they will be able to exercise those admirable administrative qualities through the greater part of the year. But with regard to the other three army corps, which, as I understand, are to be composed almost entirely of Militia, Volunteers, and Yeomanry, the position to me seems extremely unsatisfactory. You will have to spend, I take it, very large sums of money in equipping these army corps; you will have to build barracks for their accommodation; you will have to buy guns, stores, and all the necessary accessories for them; and when you have got all these things, I suppose you will not be able to keep the men in training for more than six weeks at a time. It seems to me that these three generals, with their staffs, who will command these army corps will be extremely short of work after a very short time. There is one more point with regard to these particular army corps, which I think is worth the consideration of the House, and that is that I feel you will create invidious distinctions in particular districts between particular regiments. You will put one regiment in one of these army corps because you consider it to be a better regiment than another which you leave out of the army corps. I believe you will create, possibly; I do not say it will be so, but it may be; feeling between particular regiments, which I think would be a pity, and which under ordinary circumstances need never arise.

With regard to recruits, the matter has been several times referred to yesterday and to-day, and I have very little to say. I would merely make this remark. I am perfectly clear that if the right hon. Gentleman insists on going on with this scheme in its present form he will not be able to get the recruits he requires. We should then inevitably have to give up our voluntary system of recruiting and go to some form of conscription, which, to my mind, would be bad in itself, and I think would be contrary to the instincts and feelings of anyone who lives under British rule. What I should like to see, and what I feel we want, is a smaller army, adequately equipped, absolutely efficient, ready to be sent off at any given moment to any given point at which it may be required. I believe we want to pay more attention to the general efficiency and training of our Auxiliary forces, whether Militia, Volunteer, or Yeomanry. Might I be allowed here for a moment to dwell on one point particularly; it being, perhaps, rather a personal matter; with regard to the guns that are used at the present moment by the Volunteers and Militia. I speak with considerable feeling, for I have belonged for several years to a particular regiment, at whose headquarters the men are trained simply and solely with guns of which hon. Members may probably have never heard; 65-pounder rifle muzzle-loading guns, which at the present moment are obsolete, almost prehistoric, a source of considerable danger to the men who fire them, and absolutely inefficient for any active service.

This is not by any means an isolated instance. I would ask that the guns should be seriously considered, because I believe it would increase the esprit de corps

of the regiments, and increase their efficiency in every way. There is another manner in which I think we might increase the efficiency of the Auxiliary forces. I think it would be well, if possible, that non-commissioned officers of Volunteers, Yeomanry, and Militia should be afforded more opportunities of undergoing a course of training at Aldershot, and the various other places where that is possible. I believe that would increase the efficiency very considerably. I entirely agree with the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean in the suggestion he throws out, and to which I was glad to hear the noble Lord give a most friendly assent, in regard to the Imperial Yeomanry in the colonies. I believe that in regard to these Yeomanry it would be a graceful action on our part, having regard to past events, if we followed the suggestion which has been made. I believe such action would be received with enthusiasm in the colonies, and I am bound to say they would make a body of men second to none for the defence of the empire. While I approve generally of Army reorganisation, I hope it will be carried out on thorough business principles, on the principle of getting, if possible, full value for the money that is being spent, and above and before all remembering that we are a great naval Power, and that we are not, and I hope never shall be, a great military nation. May I thank the House very much for the kind and courteous way in which they have listened to the few remarks I have made.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): As I purpose making a frontal attack upon the policy of the Secretary of State for War I shall not detain the House by skirmishing over previous speeches. My noble friend the Financial Secretary to the War Office spoke at first with his genial and breezy cheerfulness, but when he came to the pay question he seemed to me to get a little lugubrious. I must point out to the House, merely in passing, that in giving what he called the balance-sheet of the results of adopting the suggestion of the hon. Member for the Fareham Division he only stated one side of the case, so that the House, I hope, will not be influenced by the remarks of my noble friend until they have heard the other side of the case. The other point, which brings me to my particular objective, has reference to the speech of the hon. Member for Oldham. I understood my noble friend the Financial Secretary to the War Office to recall to the recollection of the House that it was a passage in Lord Randolph Churchill's own letter that has led to this increase of expenditure since.

LORD STANLEY: I said I thought that the passage in Lord Randolph Churchill's letter made the country appreciate the vulnerability of our Empire.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: My noble friend said that the calling attention to the scattered commerce and the scattered territories of the Empire by that letter awoke the country, because nobody had called attention to it before. That was what the noble Lord said. That gives me my first post in advance. The resolution before the House is the latest development of a policy; the new departure adopted in 1871; which my noble friend now advocates developing, a military policy which was inaugurated sixteen years before any one thought of our scattered territories and commerce. One remark I must make with regard to the speech of my hon. friend the Member for Oldham. I am sure we all listened with great sympathy and admiration to the brilliant son defending the memory of the brilliant

father, but that speech disclosed the fact that the son did not agree with his father in the application of the principle of retrenchment. The son would reduce the expenditure on the Army in order to spend it on the Navy, but the father resigned the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer because reductions equally and indiscriminately were not made in both Services. I wish to guard myself against misconception with regard to my hon. friend the Member for Oldham, for, had his resolution come forward, I was to have seconded it. A few years more study and thought will give him a better conception of what the position of this country would be in a maritime war. A superior fleet by operating on the offensive bottles up the fleet of the inferior Power. That is all we can do. Naval power stops there. But in these days that act, however decisive as regards a war fleet, can only minimise, and not entirely prevent, predatory attacks upon our commerce; and even a few attacks here and there upon our commerce must have the moral effect of enormously increasing our freights, enormously increasing our rates of

insurance, and enormously increasing the difficulties of our competition in the world's markets, and that means an enormous economic strain upon this country. That would be an intolerable strain, and unless you have an Army adapted to the nature of the attacking work it must do, you cannot bring that intolerable strain to an end. It is for that reason, if for no other, that you require a mobile army for active service in the field beyond the sea to bring a war to a conclusion; for the sake of your industry and commerce.

Now I approach my main objections. We have the resolution of the Secretary for War asking for more men to lock up at home. The first part of the Amendment expresses no real concrete alternative. The last part of the Amendment declares that the scheme is not adapted to the special wants of the Empire, and will add a burden, without adding to the military strength. With that declaration I absolutely and entirely agree, but I cannot trust the safety of the Empire to pious opinions, and therefore, having no real alternative or broad principle offered me, I shall be unable to vote for the Amendment. The remarkable fact of my right hon. friend's speech, in introducing this so-called Army reform, was that he reversed the order of two great features of recent military policy. He put in the forefront of his speech the absolute necessity for having 120,000 men ready at any moment for service over sea. That was a new and welcome departure, but he has whittled this policy all away since. The service Members are able to take care of themselves, but I must, on behalf of those who have paid some attention to the subject and been in the House some time, take the right hon. Gentleman to task for the way in which he introduced that point with regard to the 120,000 being ready for over-sea service by putting it in the forefront of his programme. He looked around and said to the House;

"Look at the scanty backing I have had in this House for the principle of being able to send abroad two army corps;"

Then he said, as if he were an injured individual;

"For home defence everybody was willing to act."

I do not think my right hon. friend was either just or fair to a very large body of service Members in this House, and I will just recall to him my own motion

which I moved in 1895. I then called attention;

"To the necessity for the more adequate adaptation of existing military forces to the oversea requirements of the empire in war, and to the conditions and requirements relating to the embarkation, the sea transit, and the disembarkation of land forces, as a determining influence on all military arrangements necessary to provide for the 'safety of the United Kingdom, and the defence of the possessions of His Majesty's crown.'"

That was most ably seconded, in a splendid speech, bristling with facts, by Sir Henry Havelock-Allan. It had the full support of the service Members. What did my right hon. friend do? He pooh-poohed the whole idea, and declared the policy to which he adhered in these words;

"For some years past it had been felt that we must put the question of home defence in the front rank, and consider as subsidiary to it the question of the extent to which we might have to send forces abroad."

Now, I say that he himself, having been eight years at the War Office, must have known that our contention was right, and I say that he and the War Office, and not Members of this House, are responsible for what happened on the outbreak of the war in South Africa. That was the policy I thought he was departing from in introducing his Army reform, but he is back in the old rut, as this resolution shows. He is clinging to the same old policy.

Let us see what happened in South Africa from putting over-sea service in the background of policy. We had the outbreak of the war in the early days of October. [Mr. BRODRICK laughed.] My right hon. friend smiles, but the matter is so serious that I trust the House will pardon me if I go into some detail. We had at home on the War Office books some 540,000 military units, and some 13,000 horses and mules. By the 31st of October, owing to this policy, we had only succeeded in despatching 31,400 of all ranks, and 3,935 horses and mules; that is to say, 4,859 men and 6,212 horses short of one single army corps. In November we managed to

send off 27,257 more men, and 5,505 more horses. Thus, in two months from the outbreak of the war, we only succeeded in sending a force from home which was 13,821 men and 10,854 horses short of the complement of two army corps. Well, I am afraid an army corps is to the War Office what the word Mesopotamia was to the old woman. But it is useful for testing the War Office paper standard by facts. Thirty years ago we reformed our army, and to day we are asked for a reform of that reform. I have nothing myself to say against many of the changes made by Mr. Cardwell in the internal arrangements of the Army, and I would also say that I associate myself entirely with my hon. friend the Member for the Fareham Division in claiming for the Army increased pay. Whatever you do you must expect an increase for pay on the Army Estimates, and therefore it is important that you should not waste money or throw it away on objects which cannot be proved to be necessary.

Now it is my honest conviction that it is our general military policy that is the fruitful cause of the waste of money. I believe that the new departure in 1871, to which we have clung ever since, is the real reason why we have paid so much and got so little. I propose to confine myself to a sketch of the origin,

history, and results of this policy. The reason for the army reform of 1871 was that the Germans had marched over the frontier of France and crushed her, and the reason we are again discussing army reform now is because our military machinery has proved defective in South Africa, and not adapted to our wants. When I talk of the new departure of 1871, let me briefly recall to the House what was the principle of our military policy before 1871. For generations the main object of our military expenditure was to provide an army for the contingencies of the Empire beyond the sea, and as a necessary complement of maritime power, and to leave the local military defence of these islands to the Militia, thus trusting to the protection of the Fleet. That was the policy which carried us through the great struggles of the earliest part of the nineteenth century. That was the policy that triumphed over dangers of armed neutralities and great combinations by sea and land against us. But it was from that policy we retreated in 1871. But before 1871 we had wobbled in 1860, and in a hurry a political panic was manufactured, an enormous Vote was rushed through this House for great land fortifications, and we then committed ourselves to a policy which our fathers had always repudiated. It is useful for anybody to turn up and read what occurred at that time. I am not going to read the extracts I have here, but I would say that it is a curious fact that Mr. Cobden was the only man who saw clearly what this new policy was going to produce in the end. I know it is very unpopular to quote Mr. Cobden on army reform. He ridiculed our programme, which contemplated, he said, our soldiers being safely ensconced in these forts beneath casemates and behind gigantic ditches in chalk. I think that has been shown to be quite true. What was his alternative policy? He said; "I would rather spend £100,000,000 sterling on the Fleet than have any doubt as to its superiority to the other fleets of the world." Public faith in 1860 having been thus shaken in the old principles of British policy, I for one do not wonder that in 1870 we were overtaken by a terrible panic, and went really mad about invasion, for no other reason in the world than that the German army had marched over the frontier of France. What happened? Here is an interesting fact. In that very year; 1870; Mr. Childers moved the Navy Estimates, and he boasted that they were the lowest Navy Estimates that had been produced for some years. In 1871, within a few days of the introduction of the new departure in policy, Mr. Goschen; Mr. Childers being sick; moved the Navy Estimates. He lamented to the House his misfortune at being obliged to ask the House to provide £385,000 more for the Navy than had been voted in the previous year. In our fright we had come to regard the Navy as a somewhat doubtful auxiliary in the economy of British defence. Therefore we embarked on this policy. Our eyes were fixed on Germany, and everybody was crying out, "Save us from the fate of France and give us German military policy." That we did try to do, but we found in doing it that the German model did not suit our Empire, and so we made a compromise between the internal changes of the Army and the old policy of this country. We tried to make the wants of the Empire fit the Army instead of making the Army fit the wants of the Empire. What has been the result? The result of thirty years experience has shown that on every single

occasion of a military expedition being required over sea for a small war our system where applied has failed. The Foreign and Colonial Offices have now each a little army all their own. But somebody may say, "Look at Egypt." What happened in Egypt was this. We certainly gave some men, but Lord Kitchener and Lord Cromer would have nothing to do with our system, or with our War Office. They ignored our system and snubbed the War Office. They achieved a great and remarkable military success, coupled with the greatest possible economy. That is a review of the results of thirty years of this policy. Now, twenty-eight years after a war in South Africa overtakes us, and so in the wilderness of military confusion we find that the policy adopted in 1871 does not suit our Empire, and we are asked now to bolster up a policy which has failed. By the resolution we are asked to vote more staff and more buildings, to prop up a military superstructure on rotten foundations. Because in South Africa, 6,000 miles away, the Army failed in mobility we are asked by this resolution for more men to lock up at home. Because we suffered, and suffered terribly, in South Africa, from insufficient cavalry and field artillery, we are coolly asked for more money to spend on staff and buildings for the defence of London. It is the false principle of the policy adopted in 1871, for which both parties in this House are responsible, that is the root cause of the mischief, and I say we might as well throw our millions into the sea as devote them to the pursuit of a false purpose and a false policy. The War Office, sticking to this German policy, still keeps invasion in the forefront and everything else in the background,

but the country in the meantime has awakened from its delusion of 1871 as regards sea power, and thus we have arrived at this remarkable and extraordinary state of things, that you have the Admiralty on the one hand spending £31,000,000 this year to secure the safety of the sea, and a large portion of the £29,000,000 for the Army is to be spent by the War Office because that Department thinks the Admiralty cannot accomplish that purpose. You cannot run these two mutually destructive policies. You must make up your mind which leg you are going to stand upon. (Mr. Brodrick laughed.) My right hon. friend laughs, and does not take such a serious view of this matter.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford) dissented from the hon. Member's remark.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: I think I will change the whole colour of the question before I sit down. Now the Defence Committee of the Cabinet; for I presume it is approved by them; make this demand for men, staff, and buildings. Are we going on with this expenditure on home defence without regard to what we are spending on the maintenance of our supremacy at sea? The Defence Committee of the Cabinet seems to be a pious, political imposture, without any control over the War Office. Surely there should be some special Minister charged with, and personally responsible to Parliament for, the principles of British defence. There is now no such authority responsible to this House for looking at the defence of the Empire as a whole. If you trace the action of the War Office from 1871 down to the present day you cannot fail to see that the War Office is under the delusion that the danger of invasion is becoming every year greater. I

challenge denial to that statement. The proof of it is everywhere abundant. But is it true in any sense that the danger of invasion is increasing? It is not true, because since 1871, when the scare of invasion first started this policy, the ship tonnage of France has been reduced by 100,000 tons, while our tonnage has increased by nearly 5,000,000; What does that show? Does it not affect British defensive policy? Of course it affects it, and in this way; it reduces the military transport of France, and it increases our own sea responsibility. That cannot be disputed. Why, the whole shift of our interests during these thirty years has been from the shore to the sea. I will prove that by three separate facts. Comparing 1869 with 1899; I take these two years in all my comparisons because the first was the year before the invasion panic, and the other was the year the war broke out; comparing these two years the acreage under corn has, per head of the population, declined by one-half, the tonnage employed by each inhabitant for a year's business has doubled, and the export value of trade over sea has increased per head of the population by 70 per cent. It is facts like these that should guide the principles of our policy; but these facts are always found to be extremely unpalatable at the War Office. The War Office ideas are far too military to be warlike. In 1871 we started on this military road to ruin. Here is a picture of the War Office idea of British defence painted by Mr. Cardwell in introducing Army reform in 1871; here is the aim that was to be accomplished; "Out of all the curious whirl of scientific controversy one thing emerges clear, that scientific defence is gaining on scientific attack. I believe if we agree to arm our population, as we propose to arm them, and if we avail ourselves of our national means of defence by placing torpedoes in all our harbours and rivers, and rifles behind our ditches and ledges the time has arrived when we need no longer give way to panic or fear of invasion." That was the War Office idea of British defence which caused this policy to be adopted, and that is the policy to-day expressed in its latest form in the resolution of my right hon. friend. It is not a policy for an island people who are the greatest sea traders in the world. It is rather a policy suitable to the fly in amber or the bottled imp. I dismiss these economic aspects of defence by reminding the House of one fact, namely, that the stream of commerce entering and clearing our ports, by which our forty millions of people live, may be estimated by remembering that ceaselessly, night and day, the stream goes on at the rate of three tons of shipping per second of time.

*MR. SPEAKER: I must say that many of the hon. and gallant Member's remarks seem to be remote from the subject under discussion.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: Sir, I quite recognise that that may seem so. I have no desire to wander unnecessarily from the subject, and will confine myself to this broad statement, that from whatever point of view you look at the economic and industrial position of these overcrowded islands, when that stream of commerce comes to be interrupted, as it must be under conditions which render invasion possible, the position of the forty millions of people in these islands would be that of forty million rats in a trap.

Let me now turn to the Army and the question of military sea transport, and the evil results of the policy of 1871 on the Army itself viewed as a field force. If anyone would take the trouble to analyse the constitution of the Army in 1869 and in 1899 he would find that the proportion of field artillery and cavalry to the total Army has largely decreased, while the proportion of garrison artillery and fortress engineers has largely increased. The charges will show this more clearly. In 1899, before the war, the charge for the pay and additional pay of cavalry and field artillery was £;4,000 a year less than in 1869, although the Army had been increased; while the charge for garrison artillery and fortress engineers increased by £;170,000 a year. Now, apropos of this resolution, in 1899 the charge for the general staff was just double what it was in 1869, while the charge for the War Office had increased by 36 per cent. Now, this is all the result of this home defence policy. Putting the increase of the cost of the general staff and the increase of cost of the War Office together I find that it is the money equivalent of the annual pay and additional pay of thirty batteries of royal horse artillery, or of eight cavalry regiments of the Line. So you will see how much increase of cost has gone for the staff and the War Office. That policy, started in 1871 and pursued for twenty-eight years since, could not produce an army for field service in South Africa, but it has produced an endless series of staff cocked hats and a bottomless pit of works, and billets, and buildings, so that military engineers may learn at the cost of the taxpayers the businesses of architects, contractors, and builders. Now what does my right hon. friend ask for in this resolution? For more field artillery, for more cavalry for the Regular Army? Nothing of the sort. He asks for more staff, for more buildings.

MR. BRODRICK: Will my hon. and gallant friend say what buildings voted by Parliament last year for the troops were unnecessary.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: In 1872, as part of the Army reform, Mr. Cardwell made a demand, and got it, for £;2,500,000 to specially house the troops to resist invasion. Why should we have barracks to build now, while many of the barracks built under the Act of 1872 are half empty?

MR. BRODRICK: No.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: Well, then, why was a great area of land in the most expensive part of my constituency bought and barracks erected upon it in 1875, while 60 per cent. of the building is generally unoccupied. But to return to my argument. What the War Office says is that more money must be spent on the staff and on buildings and in acquiring land in the neighbourhood of London for the purpose of preserving it for a few days after it has ceased to be a free port. I protest against that. My right hon. friend thinks he is justified in introducing this Army Reform Bill by saying that invasion is an "off chance," and that we cannot run an Empire of this size on "off chances." What has the size of the Empire to do with the "off chance" of an invasion and capture of London? I, for one, protest against British policy being founded upon an "off chance." Moltke's doctrine was

that in preparation for war only probabilities had to be reckoned with; and I submit there is no such probability of invasion as to justify this huge and ever

growing military outlay to provide for home defence. The problem of military sea transport was on the outbreak of war presented to us in the very simplest form. In the South African war we were sending out troops and supplies from British ports and dumping them down in British ports. We have had matchless experience in embarking and disembarking troops. We have a multiplicity of magnificent ports, and our mercantile marine is greater than that of all other nations put together. What were we able to do? It took us six months to embark 168,000 men and 29,000 horses. The right hon. Gentleman, in answer to my question, said that no avoidable delay took place, and therefore I take it that that is the utmost we can do in that time.

MR. BRODRICK: I said with regard to the original force intended to be sent out no delay had taken place. That was when it was not considered necessary to send horses to Africa.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: Then you admit you did not originally think it necessary to send out horses to South Africa. However, I think, with my right hon. friend, that what we did do in floating military force was a wonderful achievement, and I say that everybody connected with that embarkation deserves the highest praise. But what is the result of an analysis of what we really did? In no single month did we ever succeed in embarking 35,000 men. That is less than an army corps, and then the horses were 5,000 short of the complement required. But the real point with reference to our invasion is how an invading army is to get across the sea. I must do Lord Derby's memory justice, and say that he was the only public man in 1871 who seems to have kept his head. Speaking at Preston, he ridiculed the panic, and said;

"The utmost strength we can be called upon to repel is only that which can be carried across the Channel in a hostile fleet; assuming such a fleet to have escaped our Navy, or that a temporary disaster occurred."

Taking Lord Derby's standard then and now, it does not assist the War Office contention,

for this reason; in those days a man-of-war could remain a fighting ship and yet carry a multitude of men. That is now impossible, and no battleship can be made use of for purposes of military transport. Therefore we are driven to the mercantile marine. It was not till sixteen years after this invasion theory was first developed that we were casually informed, in 1886, by the head of the Military Intelligence Department of the War Office, before a Select Committee of Inquiry, that a force of 100,000 or 150,000 men could be quite easily thrown on our shores. Let me look from the business point of view at this question of invasion with reference to French ports and mercantile marine. Between Dunkirk and Brest there are only fifteen ports;

*MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Member will look at the resolution on the Paper I think he will see that his present remarks do not apply to it or any branch of it.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: I bow to your ruling, Sir; but this resolution is to provide more men for home defence, and speaking on the Amendment I wish to show that the question of invasion is ruled by the question of the military transport of an army which must cross the sea. If that is out of order, I cannot discuss the

question as to what our defence ought to be, and I am accordingly placed in an extremely difficult position. I understand the resolution is to provide for the safety of this country.

*MR. SPEAKER: In a certain method, and that method is what is under discussion. I did not interrupt the hon. Member for saying that we must provide against invasion; but he is going into details as to invasion and the forces which might bring it about, which are quite beyond the scope of the resolution.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: Of course, Sir, I do not presume to take any exception to your ruling, but when discussing the question of home defence we must assume where an attack would come from, and must examine all the possibilities of that attack; and it is the ports across the Channel, and their capacity, and the transport that could be got together to embark an army that are at the root of the whole matter. What I was going to do very briefly, and in the broadest way, was to deal with these ports of France.

*MR. SPEAKER: If the hon. Member did that, he could go into the organisation of the French army, which lies behind the ports, and so into that of every army in Europe.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: I quoted the head of the Military Intelligence Department of the War Office, and I was going to show that the broad facts of the case would not substantiate his assumption; but by your ruling, Sir, which, of course, is quite right and proper, I am now prevented from proceeding. I suppose, however, I shall be in order in quoting official authorities on the question of military transport with reference to invasion. In May, 1888, Lord Wolseley having made an after-dinner speech that created a scare, the Daily Telegraph published a panic-stricken article upon it. The attention of Lord Wolseley was called to it in another place, and he repeated his statement as follows:;

"I consider the position of England at the present moment as regards its army as very unsatisfactory, and if a hostile force were to land upon our shores of say 100,000 men, there is no reason why those 100,000 men, if properly led, should not take possession of London."

The First Lord of the Admiralty was questioned on this statement in this House, and he entered into elaborate figures and calculations made by the transport authorities and the Admiralty to show that there was no foundation for the belief that France, as suggested by Lord Wolseley, could throw 100,000 men on these shores, and he concluded with these words:;

"The Committee will see that in order to carry out an invasion France will have to bring together every single steamship she possesses leaving her Mediterranean coast and her various possessions abroad unprotected, and then concentrate them somewhere in the Channel; and when she got them there there is no port where she could locate them or find sufficient wharfage for them. I am further informed that even with our enormous resources we could not bring together a similar amount of tonnage under three weeks. That being so, my noble and gallant friends will not be surprised to hear that the Government in one sense cannot give countenance to the sensational statements to which I have reverted."

A few days later my noble friend who was then First Lord of the Admiralty, and

is now Secretary of State for India, on being asked for a further explanation, said::

"The calculation which I laid before the House the other day was based upon the assumption that that was the amount of tonnage necessary to bring over an army of 100,000 men composed partly of artillery and cavalry, with a certain quantity of stores packed as closely as possible for a short voyage."

Later on the Secretary for War was questioned on the great divergence of opinion between the Admiralty and the War Office on this vital question, and he said::

"I have read the statements made on this subject both by my noble friend and the Adjutant General. I, for one, deprecate the raising of any such controversy, but in my opinion the main divergence arises from the fact that the conditions of the problem are different in the two calculations, and especially as regards the force to be transported."

The First Lord of the Admiralty was again interrogated, and he went again into calculations in the fullest detail, and concluded with these words;

"My figures are based on the practical data of daily experience and ascertained facts, and upon the knowledge that difference between gross and net tonnage is yearly increasing, owing to the greater space and power of the engines and boilers and coal bunkering of modern passenger ships; and I adhere to them as correct."

Officially in the person of Lord Wolseley the War Office in another place returned to the charge, and the late Commander-in-Chief declared that the Admiralty conclusions were fallacious. He said that the First Lord of the Admiralty was out of his reckoning by 320,000 tons;

*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; The hon. Member has now returned to those matters which I stated were irrelevant, All these details are out of order in a debate upon the reorganisation of the Army.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: I hope, Sir, that I have made it clear to you that I was reading official extracts from the utterances of the First Lord of the Admiralty on this very question of home defence against invasion. I think you will see, Mr. Speaker, that this House is asked to vote upon a resolution which is to give active effect to a scheme to develop this tremendous costly policy of military home defence, and we are not to be allowed by the rules of the House;

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must not argue to the House upon my ruling. I only want him to confine himself to the terms of the resolution before the House. I have given my ruling, and I must ask the hon. Member to follow it.

*SIR JOHN COLOMB: I hope the House will appreciate the difficulty in which this ruling of the Chair has placed me. This resolution is one with which I disagree for reasons which I am not allowed to give. I would point out that this Army reform, being a development of the new departure of policy in 1871, is to continue a policy that expends vast sums upon military home defence upon a theory of invasion, and neglects the real military wants of the Empire over sea. And it does all this upon a hypothesis which has never been proved, upon which His Majesty's Ministers themselves totally differ, and which, I say, and say fearlessly, will not stand the test of scientific examination. I decline, for one, to vote for the resolution as a part of that policy. I absolutely decline

to vote any more money for military home defence until I am satisfied that there is some ground for it. The one redeeming feature of the policy we have pursued since 1871 is the magnificent force of Volunteers which have been produced and are actually in existence. That is the one real grand thing which we have got out of it. Speaking with some knowledge of the subject, and after a painstaking examination of the facts of the case, I say that, in my judgment, that force, if sufficiently well organised and treated in a common-sense way, is more than sufficient in numbers, if made reasonably efficient, to perform all the military defensive duties in the United Kingdom in time of war, under conditions of sea supremacy; and if you have not got sea supremacy it is no good trying to survive. If my principle be correct, that you can rely upon the Volunteers for local military defence, what is the effect of this upon military policy? It has the effect of releasing your Militia from territorial obligations at home, and leaves them free to discharge Imperial duties abroad when our Empire is anywhere in peril; thus freeing the regular army for general service. That is a policy which I can understand, and it is the only policy in which I have any faith. It is not that I object to pay money for a military force, but it is because I object to spending money upon a false policy that I am opposed to this scheme.

I decline to vote for this resolution because, in the words of the Amendment, it is

"not adapted to the special wants of the Empire, and will largely increase the burdens of the nation without adding substantially to its military strength."

I refuse to give the War Office any more millions to waste on soft billets, defensive works, and upon a multitudinous general staff. I refuse to give them any more millions to "stall-feed" the bugbear of invasion on cocked hats, red-tape, and aerated army corps.

Surveying the Empire as one great whole, I am filled almost with awe at the magnitude and complexity of the problem to be faced for its defence. My apprehension for its fate in war in the coming century does not arise from any deficiency of its resources, or from any lack of patriotism of its multitude of peoples. The resources of our Empire are infinite, and the patriotism of its denizens unbounded. My misgivings spring from a totally different source. My fears are founded upon the observation of the modern tendency of the British mind; a love of tinkering with details and imagining that they are principles, and failure to grasp and apply the eternal principles of war to the Empire as one great concrete whole. The failure so to

apply these great principles is the root cause of all our trouble. It was by the application of them that our fathers preserved our liberties and won our Empire, and my opinion is that, if we do not soon return to the broad path which our fathers trod, a great war overtaking us will find us meshed up in a tangle of naval and military confusion of our own making.

*SIR ARTHUR HAYTER (Walsall): We have listened to a good many very able speeches upon this question from all parts of the House, but perhaps hon. Members will pardon me for saying that I think there are certain questions which go to the very root of this new system which have not yet been touched upon by the

Treasury bench, and some which have not been touched upon in the debate at all. There was one question mentioned by my hon. friend the Member for Hastings, who, in an excellent maiden speech, asked the Government whether they would take some steps in regard to the accumulation of stores necessary for the carrying out of this great enterprise. I have myself to ask some questions of a similar character, which relate rather to the powers which it is intended to bestow upon the generals. I trust that the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War, in the speech which he will make on Thursday, will answer those questions because they go to the very root of this question.

In the first place, however, I desire to guard myself against any intention of saying one word in depreciation or one word of criticism of the policy of decentralisation. We regard that principle as the very keystone of any system of military reform, and those of us who spoke to considerable audiences at the General Election upon the question of military reforms have always made it the burden of our song that the power of the War Office has increased, is increasing, and must be diminished. The object of decentralisation is to carry that out. Besides my question as to the powers of the generals, I wish also to ask the Secretary of State for War certain questions with regard to the interior organisation of the War Office. Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to say that it does not require the establishment of six army corps, and all this fine paraphernalia of a grandiose system, in order to establish the principle of decentralisation, because it is perfectly possible for the right hon. Gentleman to have entrusted larger powers to the existing generals of these districts. It does not at all matter whether you give larger powers to the sixteen generals of the divisions or to the six generals of the army corps.

Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will allow me for a moment to say that the system and the name of army corps is not very popular in this country. I have had the good fortune of reading a very able and short memorandum by Mr. Stanhope which he laid upon the Table of the House when introducing the Estimates in the year 1887. He showed that the system of army corps was put forward in later days by the Secretary of State for War in the Government of Mr. Disraeli. I think the system of army corps was originated under Mr. Gathorne Hardy. He began by proposing that there should be eight army corps, but that system broke down altogether, because it was recognised that such an enormous mass of troops was altogether too large for our requirements. This question afterwards slept until the year 1881, when Mr. Childers again took up the subject. Mr. Childers introduced a system which should have only one army corps, and that was felt to be so entirely unequal to our wants that that, too, was not proceeded with. Then came the scheme of six years later, introduced by Mr. Stanhope. Mr. Stanhope, taking advantage of the experience gained by his predecessors, attempted to take the middle course, and proposed that two army corps should be ready and complete for emergencies. That system was to a certain extent carried out. There were some preparations made, but I think I have the support of gentlemen at present at the War Office in saying that that really has proved nothing more than a paper scheme, and that all that has been done under it has been to bring up to strength certain regiments because you called them parts of the first army

corps, and to place others on a lower establishment because they belonged to the second army corps. That, the right hon. Gentleman will pardon me for saying, is very much of a paper system. If you mean to give reality and force to this scheme you must engage in very large expenditure; and you must give the generals of districts very much larger powers than they have now.

What I should like to ask the right hon. Gentleman is this: has he contemplated the powers which are given to the army corps generals in other countries? If I may sum up the difference between the two, I will show it in a few sentences.

The noble Duke the President of the Council, in replying to Lord Wolseley in another place, used a very pregnant sentence in which he describes the duties we entrust to generals now in divisions and districts. He said that generals of divisions in England had everything to do with the drill and the discipline of the men entrusted to their charge; they alone are responsible, and they alone exercise that power. But he went on to say that with regard to the arming and equipment, the clothing, the feeding, and the housing of their troops they had nothing directly to do. I should like to quote, if I may, the powers of the commander of an army corps in Germany and France. I have it on the authority of a paper which was laid by the Intelligence Department before Lord Harrington's Commission in 1887, and I ask the House to consider whether for a moment they would like to entrust these powers to our generals. I will take Germany first;

"The Army Corps commander is absolutely independent in his own command, and entirely responsible for efficiency and preparedness for war of all troops in his command. He communicates direct with the Emperor, from whom alone he receives direct orders. If he objects to an Army ordinance issued by the War Minister he has the right of direct appeal to the Emperor for decision. He has very extensive powers on giving decisions in administrative matters, and is entirely responsible for the finances of his corps. He is responsible for the tactical training and discipline of all troops in the corps, also that commanding and staff officers are capable of performing their duties, and reports any special qualification for promotion to higher rank or command."

It being ten, minutes before Seven of the clock, the debate stood adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Thursday.

MESSAGE FROM THE LORDS.

That they have agreed to,;

Gravesend Gas Bill, without Amendment.

That they have passed a Bill, intituled, "An Act to authorise the sale and disposal of the site of Christ's Hospital, in the City of London." [Christ's Hospital (London) Bill [Lords.]

Also a Bill, intituled, "An Act for the abandonment of the Bideford and Clovelly Railway." [Bideford and Clovelly Railway (Abandonment) Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for making and maintaining railways in the county of Southampton, to be called the South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway; and for other purposes." [South Western and Isle of Wight Junction Railway Bill [Lords.]

Also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for extending and amending the leasing powers of the Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London as Masters,

Guardians, and Governors of the House and Hospital called Bethlem, and for conferring on them other powers for the management and development of their estates; and for confirming certain leases granted by them." [Bethlem Hospital Bill [Lords].]

And, also, a Bill, intituled, "An Act for extending and amending the leasing powers of the Mayor and Commonalty and Citizens of the City of London, Governors of the Possessions, Revenues, and Goods of the Hospital of King Edward the Sixth, called Bridewell, and for conferring on them other powers for the management and development of their estates; and for confirming certain leases granted by them." [Bridewell Hospital Bill [Lords].]

CHRIST'S HOSPITAL (LONDON) BILL [Lords].

BIDEFORD AND CLOVELLY RAILWAY (ABANDONMENT) BILL [Lords].

SOUTH WESTERN AND ISLE OF WIGHT JUNCTION RAILWAY BILL [Lords].

BETHLEM HOSPITAL BILL [Lords].

BRIDEWELL HOSPITAL BILL [Lords].

Road the first time; and referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills.

EVENING SITTING.

DURATION OF SPEECHES IN PARLIAMENT.

*SIR JOSEPH DIMSDALE (London): In venturing to move the resolution standing in my name, I would desire to assure the House that I have no intention to interfere with legitimate debate or the fair and full discussion of the important topics which are presented to Parliament for consideration. It is rather with a view of enabling a greater number of hon. Members to participate in debates which often affect not only the welfare of the Empire, but also the welfare of the particular localities they represent. As a new Member of the House, it would ill become me to comment upon the action adopted in previous Parliaments; I leave that to Members who from personal experience can speak from their own knowledge. There are many notable instances of long speeches. For instance, it is reported that Sheridan spoke for five hours, Sir R. Peel for three and a quarter hours, Lord Palmerston four and a half hours, and Mr. Gladstone and other statesmen have from time to time spoken at considerable length; but these generally were occasions when great policies and weighty State matters with far-reaching results had to be expounded to the House and the country. The present resolution is not intended to apply to or curtail this sort of oratory.

Nor does it affect Ministers, ex-Ministers, or movers of resolutions, who should have full scope to express their views. It is intended to place some limit upon those who, while possibly acting from entirely conscientious motives, seem to consider no debate complete without a speech from themselves; it matters not the subject, whether Finance, Foreign or Imperial Policy, the Navy, the Army, Coals, or Sugar. It has

seriously struck me that, with the ever-increasing work of Parliament, growing in volume and detail year by year, either something must be done to husband the time of the country and Parliament, or the business of the country must suffer.

It is only necessary to refer to the course of business in the present

Parliament to prove to a large degree my contention. We met in December with the

view of voting supplies to carry on a war sanctioned and supported by the votes of the country only a few weeks before. One would have thought a pure business matter of this kind could be dealt with in a very few days. No; weeks were expended in a guerilla warfare upon this Government; one day by attacks of a personal character upon a Minister, at another upon the loyalty and patriotism of the Army. In this way much valuable time was irrevocably lost, and necessitated meeting at least a week later in February than usual. Since then the exuberant oratory of certain Members has rendered it necessary that the Government should hypothecate nearly all the time of private Members to Government business, certainly up to Whitsuntide. Now, by whom was this time wasted? Not by the Government, nor by any large section of the House. It was occupied by the comparative few who carry on debates upon subjects constantly of trivial moment to the House and country, and leave no time for the careful consideration of great and important matters. I have had until lately the honour of a seat on the London County Council. No one will deny that there are on that council many gentlemen of undoubted ability, and possessing great oratorical powers, yet they confine the time limit for speaking to fifteen minutes. If, however, any member possesses information or data of value an extension to the limit is found invariably granted. Much can be said in twenty minutes. I am fortunate enough to sit under a clergyman of great power, and also a man of deep thought. He rarely exceeds twenty minutes, and never leaves the pulpit without the regret of his congregation that he has not preached longer. How different with many speeches delivered in this House. I know it is more difficult to make a short speech than a long one, but I think some hon. Members might sometimes consider their listeners, and also that there must be many who desire to speak upon the same subject, often of real interest, who are now unable to get a hearing on account of pressure of time. I beg to move the resolution standing in my name.

MAJOR RASCH (Essex, Chelmsford) said that his hon. friend the Member for the City of London had explained his proposals in so lucid a manner that it was hardly necessary to elaborate the question. But perhaps he might say half a dozen words on the history of the movement.* Twelve years ago Mr. Farmer Atkinson, then Member for Boston, introduced a Short Speeches Bill, one of the clauses of which provided that when an hon. Member had absorbed the time at his disposal the Speaker should call attention to the fact by striking a gong or ringing a bell, and the hon. Member should then resume his seat.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): Hear, hoar. But that would not stop me.

MAJOR RASCH said that that measure did not commend itself to the House, and the matter dropped. In 1897 an agricultural Member introduced a measure limiting the duration of speeches, and although it was opposed by Mr. Cedge, then a Member of the House, the hon. Member, with the able assistance of the hon. Member for Battersea, succeeded in obtaining a majority on the Second Reading stage. But it was then seen that it would be impossible to have the Upper House interfering with the privileges of the House of Commons, as they would if

*The history should commence in 1833. In that year a Mr. Buckingham propounded a scheme under which Members intending to speak on a particular Order of the Day

should enter their names in a list, and in due order be called upon by the Speaker; as a part of the scheme, the duration of speeches was to be limited; an ingenious "tariff" of time is elaborated, with curious safeguards and exemptions. [See Debates, Third Series, Vol. xv., page 1010; or, for a fuller report, the Mirror of Parliament, first volume of 1833]. In the discussion on Major Rasch's Resolution in 1900 other developments of the "movement" are traced. [See Debates, Fourth Series, Vol. lxxxii., page 1110].;ED.

the Bill was passed through its other stages and sent to the House of Lords, and placed on the Statute Book in the ordinary way, so the matter was allowed to rest there. Two years after his agricultural friend, however, was fortunate enough to obtain an opportunity of moving a resolution upon the subject, which he carried by a majority of seventy, and he not unnaturally thought his difficulties were over; that the millennium had come. But he reckoned without his host; he did not reckon upon the pitfalls placed in his path by the artfulness or the diplomacy of the Treasury Bench. For when he asked whether the Leader of the House would take steps to carry out the expressed desire of the House, the right hon. Gentleman replied that he did not see his way to make such an alteration by means of a Rule.

The present resolution was not particularly drastic. It endeavoured to temper the wind to the shorn lamb. Hon. Members belonging to the rank and file of the House, like himself, were allowed twenty minutes, but they were permitted to speak longer if the House desired. He could not conceive it possible that the House ever would desire them to do so. It was proposed to give Ministers as much rope as they chose; not that the rank and file desired to bask in the sunshine of their speeches, but because their first idea was never to sit down under an hour, and if their speeches were to be interfered with the resolution would never be carried.

This evil was by no means of modern standing. In the days of Queen Elizabeth her Majesty ordered the House of Commons to "work more and speak less," on pain of hon. Members being sent to the Clock Tower, or whatever was the receptacle for offending Members in those days. In the year 1642, so far as he could make out, the House appeared to have assembled about nine, dined at twelve, and adjourned about four o'clock. One of the sittings was prolonged owing to the length of the speeches, and an hon. Member appeared to have got up and said, "I perceive the House is empty; I pray you to adjourn for one hour." The Speaker, Mr. Chaloner Chute, declined to adjourn, and presumably the sitting went on, but the Speaker came to a bad end. Then there was a case in the early Georgian era. It was a speech of Sheridan, who spoke for five hours on what was called the Begum case, and the Members were so much discomposed that many of them went into the lobby and others wept. He was not surprised at that, for he would be inclined to weep himself under such circumstances. Mr. Pitt had to adjourn the House in order that Members might recover their composure. Coming down to Victorian times, he found that Lord Palmerston spoke for four hours and a half on Don Pacifico. Sir Robert Peel spoke on the corn laws for three hours and three-quarters. Then, coming down to more modern times, he found that Mr. Biggar, the late Member for Gavan, spoke on the subject of the Devon Commission

on a Wednesday from rosy morn to dewy eve. More recently there was a debate in which hon. and learned Gentlemen connected with the medical profession spoke for the whole evening on the subject of vaccina-ton. In recent times an hon. Member spoke for an hour on the question of a bog in the Hebrides, and the Lord Advocate characterised the speech as an outrage. An hon. Member, a colleague of his own in East Anglia, addressed the House for an hour and three-quarters on the question of undersized flat fish, and in the last two days the House had had object-lessons on the question of long speeches. On the previous day five Members took up six hours; while this day one Member spoke for an hour and twenty minutes, and nobody had the faintest idea what he was talking about. Yesterday an hon. Member spoke on the Army proposals for fifty minutes, and there was some excuse for him, because he sent all his notes to the Press forty-eight hours before, and he was bound to speak them or die in the attempt. In a book called "Scottish Antiquities" he read that a Minister in Scotland had spoken for a year and six months on the three wells and the seven palm trees; whatever they might be; of Elim. These were, no doubt, fearful examples, but Mr. Gladstone once said that the resources of civilisation were not yet exhausted, and it was quite possible that a remedy might be found for this evil. Fifty years ago Mr. Milner Gibson proposed that speeches should be cut down to an

hour. The resolution was supported by Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright, and on a division it was only beaten by thirty-four votes. In 1880 an appeal was made to Mr. Gladstone to shorten speeches, and, while his reply was sympathetic, he did not at that particular moment see his way to carry it through.

In the London County Council nobody could speak longer than fifteen minutes. In the United Service Institution members' speeches were limited to ten minutes. At the Trade Union Congress last autumn the chairman, desired that Members should not speak more than half an hour, and at the Church House speeches were confined to moderate limits. There were only two places he knew of where speeches were unlimited, and a man could talk as long as he liked. One was the Central Chamber of Agriculture, of which he was a member, but while farmers were amongst the most quick-witted and singularly intelligent of men, it happened that their ideas did not flow very fast. The House of Commons was the other place that did not limit speeches. It might be said that what was good enough for our predecessors in this House ought to be good enough for us, but then things had altered and were by no means what they were 150 years ago, when gentlemen came up to this House in their ribbons and stars and top-boots, and Macaulay said they did not come up till after Easter and went down for the hay harvest. They sat on each side waiting for their apotheosis; their translation to the House of Lords; and those who spoke least got the earliest promotion: whereas in these days Members had to justify their existence. He had himself on one occasion to take up an infinitesimal portion of the time of the House by moving a Bill for the compulsory marking of Dutch shrimps. He had to do it at the desire of his constituents. He was sure there was a regular dossier kept against individual Members in order that their constituents might know what they said and how they acted. It was obvious that rules which were good enough formerly did not apply

to the House of Commons

† The Secretary of the Chamber, in a letter to The Times, pointed out that Major Rasch was under a wrong impression; there is a time limit provided in the bye-laws.

of the present day. He had on three different occasions drawn attention to this subject, and he was beginning to think that he was a castaway. He had heard it asserted that, if Members would only vote for this resolution, they would not be opposed when they went back to their constituencies, and that their political path would be strewn with roses. Seriously speaking, however, he would suggest that a man who could not compress his remarks into a moderate compass and say all he had to say in addressing the Chair in the course of twenty minutes, did not know his trade, and was not fit to be a Member of the House. He begged to second the resolution.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That in future no Member shall (except by leave) speak for more than twenty minutes, or twice on an Amendment in Supply, Ministers, ex-Ministers, and movers of Bills and Resolutions excepted."; (Sir Joseph Dimsdale.)

*MR. EMMOTT (Oldham): I have listened to many debates upon procedure during the almost two years that I have had the honour of being a Member of this House, and I must say that we new Members, if we do not say much on questions of this kind, like the proverbial parrot, think the more. I wish, from the bottom of my heart, that I could consider the proposal of the hon. Member, which appears likely to become one of our hardy annuals, were either feasible or desirable. There is much that is attractive in the idea, but I confess that its chief attractions are removed when the front benches are excluded from its hope. If this idea is to be carried into practice we must include the Front Benches or it will be of no use at all. My right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition made a speech last year in approval of this proposal, and he did it, as I understand, avowedly on the ground that one of the best speeches he ever made was on a Bill introduced under the ten minutes rule. I am told that the ten minutes allowed under that rule are sometimes exceeded, and I am not quite sure that they were not exceeded on the occasion to which the right hon. Gentleman referred. At any rate the right hon. Gentleman evidently would not regard with entire disapproval the inclusion

of the front benches. It would be so nice for hon. and right hon. Members on the front benches. Instead of having to cudgel their brains to fill up an hour's speech and bring it up to a standard of excellent quality, they would then deliver speeches in which every word would tell, every sentence would be an epigram, and the whole speeches would outrival Tacitus in terseness and force. This resolution, as I take it, is aimed at the bores of the House, and intended to punish them. I have always been told that the great aim of the science of penology was to invent a punishment to fit the crime, and one which would deter other potential criminals from taking the first step in the downward path of crime. Applying this principle, I venture to inquire whether we could not treat the matter in another way. We want to produce moderation, and also a certain amount of abstinence, on the part of certain speakers. My suggestion is founded

on my own experience, and it is to make a greater use of Committees and Select Committees and Commissions not only for devolution, but for penological purposes. Last session was my first full session in this House, and I felt it due to my constituents, if not to the House, to make my voice heard. I may say that my first essay was on the question of boiler explosions, a not very exciting subject, except to those who happen to be near the explosion. I spoke for thirty minutes, but the result was that I was put on a Select Committee which sat for many days on this exciting subject. The next Bill that fell into my hands was on a very complicated commercial subject. In introducing it I spoke for forty minutes, and again I received the inevitable punishment of being put on the Select Committee on the Bill. Since then I have been very quiet; not quite dumb, for I spoke on the Amendment on the Address in December last, but that was on the disaffection in the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and there was no danger of the right hon. the Colonial Secretary putting me on a Select Committee on that question. I really think that my proposal is worthy of consideration. These Committees are capable of doing no harm and some good, and the House gives little attention to whatever they may report.

This suggestion is capable of being put to a useful end. For the ordinary Member who is too active in the House and whose interests chiefly lie in the United Kingdom, I would put him on Committees on humdrum, intricate home affairs. But for hon. Members who survey mankind from China to Peru some other punishment must be imposed. The hon. Member who is continually inquiring about India, might be sent to India to make investigations on the spot. If another Member was too aggressive in regard to China, he might go to China to investigate the Boxer movement, and the closer quarters he got with the Boxers the better. The hon. Member who continually fears the machinations of Russia I would send to Siberia to study there what dark designs that mighty empire is pursuing. I must say I cannot take a patent out for this plan, because the First Lord of the Treasury has forestalled me. The hon. Member for King's Lynn, who is not a bore, but a very able and amusing Member of this House, moved an Amendment to the Address in reply to the King's Speech in reference to certain works at Gibraltar. It was only a question of wasting a few millions, but then this country is rich; The Hon. Member was met by the First Lord of the Treasury in the most sympathetic way, and was immediately appointed a member of a Commission which was sent out to Gibraltar. That Commission, or Committee, took a month to do their work, but the hon. Member, who knows his way about in parliamentary matters, took care that half of the month's banishment to Gibraltar was in the Easter recess. What the outcome of that visit to Gibraltar is to be I am somewhat curious to know; I rather think it will end in a speech of more than forty minutes duration.

Honestly, I cannot think that the proposal placed before the House is a serious one. The evils from which we are suffering are not to be cured by trivial expedients any more than an inrush of the Atlantic can be stopped by Mrs. Partington's broom. The evils are real and deep-seated, and quack remedies would only make them worse. We are often told that the House of Commons is declining in public estimation. Perhaps it is; I do not know; but I feel that the

prestige of the House of Commons would not be increased by adopting the rules of a third-rate debating society. After all, I would remind the House that this is rightly called the Mother of Parliaments, and let those of us who care for it treat the Mother of Parliaments with respect. What are the chief evils from which we suffer? I say it in no spirit of reproach to our friends from Ireland, but avowedly they despair of obtaining from this House the remedies of the evils of which they complain, and they use the rules of the House for their own ends, and do not profess respect for the dignity or convenience of the House. [An hon. MEMBER on the Irish Benches: We respect Ireland only.] I think that we suffer more from the large number of speeches from non-official Members, rather than from the inordinate length of the average speeches. I will venture to deal with the Irish question as the Government deals with the powers of the local authorities in the new Education Bill, namely, in a negative way. I do not believe that the Irish demand is going to be killed by kindness, and I think that the Government itself has given up that hope. The Government has refused Home Rule for Ireland, and so Irish Members here are like the children of Israel in Egypt. Pharaoh the "predominant partner" will not let the people go. Perhaps Pharaoh will let them go eventually. The longer I sit here, and the more I hear of the grievances from which the Irish Members suffer, the more I despair of any remedy being found for them by this House. The other Members desire to be loyal to party institutions. They are not usually very prolix individuals. The present age, I am afraid we must all admit, is somewhat mediocre. We seem to be mediocre in art, literature, oratory, and I am afraid our statesmanship is not of the very high quality that it ought to be. But I venture to say that mediocrity should not be prolix. We are all too much inclined to be *laudatores temporis acti*; to think too much of the time that is past, and to go back to what some of us fancy to be the golden age of parliamentary effectiveness, to the time when Gladstone, Disraeli, Cobden, and Bright were in their prime, and were the great ornaments of this House. But

exactly the same complaints were made forty or fifty years ago as are to be found in the resolution now before the House. In 1849 Mr. Milner Gibson moved a resolution fixing the maximum time of a speech at one hour; If you were to pass such a resolution now you would not save six hours in the course of the session. The difficulty chiefly comes from the fact of the enormous number of Members who are anxious and willing to speak. I agree with the hon. Member for Essex that the constituencies are to blame for much speaking in the House, because they like to see their Members' names in the paper. The descriptive reporters are also to blame, who contrive to make their accounts of debates so much more interesting to the public outside than they are to those inside the House. I admit that we suffer from *cacothés loquendi*. But there are many hon. Members in this House who do not take that part in debate to which their abilities entitle them. I refer, for instance, to the hon. Member for Morpeth, who delivered the other day a speech of singular ability and charm, and I regret that he does not address the House more frequently. The fact is that the nervous strain of the preparation of a speech, which may or may not be delivered, and which, if delivered, may or may not be effective, is very great; but there is a

more awful nervous strain in striving to catch the Speaker's eye, and I am afraid that it frightens many Members who want to take part in the debates into an attack of *cacoethes silenti*. There may not be many *Lieder ohne Worte* in this House, but I venture to say there are a few.

My real objection to this motion lies in the history of the past of this House.

In my opinion, if you are to have a rule at all, you must apply it to all

Members, except, of course, on special occasions; but for the present I assume that it is to be confined to the non-elect, and that the front benches will be excluded from its operations. Probably there are too many front bench men who have stepped from 'varsity to office. But a good many Members have earned fame whose speeches were not confined to twenty minutes. Let me remind the House of the late Lord Randolph Churchill, the father of the hon. Member for Oldham.

He made his name and fame as a non-official Member, and he was not confined in his speeches to twenty minutes. But let us go further back. Take the case of Mr. Cobden, who was never a Minister. I am quite aware that it is now the fashion to sneer at him, but he had the faculty and the mind of a statesman, and he was a man of whom this House was proud. Can you conceive of any reason why a man of Mr. Cobden's ability should not be allowed to speak for more than twenty minutes? Take another famous case, that of Mr. Bright. He made his finest speeches before he was a Minister. For forty years he enthralled this House by his eloquence almost every time he spoke, and would you have had him "cribbed, cabined, and confined" throughout twenty years of his best period? Then, take these two dashing freelances, Mr. Roebuck, the Member for Sheffield, and Mr. Joseph Cowen, the Member for Newcastle. They were men whom this House was always glad to hear, and to hear at length.

*SIR JOSEPH DIMSDALE: This resolution will not stop a speech of any length, if the House is prepared to listen to it.

*MR. EMMOTT: I am afraid I cannot go into that for lack of time. There are obvious difficulties in such a course. Take another instance; O'Connell, the brilliant, the witty, the great-hearted. Would you have confined him to twenty minutes? Or take another Irish Member of a later day, Mr. Parnell, the model of taciturnity. He could not compress all his speeches, great master of compression as he was, into twenty minutes. But let us go back further to the age of parliamentary giants. It is more than 100 years since the great voice of Edmund Burke was stilled for ever, and more than 120 years since he thundered against corruption in high places, since he pleaded for conciliation with America and for justice to Ireland. I am fully aware of his faults. We all know his impracticable temper, his passion, and his prejudice, but, in spite of all, his genius made him illumine every question he touched by reference to those great principles of eternal truth which he had such extraordinary powers of exhibiting. I may remind the House that many of Burke's finest and longest speeches, precious treasures to literature and political philosophy to all time, were made before he filled any position, and he never filled any but a subordinate position in the Ministry. I am not prepared to clip the wings of a future Edmund Burke by such a resolution as that now proposed.

I have only one practical suggestion to make in conclusion. It is that we who care for the preservation of our Parliamentary institutions, we who desire to see the dignity of the House of Commons upheld, and its usefulness extended, should not speak from mere motives of vulgar ambition, but also should not be silent when we have really something to say. Frankly, I do not see how anyone who cares for the glorious history of this House in the past, and who desires to see it maintained as the foremost deliberative assembly in the world, and the safeguard of the liberties of a great and free people, can possibly vote for the resolution of the hon. Member.

COLONEL SAUNDERSON (Armagh, N.): I am opposed entirely to the hon. Member's proposal, and the grounds upon which that opposition is based may possibly differ from those of any hon. Member who takes part in this debate. I look upon the speeches made in this House as of inestimable value to the country, whether they be good or, as they generally are, bad. I have been in this House for many years, and have always taken a great interest in oratory, probably because I am an Irishman, and I have asked myself over and over again what good object did speeches here perform. Everyone knows that nobody expects to influence the vote by the speech he may make, although it has sometimes been done. But on great questions the minds of Members are made up before any speeches are made, and the speeches made in debate have no effect at all. They do not affect the mind of the House, and do not affect the mind of the country, because they are seldom reported except in the case of Irish debates, when the temperature of the House rises to some-where

about 98 in the shade. Even then people seldom read the reports, and it may be asked, therefore, what good is done by speeches made in this House. Well, I think, they are of inestimable value. Without parliamentary speeches I do not believe you would have an institution in the country which would not be capsized altogether or shaken to its foundations. I look upon parliamentary speeches as the best kind of pneumatic brake for legislation, I cannot imagine a more evil case than this. House degenerating into a business assembly, a sort of county council. We do not come here to pass measures, we come here to keep one set of gentlemen on the treasury bench, and another set of gentlemen off it, because we believe the gentlemen who are on the treasury bench advocate the policy most beneficial to the country and ourselves. It would be a most horrible thing to come here and pass Bill after Bill in the course of a session. I think the less legislation we have the better. I recollect that the late Mr. Gladstone said in former years that the Irish question held the field. Had he also said that the Irish Members took the floor, he would have been more accurate in his description. And those who have the Union at heart and reverence the institutions of this country, as I and the majority of the English and Welsh Members of this House do, owe a debt of gratitude to the Irish Members, who have openly professed their desire to destroy those institutions and the Government, and the Empire, but who have taken yet for the last fifteen years the best way in the world to preserve them. When hon. Gentlemen find fault with the Irish Members for occupying so much time, they must not forget that it is owing to that fact that no legislation has taken place. If it were not for the action of

the Irish Members, we should not have an institution left in the country. It is owing to the occupation of time that this House has not degenerated into a mere business assembly like a county council, and for that the Irish Members have been mainly responsible. My Irish friends, whose oratory no one can deny, have a faculty given to them, I do not know by whom, of speaking upon subjects whether they

know and understand them or whether they do not with equal ability; in fact, the less they know the more eloquent they become. I say to them, from different motives to those which actuate them, go on. Although the Government may object because they cannot pass the Estimates, still, as you speak day after day, and night after night, and occupy the time of the House with Irish eloquence, you may lay this flattering unction to your soul, that every speech you make is helping to preserve and maintain those institutions you desire to sweep away. The right hon. Gentlemen occupying the Treasury bench are not only naturally eloquent, and so full of information that when they are posed at the Table and supported by it they can never speak for less than an hour or two, but it is not proposed to muzzle them. It is not proposed to muzzle the dogs that bark the most. All I can say is if it is only proposed to muzzle the Irish Members, it will have a most deleterious effect upon this assembly and the institutions of the country. I shall show all the opposition to this proposal that I can.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I desire to say in one or two words why I am strongly opposed to this motion. If this proposal is aimed directly at the Irish Members, I can only say I do not think it is likely to meet the evil the hon. Gentleman has in his mind. If I had no other reason for objecting, I would object to it because, if carried, it must necessarily curtail the speeches of the right hon. and gallant Member for North Armagh, which to my mind would be a most disastrous thing. The real reason of this motion, as I have said, is to curtail the speeches of the Irish Members in this House. It is perfectly true that a considerable portion of the time of this House is occupied by Members from Ireland, but the way to meet the difficulty is not by limiting the speeches in this House, but the more drastic reform which would enable Irish Members to make their speeches in Dublin, among their own people. I will just refer to two questions raised by the Irish Members in this House this session, and I will ask the hon. and gallant Member for the Chelmsford Division of Essex whether he seriously wishes us to understand that questions such as those which I am going to mention could possibly be introduced to the attention of the House in speeches limited to twenty minutes duration. One of the most important debates which have taken place this session was the debate on Compulsory Land Sales (Ireland). It was a debate which aroused the greatest interest in every quarter of the House. Does the hon. and gallant Gentleman ask the House to believe for a moment that it would be possible to present such a Bill as that to the House within the time-limit of his proposal? It would be impossible to introduce a question of such magnitude in a speech of twenty minutes. I myself took an opportunity of looking over a recent volume of Hansard, and I must say that I was appalled at the number of speeches I myself had made, and the number of questions I had directed to Ministers in this House. I ask the House, does it

for one moment believe that it is any pleasure to Irish Members to be continually making speeches, or that it is any pleasure to us to be curiously inquiring every afternoon of Ministers about affairs concerning remote localities in our constituencies? Nothing of the kind. It is simply the necessity which is engendered as the result of the present system of governing Ireland which compels us, as the hon. Gentleman opposite very candidly said, to bore the House by referring to matters which really ought not to engage the attention of this Imperial Parliament at all, but which ought to be dealt with by a National Parliament in Ireland, the only body really competent to deal with such matters. I would invite hon. Gentlemen who complain of the time taken up by Irish Members in this House to take at random any Irish Nationalist Member, and see the questions he has asked during this session and the matters on which he has been compelled to take up the time of the Imperial Parliament, and if he does, he will find that these matters are in many cases insignificant and trivial, and that it was an absolute absurdity to occupy the time of Parliament, which has to deal not only with England, Scotland and Wales, but India and the Colonies, with them. This is not our fault. And I venture, with the greatest possible respect, to ask the hon. Gentleman who moved this motion, and the hon. and gallant Gentleman

who has repeatedly brought this matter before Parliament, to reflect whether they would not better facilitate the progress of business in this House, not by proposing a resolution to limit the speeches of Members on all subjects to a period of twenty minutes, but by moving a resolution which all the Irish Members would gladly support, to remit to Ireland and the Irish people in their own Parliament assembled all those matters which their representatives are now reluctantly obliged to press on the attention of this Parliament.

Suppose this rule were passed, I ask with great respect, how it is going to be enforced? The hon. and gallant Gentleman said that somebody proposed that the Clerk at the Table should have a gigantic gong before him, and that the moment the twenty minutes were up Mr. Jenkinson should rise in his place and strike the gong vehemently. I do not know with what approval the House would look upon a proposal of that kind; but I myself, as one most anxious for the dignity of this Assembly, would be sorry to see it introduced, because of its effect on the dignity of the House, and also its effect on the nerves of the House.

MAJOR RASCH: That is precisely the opposite of our proposal.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Then, my objection is that while some courageous person did suggest a gong, the hon. and gallant Gentleman himself did not suggest anything. What does he propose instead of the gong? Does he propose to have an electrical arrangement by which, on touching a button at the Speaker's chair, a heavy piece of ordnance would be fired in Palace Yard, and so give the hon. Member speaking notice that he had exceeded his time? The whole thing is absolutely absurd. If a Member who has been speaking for twenty minutes refused to desist, there would have to be a division, and probably superior force would have to be introduced in order to make him cease speaking. The proposal is, in my opinion, a good-humoured attempt to deal with a question which is always before the House, which has been before it for the last hundred years, and which always will remain

before it until it is settled, namely, how to deal with the position and attitude of the Nationalist representatives of Ireland. Never mind limiting speeches, never mind introducing gongs on the Table of this House, but give to the Irish Members, and, if you will, also to the other national sections in this so-called United Kingdom, the right to manage their own affairs at home. If you do that, the first result will be seen in the rapidity with which useful legislation will pass through this House. The right hon. and gallant Gentleman the Member for North Armagh told us very candidly that he for one liked speech-making, because speech-making prevented legislation ever being carried. I have no doubt that is the opinion of the right hon. and gallant Gentleman, but I am equally certain he did not ventilate it when he was wooing the electors of North Armagh. The whole object of this motion is to deal with the eternal Irish question, and I would suggest to hon. Members that they can only deal effectively with the difficulties before them by giving us the right to manage our own affairs at home, which would be highly gratifying to us, and which hon. Members would also find gratifying.

MR. CRIPPS (Lancashire, Stretford): I think the question to be discussed under the proposed resolution is whether we can reform the procedure of this House in order to make it more efficient. Undoubtedly that is of the highest importance. Outside of any question of particular sections in the House, the time has really come, and the country demands it, that this House ought to consider whether it cannot put its procedure on a more efficient basis, and the question we have to discuss this evening is whether the particular proposal before us is likely to effect what most of us wish, or not. As regards this proposal, I think the evil results of it have been exaggerated by the hon. Gentleman for Oldham, as well as by my right hon. and gallant friend the Member for North Armagh. I do not think that a rule of this kind would in the least operate against any unknown Edmund Burke who happened to be in this House; and perhaps as regards that great orator and writer it may be said that if he had practised the art of compression he would have had greater influence than he had as a speaker in his own day. I do not believe myself in the value of argument, and I believe, as Macaulay said, that no speech ever made in this House actually affected the division which followed it. But the end of discussion is to make our minds clearer as regards the principles involved, and it is to my mind of great importance, if we are to maintain the prestige of this House, that Members who have a special knowledge of particular subjects should speak upon them. I do not know that it matters much whether a Member has great oratorical gifts or not, but any man who is cognisant of the principles involved can in a plain and direct way explain them to the House, and that explanation may be of the greatest value if he is an expert.

The first question which arises is whether this proposal will give us that result. At the outset I may say that I object in the strongest manner to making any distinction between Members on the front benches and other Members of the House. If a Minister is moving a resolution or a Bill, he may want a longer time than twenty minutes, and the resolution provides for that. But, as a matter of fact, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred no private Member does speak more

than twenty minutes. I myself do not think that if we had this rule we should get the result we are seeking to arrive at, namely, that Members of the House who are competent to give their opinions should take part in the discussions. How are we likely to arrive at that? I think we are much more likely to arrive at it by allocating time to the discussion of particular topics than by limiting the duration of speeches. That is the real direction in which reform ought to proceed. Let me give an illustration. Let me take Supply. We know the topics we have to deal with in Supply, and we know the time at our disposal, and if this House is a businesslike assembly, which really wants to transact business in an able and efficient manner, there ought to be no difficulty in allocating time to particular topics; and any Member who had a knowledge of any particular subject would not feel that he was wasting the time of the House, and his speech would be welcomed, because in any case the discussion would extend over a particular time.

I think that a large number of Members refrain from speaking at present for fear of arousing the impatience of the House, and if we could get rid of that idea and provide that any Member might speak without prolonging the debate beyond the period allotted to it, surely that would be the proper way of proceeding. Take one or two other matters. Private business is an extremely important matter, but at the same time we could give a time limit to it, and there might also be a time limit as regards questions. With regard to the second part of the resolution, I have not hitherto heard any reference made to it, but in my opinion it is extremely important. It is that no Member should be allowed to speak twice on an Amendment in Supply. I would have a rule of that kind applied not only to Committee of Supply, but to all Committee proceedings in the House, though, of course, the mover of any particular Amendment ought to be entitled to be heard in reply. But outside that, if we want a really business discussion no one person ought to be allowed to monopolise the whole night. If we are to arrive at the result we desire, we must allow various Members to take part in a discussion in Committee instead of only one or two Members. Of course it is impossible to suppose that a resolution of this kind, even if carried, would effect all that is desired. I do not think that if we had a reform of procedure we should necessarily have more legislation, but I feel very strongly that a great assembly of this kind, with great national and imperial interests entrusted to it, ought to put its rules on a basis that would enable it to deal efficiently with its business. That is the real issue. It is not an issue between different sections in the House, or an issue between private Members and the Government. It is quite beyond that. It is that the House, if it is to preserve its prestige and its position in the country, must have its rules put on a more satisfactory basis. As regards this particular proposal, I intend myself to vote for it, not on the ground that I think it covers anything, like the area of reform necessary, but because it points in that direction.

MR. NUSSEY (Pontefract): I am extremely sorry this Resolution does not include Ministers and ex-Ministers. I

have heard occupants of the two Front Benches speak repeatedly, until, I confess, I have been quite gorged with the repetition of their arguments. I have

often observed that when they get up they look at the clock, but not with any sort of apology, and they look at the clock again when they sit down; and if they have done their hour and a quarter they feel that they have discharged their duty to the House, their constituents, their Party, and the country. The hon. and learned Member for the Stretford division said he believed in allocating the time of the House for the discussion of certain topics. I remember the vehement protests of the Tory Party when Mr. Gladstone proposed to close the Home Rule Bill by compartments. It was said to be a most monstrous proposition, and to be gagging the House. Yet we now hear advanced by a Tory reformer of the procedure of the House the suggestion that we should adopt in future a system of closure by compartments, a system for allocating the time of the House to particular Bills and to particular sections of Bills. I quite agree that the procedure with regard to private business should be reformed. We have great and growing wants to meet, but we have less and less time at our disposal to meet them. Far too many Members speak in the House in these days, and the unfortunate part is that business is congested and hung up which ought to be disposed of. But, after all, the true solution is not to be found in the gagging of Members, or in the limitation of speeches to twenty minutes, but in the dividing up of the business, in devolution, in Home Rule all round if you like. I shall support this resolution because it will in part make the proceedings of the House more effective, and do something to further the consideration of various matters of second-class importance, but at the same time I do not think it touches the root of this great question of Parliamentary reform. The rules of the First Lord of the Treasury with regard to Supply have in part met the want. That precedent should be extended. You should have a system for Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and London, so that the business affecting those different parts could be discussed by various bodies, delegated by this House, if you like. But in the mean-time, as an instalment of reform, I propose to vote for this resolution, although I must express my regret that its scope does not extend to Ministers and ex-Ministers, who, I think, are the worst transgressors.

*MR. PURVIS (Peterborough): I think this well-meant resolution is intended to be a sort of winnowing fan, to separate the wheat from the chaff; to retain the wheat and to get rid of the chaff. As it has been said, the House is not a mere debating society, nor, as Carlyle very irreverently expressed it, a mere talking shop. It is an assembly for taking practical counsel together. It contains many men full of practical counsel, but who cannot express themselves fluently. They are like narrow-necked jars full of precious ointment, which, unless they are broken altogether, drip, drip, drip, slowly, but when their contents do come out of the narrow neck they are well worth consideration. What would be the effect of this resolution, under these circumstances, if I am right in that view? The well-informed but unfluent and unexpressive speaker would be limited as dull, while the glib speaker would be allowed to go on by the consent of the House, because he pleased the ear. It would be as with Milton's Belial;

"His tongue

Dropt manna, and could make the worse appear

The better reason, to perplex and dash Maturest counsels,
For he pleased the ear."

Without adding any more, because I believe that is the real answer to this resolution, I conclude by saying that the motion would defeat its own object; it would diminish and not increase the real efficiency and profit of the debates of this House.

SIR THOMAS ESMONDE (Wexford, N.): The country from which the hon. Member who has just spoken comes has a reputation for common-sense, and the speech he has just made is a thoroughly common-sense speech. The proposal we are discussing is, if I may say so without discourtesy, an extremely ridiculous one. Hon. Members complain of the waste of time which periodically takes place, but in making that complaint I do not think they are proposing the proper remedy for the disease. The proper remedy, in my humble judgment, is that the Members of this House should have allotted to them proper opportunities for discussing questions in which they are specially interested. It is a question, not of the duration of speeches, but of the allocation of the time of the House. The real explanation of the difficulty in which we find ourselves is that the House has not time to discharge the duties entrusted to it. The hon. Member for East Clare gave the true solution as far as Ireland is concerned. This House having proved itself physically incapable of discussing all the matters which come before it, the real solution of the difficulty is a policy of devolution, which would enable the various countries supposed to be governed by the House to discuss in their own localities, and to legislate upon in their own Legislatures, the questions in which they are particularly interested. One hon. Member has said that this proposal is not directed altogether against private Members, but that it is also suggested that Ministers and ex-Ministers should not be allowed to speak for more than twenty minutes. Although I do not approve of the resolution, I think, if we are to have a limitation of speeches at all, that limitation should apply also to Members on the two Front Benches, because they are the very worst offenders in the matter. The real difficulty, I think, is the want of consideration shown to the rights of private Members. Matters of great importance to our constituents come up, matters quite as important as those brought forward by the Government or by Members of the Front Opposition Bench, but session after session the Leader of the House, no matter to which party he belongs, after a certain period takes the entire time of the House, and private Members have no opportunity for discussing the questions in which they are directly interested. They are naturally led to retaliate, and perhaps to speak longer and more frequently upon questions which emanate from the Treasury Bench. It has been suggested that we should have hour-glasses, gongs, and various other machinery upon the Table, for the purpose of intimating to Members that the time has come for them to stop their speechifying. I do not know how many Members have seen the operation of these various appliances in foreign Legislatures, but as far as my observations go they have not the least effect. This debate, though no doubt very interesting, is a purely academic debate. I do not imagine it will lead to any practical results, but if a division is taken, I shall vote against the resolution, because I quite agree that it will not have any

desirable effect upon the conduct of the business of the House.

MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham): I quite agree with the hon. and learned Member for the Stretford Division that what we have to consider tonight is whether or not we should reform the procedure of this House, and I presume that it must be with that object that this resolution has been introduced. I am rather astonished that my hon. and gallant friend the Member for the Chelmsford Division of Essex should have seconded the resolution, because I have always understood that he was one of the great champions of the rights of private Members in this House.

MAJOR RASCH dissented.

MR. BANBURY: Am I misrepresenting my hon. friend?

MAJOR RASCH: Yes.

MR. BANBURY: Then I beg his pardon. My recollection is that on several occasions when the Government have moved to take the time of the House my hon. and gallant friend has made speeches against them.

MAJOR RASCH: Never.

MR. BANBURY: Then I must have misunderstood him. But there are many other Members on both sides of the House who have made speeches with that object, and the hon. Baronet who has just spoken stated that private Members were very badly treated. The effect of this resolution, however, would be to place private Members in a still worse position. The members of the two front benches are exempted from this rule, and my experience is that the Members who exceed the limit of twenty minutes are not the private Members but the occupants of the two front benches. They not only exceed the twenty minutes, but it is much easier for them to do so, because when they rise they are immediately called upon. But a private Member has first to summon up his courage to rise in the endeavour to catch your eye, Sir, and, when he has summoned up his courage sufficiently to go through that ordeal, he has to run the chance of not being called at all. The consequence is that when he is called, for the first ten or fifteen minutes he is so extremely nervous that he really does not quite know where he is. Therefore, if this twenty minutes rule applied, he would have to sit down before he had been able to place before the House the remarks he desired to make. The hon. Member for the City of London stated that his resolution was to the effect that, with the leave of the House, a Member could go on for more than twenty minutes. What would be the result of that? To-night we have had from the hon. Member for Great Yarmouth a long speech occupying about an hour and a quarter. We are quite certain that at the end of the first twenty minutes he would have desired to continue his remarks, and he would have had to ask the leave of the House. If anybody objected I presume there would have been a division, and as the speech went on for seventy-five minutes, there would have been three divisions. Allowing a quarter of an hour for each division, the consequence would be that the speech would have occupied 112 minutes instead of seventy-five. If, therefore, as I believe, the object of the resolution is to expedite matters, I think it would fail in its object.

There are three classes of speeches in this House. First, there is the class of speech to which I have just referred; the excellent speech delivered by the hon.

Member for Great Yarmouth, because he knew a great deal of the subject. There are also speeches which are made for the purpose of obstruction. I think that is admitted. How will this resolution affect those? The ordinary obstructive speech is not a very long one, but one Member desirous of obstructing must have other Members ready to follow him. The only result would be that instead of two or three Members speaking for perhaps half an hour each, you would have four or five speaking for twenty minutes each. It must be remembered that during the last twenty or twenty-five years we have had the closure, and it is in your hands, Sir, if you see that a debate is being carried beyond the length to which it ought to be carried, and a Member moves the closure, to put the question. We have, therefore, a protection against lengthened speeches and lengthened obstruction. Then there is a third kind of speech; the speech which is sometimes made upon the subject before the House with the idea of delaying a subject which is lower down upon the Paper. In what way would such speeches be affected by this resolution? They might be shortened by five minutes, but nothing material would be gained. I was reading yesterday the speeches made in 1897 and 1900 on this subject by the hon. and gallant Member for the Chelmsford Division. They were most amusing, interesting, and instructive. He said that the procedure of the House of Commons in this matter had gone on for over 200 years, and that it would be a very serious thing to alter that procedure without very good reason being shown. I agree, and therefore I hope, if we go to a division, the resolution will be negatived. The whole of the hon. Member's argument in 1897 and in 1900 went to show that not private Members; and only private Members, would be affected by this resolution; but Ministers were the people who most offended against this proposed rule. He emphasised that in his speech to-night, and pointed out that Sir Robert Peel and, I think, some other Minister had spoken for four hours and for three and a half hours on certain given occasions, myself remember an occasion in the House when a Minister spoke for something like three and a half hours. In what way would this resolution improve that? I do not say there was anything wrong in the Minister taking up that time, but this resolution would not in any way avoid it. There was another very curious thing I found in reading the history of those two debates, and that was that in 1897 my hon. and gallant friend carried his resolution, but that in 1900 it was defeated. That was in the same Parliament, and I think it shows that on a Tuesday evening a certain number of Members came down to the House and, carried away by the eloquence of my hon. and gallant friend, voted for the resolution; that, by the way, is against the argument of the hon. Member, who said that nobody was influenced by speeches; but, when those Members had had time to think the matter over during the three years which elapsed before 1900, they found they had been misled, and, therefore, when the resolution was again brought forward they voted against it. I think that the only possibility of this resolution being carried would have been if the mover and seconder had shown that there was really anything wrong with the procedure of this House. Not only have they not shown that, but I do not think they attempted to do so. When a new Member comes to this House he naturally is under the impression that the thing which is nearest and dearest to

his heart ought to be carried at once, and I am not sure that that would be a good thing for the nation. I do not go so far as the right hon. Gentleman the Member for North Armagh, who says he is opposed to all legislation, but I do think that legislation ought to be initiated with care, and should not be passed without due and proper discussion. We must all admit that at the present moment we are in danger of suffering rather from hasty legislation than from legislation being slightly delayed through prolonged discussion. There is no doubt that if any section of the community desire that any measure should be passed in this House that measure will be passed, and whether they have to wait six months or a year is a very little matter if, in order to avoid that waiting, you are going to alter the procedure which has obtained in this House for two or three hundred years, and which has given this House to reputation of being one of the finest and most business-like assemblies in the world. I disagree with the right hon. Gentleman the Member for North Armagh in that I believe that every speech made in this House has an object. Sometimes that object is delay, and my experience of business is that it is a businesslike thing when you have an object to attain that object. Therefore, I trust that if we go to a division, as I presume we shall, the House will pause before it reverses the practice which has obtained here for two or three hundred years by passing a resolution, which I admit has been ably moved, but which I do not think would achieve the result we all really have at heart.

MR. RENWICK (Newcastle-on-Tyne): It is curious, perhaps, that I have to make my maiden speech as an advocate of the limitation of the duration of speeches made by Members of this House. But I am quite willing to accept the position, and to take as my text the speech of the hon. Member who has just sat down. The hon. Member tells us that we ought not to interfere with the traditions of this House, which have been carried down for two or three hundred years. If those traditions had not been interfered with there would have been no necessity for the resolution which has been moved to-night. I would point out to hon. Members that the necessity for this resolution has arisen because we have departed from the traditions of this House, because we put into force in 1882 in a modified form, and have carried it further since, the system of closing debate when a Member, whether he be on the Front Bench or not, has risen and moved that the Question should now be put. I have not long been a Member of the House, but for many years I have pursued a business career, and in pursuance of that business career I have learnt that it is absolutely unnecessary to occupy one, two, or three hours to put your points before business men. If there is one argument which ought to commend this resolution to the favourable consideration of the House, it is supplied by the object-lesson that we have seen in the House yesterday and to-day. We have seen as many as twenty or thirty Members rising at the same time, anxious to put their views before the House on the great question of Army reform, and when an hon. Member has been called on he has occupied an hour, or even an hour and twenty minutes, in giving expression to his own views. Last night we had four speakers occupying no less than five hours in putting their views before the House, notwithstanding the fact that the whole sitting available for speeches was limited to some six hours. We have had a similar

state of affairs to-day. I venture to say that the dignity and business capacity of the House is being injured by this curtailment of the liberty of Members, and by the great length at which Members speak upon particular subjects.

There seems to be a mistaken idea that

the aim of this resolution is to limit discussion. We do not want to limit discussion. What we want to do is to give more facilities for discussion. During my brief career in this House, when I have seen an hon. or a right hon.

Gentleman rise at the end of some three hours having discovered that the time has arrived at which the question should be put, I have thought to myself what an extraordinary decision it is, seeing that in those three hours we have heard only four or five speeches. If this resolution was carried, we might have in three hours nine speeches instead of four or five. I am perfectly aware that one of the principles of the closure is that the Speaker must take care that the rights of the minority are not infringed, but I would remind the House that the majority as well as the minority have rights, and I venture to think that it would be much more advantageous for the House, and for the nation as a whole, that nine Members should be able to give expression to their views before the question was put, rather than that the closure should be applied when only four or five have spoken. We are sometimes told that we have come to this House, not to speak, but to listen and to obey the Party Whip. ["Hear, hear," from the Nationalist Members.] I judge from the way in which hon. Members opposite receive that expression of opinion that they know it to be absolutely true. I would remind hon. Members who tell us that we are to obey the Party Whip that there are other things connected with the use of the whip than merely obeying it when we hear it cracked. I presume that when the whip is mentioned we are likened to a pack of hounds, and that we must be obedient. I am quite willing to accept the simile, but let us carry it a little further. What do we find in connection with a pack of hounds? There may be a Master of Hounds present; possibly not. No doubt many Members are familiar with the rules in regard to hunting with a pack of hounds, but let me remind the House that the first consideration of the Master in picking out a pack of hounds is to pick a level pack, all of whom can roll their tongues when they are upon the scent. Another thing the Master of Hounds would do would be to get rid of the mute hounds;

every one of those would be unmercifully knocked on the head. The next thing he would do would be to get rid of the old ones; some of these would be knocked on the head; others would be sent to another House. Other members of the pack with whom the Master would deal with would be the babblers; they would be sent to Gibraltar. But they would never come back, and I venture to say they never would be missed.

These are a few of the points to which I would respectfully call the attention of hon. Members who tell us that we have come here simply to listen, to hold our tongues, and to obey the crack of the Party Whip. But to come to a more serious matter, I would like to point out to the House that there is a change coming over this Assembly. We have had a great infusion of business men. These business men are imbued with business ideas, and they wish to see the business of the

country carried on on business lines. That fact may have escaped the attention of right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench, but it is there all the same, and it will demand attention and have to be dealt with. We come here, sent by great manufacturing constituencies; we have been sent here because we can speak upon business matters; we have come here to demand that we shall be heard upon business affairs of interest to our constituents. Might I remind the House that I represent one of the largest constituencies in the country, with over 35,000 electors? Let hon. Members, consider the multiplicity of subjects that engage the attention of that constituency. When certain subjects are before the House I am asked by telegram and by letter, not only to vote, but to speak upon those subjects, and when I tell them that it is an absolute impossibility that I should do so, owing to the great number of Members that are anxious to speak, they cannot understand it. They call my attention to the fact; which must be patent to every Member of the House; that, if one takes up The Times and refers to the reports of the debates which have taken place in the House day after day, it will be seen that the same Members have risen in their places and spoken. They are men who seem to think that they are competent to speak upon every conceivable

subject, but I venture to say that we do not always agree with them. Let me point out what to my mind constitutes one of the greatest defects of speakers in this House; it is that when they rise they seem to think that they are the only men out of the 670 Members of the House who know anything whatever about the subject under discussion, and they attempt to deal with every possible phase of the question.

The weak point in connection with this resolution is, I think, the latitude that it gives to Members of the front benches. We are quite willing that on great occasions, such as the unfolding of the Army scheme or the introduction of the Budget, the right hon. Gentleman in charge of the matter and the Leader of the Opposition who has to reply should be given almost unlimited time, but because a gentleman is or has been in the Ministry he should have unlimited time, although he is not connected with the subject before the House, is, I think, a great defect in the resolution. But if we are going to make a mistake, let us make a mistake in giving too much rather than too little. I venture to say that if this House is to maintain its great traditions, and to occupy the position in the public mind that it has occupied for generations past, something will have to be done in regard to this particular subject. I have ascertained in conversation with business men who have been returned to this House that they are not prepared to come here simply to register the decrees of Ministers. They feel that upon certain subjects they are competent to speak. They wish to speak, and they are determined to speak, and unless they have an opportunity to speak they are not prepared to continue Members of this House. I maintain that it has been and is a splendid thing for the Empire that business men have been persuaded to come here. It will be a great calamity if those Members are driven from the House, because the alternative will be that the representation of many great constituencies will fall into the hands of professional politicians. Are hon. Members enamoured with professional politicians, that they would like to see a

multiplicity of them in the House? I venture to think not. Depend upon it, the best thing for the country and for the honour and business capacity of this House is

that we should have a blend of the best business men of the country in Parliament. It is good for the country from many points of view, and, depend upon it, the time is not far distant when the commercial and business men of this House will not be satisfied with merely occupying a seat upon these benches; they will also knock at the doors of the Cabinet. We have one bright example of the business man in this House in the person of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. His example has been so good that we should like to see more businessmen here, and I appeal to every hon. Member not to dismiss the resolution as something of a revolutionary character, but to recognise that two great changes have come over the House. The first is that we no longer have free speech. We bade good bye to free speech when the closure was introduced, and if we are to have the closure it is greatly due to the action of Gentlemen immediately opposite. If we are to have the closure, then I say do not let us put it in force until we are assured that the House has given expression generally to the particular views which are held on the question occupying attention. That, I say, in many cases has not been done when we have been asked to vote for the closure. I sincerely trust that hon. Members will give their most careful attention to the subject before they vote. If they will weigh it over in their minds they will find that the effect of this resolution will be not to curtail speech, but to remove some of the trammels with which we are bound at the present time.

*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): The House has listened to a number of valuable, and many of them amusing, speeches, but we must not be led away from the question which is really before the House. We had an object lesson during the day on the matter which we have been debating for the last two hours and a quarter. In the morning sitting the House sat for about four and a half hours, and in the course of that time there were five speeches. We have sat now, at the evening sitting, two and a quarter hours; we have had eleven speeches, and I am satisfied those who listened to both debates will not feel inclined to say that the evening debate has been less interesting or less instructive than the speeches at the morning sitting. The question now raised is one which undoubtedly is attended with considerable difficulty. All of us, I am sure, must sympathise with those who complain of the inordinate length some speeches run to in the House of Commons. There is another point on which there seems to be general agreement, and that is, that the greatest sinners are the occupants of the two front benches. But the two front benches are to be specially exempted by the resolution proposed, and this will give rise to considerable comment and dissatisfaction. I often wonder what it is that really makes men favour the House with speeches of inordinate length, as many of them do, for my own experience is that it is not the long speeches that make an impression, but the short speeches. I have heard right hon. Gentlemen who are to be exempted from this resolution making speeches of great length which rather bored the House, and I have heard them on other

occasions make very short speeches which greatly interested the House, and were most effective. There is this in favour of short speeches, if a Member desires to have the real pith of what he has said reported it is much better that he should make a short speech than a long one, for the probability is the reporter in a long speech will miss the special points on which the speaker places greatest stress. The report of that speech will by no means carry to the public the impression the speaker desires to convey, but the exact contrary is the case when a short speech is made. There can be no doubt there is considerable abuse in this matter, and I instance the debates on private Bills. Can anyone say that the very lengthy speeches which the House has to listen to in connection with private Bills are not, in nine cases out of ten, unnecessary? The same ground is travelled over and over again, with the result that the House, instead of being interested in the arguments used, becomes bored to a degree, and the effect of the speech is lost entirely.

I am sure the majority of the House admits that there is an evil to be remedied. How is it proposed that this evil should be remedied? I confess that the proposal in the resolution does not seem to me to be quite the right one for the purpose of putting an end to the evil, which we all acknowledge. In the first place, the movers of resolutions are to be exempted. No doubt it is right and proper that a Member who has to make an exposition of proposals for which he desires the support of the House of Commons should be allowed to extend the period of his speech beyond that which is named in the resolution; but it appears that no one is to be really limited by this resolution, because, as I understand, anyone can rise and propose that any Member should have a longer hearing. What is to be the mode of procedure? What might happen would be this. An hon. Member would rise to address the House, and at the close of his twenty minutes one of his hon. friends would move that he be heard for another twenty minutes. Some other hon. Member would move as an Amendment that he be heard for twenty-five minutes longer, or for a less time. I presume the ordinary course would be followed, and a division taken. [An. HON. MEMBER: Debate.] I am presuming that there would be no debate, but there certainly would be a division. I cannot understand how it can be done otherwise. We are not in the habit of voting here by show of hands. If there was a division, that would take up a considerable amount of time, but if it was desired really to obstruct business; and hon. Members from Ireland have been alluded to in the course of the discussion; what would be easier than for every Member of the Irish party to get up and speak for twenty minutes, and for another Member to move that his hon. friend should be heard for a longer period. I am quite sure that hon. Members are too anxious to promote the business of the House of Commons to have recourse to any such proceeding. I am not saying that they would do so. I am only pointing out one of the possibilities of this resolution, so that, instead of it becoming an instrument of shortening debates, it might be turned into an engine favourable to anyone who desired to obstruct the business of the House.

I do not think the resolution would, even if it were put into practice, carry out the views of those who propose it. I do not say that some procedure of the

kind might not eventually have to be adopted, for it is impossible to ignore the fact that by the inordinate length of speeches many Members are deprived of the opportunity, of placing their views before the House. That is a deprivation which the Members themselves have a right to complain of, and, still more, one that their constituents have a right to complain of. For my own part, I should be extremely sorry if it were necessary for the House to adopt such a drastic rule for the purpose of securing that liberty of speech all of us desire to maintain, and, so far as the Government are concerned, though they are sensible of the evil which undoubtedly exists, they are unwilling either themselves to propose or to see adopted any resolution of this kind unless the necessity for it has been somewhat more demonstrated than it has been up to the present time. I am unable to support the resolution, but I would make an earnest appeal to Members to restrict their speeches to the narrowest possible compass consistent with the desire to inform the House of their views upon any of the subjects brought before the House. I would impress upon hon. Members that they should think of the great reputation the House has for many years sustained, and that by modifying their zeal in speaking they should prevent the necessity for the adoption of any such Resolution, which I am sure all Members of the House of Commons, irrespective of party, would be very sorry to see adopted. I hope my hon. friends will be content with the interesting interchange of views which has taken place, and will not ask the House to divide upon their proposal.

MR. PARKER SMITH (Lanarkshire, Partick): There is one point on which all speakers have been unanimous, and that is, whether they approve or disapprove of the resolution, they have objected to the exemption of the two front benches from the terms of the resolution. We on this side can imagine hon. Gentlemen opposite whom we do not wish to listen to for an hour, and we may be able to pick out Members on this bench whom we would not desire to hear so long, and there are even Gentlemen on the front benches, conscious as we are of one another's failings, who would not wish to listen to each other for an indefinite time. Therefore, I think that is an exception which ought not to be made, and I think the Amendment which stands in my name on the Paper to leave out Ministers and ex-Ministers might be accepted by the mover of this proposal. It would be impossible to have any system of asking for an extension of the time of speaking. That would merely lead to much longer obstruction. There was a point raised by my hon. friend which is of greater importance almost, and that is the limiting of the time for the subject instead of limiting it for the speaker.

Well, the effect of that would be diverse. In the first place, I think it would have a most excellent effect on those who sit on this side of the House, and who are unwilling in general to prolong debates which are against the interests of the party. On the other hand, if there is a fixed time for a debate coming to an end, there is no reason why there should not be a fair interchange of speakers on each side of the House. There is another fact. Certain gentlemen do get called to speak with remarkable frequency, and if one may conjecture what goes on it is this. There are certain people who will insist on being heard, and therefore the Chairman of Committee or the Speaker;

*MR. SPEAKER reminded the hon. Member that it was out of order to discuss the

conduct of the Chair in this way.

MR. PARKER SMITH: I have transgressed, and perhaps I ought to have confined my remark to the Chairman of Committees.

*MR. SPEAKER: He is in exactly the same position as the Speaker.

MR. PARKER SMITH: Without the slightest imputation upon your impartiality, I may say that it might tend to the improvement of debates if we had a greater diversity of speakers to listen to. I think hon. Members from Ireland are entirely wrong in imagining that this motion is directed against them. It is directed against bores, and I do not think they are of exclusively Irish, English, or Scotch growth. It would be an absolutely futile thing to direct a motion of this kind against Gentlemen from Ireland in the hope that we should produce any effect in the matter. After one hon. Member had spoken for twenty minutes there would be plenty of others ready to take up the running. Therefore, it is not against hon. Gentlemen from Ireland that the motion is in any way directed, but against hon. Gentlemen whom we are accustomed to hear at far greater length than is at all necessary on the subject on which they speak. The Amendment I have put down on the Paper shows what the effect of the rule would be. For a long time it has been a generally acknowledged principle that on Wednesdays discussion comes to a close at the end of the afternoon. Very large subjects have been discussed on Wednesdays which, if introduced in any other way, would have taken many days, but we have been accustomed on Wednesdays to come to a decision at the end of the afternoon. The result has been that the style of speaking, and the interest in the debates, have been very much higher in that limited time than in the debates in unlimited Government time. But the practice has been carried further, and on two occasions we have had divisions after comparatively short debates. For instance, the Miners Eight Hours Bill was divided upon after only three hours discussion. The matter was put by you, Sir, to take the opinion of the House in a way that is not usually done by the Chair in regard to the closure, and the House approved of the closure being given by a large majority. In the following week a Bill was discussed, and after only two hours debate the closure was moved and carried without a division. The fact is that in these Wednesday's discussions it is not a question of legislation, but a question of providing hon. Members an opportunity of putting forward their views on subjects which would afford the groundwork of legislation, and of getting a division. The corollary of that is that there should be a rule that speeches on Wednesdays should be short, corresponding to the short time to be devoted to the subject. My motion would have secured that small practical measure of restriction, but, as the discussion has taken a much larger time, I shall move the other Amendment standing in my name which has received such general support. Amendment proposed;

"To leave out the words 'Ministers, ex-Ministers, and.'";(Mr. Parker Smith.)

Question, "That the words proposed to be left out stand part of the Question."

*MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.): I wish to support the Amendment of the hon.

Member. I think if this rule is to be adopted it should be applied to Gentlemen sitting on the front benches. The hon. Member, who is very well qualified to speak on the question of Parliamentary bores, said we should have a time-table

for subjects. Madagascar, for instance, would get five minutes, South Africa two hours, and how much would he give to Morocco? I think the hon. Member will hardly get very many to agree with him in that proposal. Under this Amendment I think there should be some differentiation. Suppose a Member did not speak for a whole year, should he be treated in the same way as a Member who speaks every night? I was three years in this House before I spoke.

*MR. SPEAKER: The question is whether there should be a time limit for the speeches of Ministers and ex-Ministers.

*MR. TULLY: I do not know how Ministers and ex-Ministers will themselves regard the proposal to confine their speeches to twenty minutes. I was reading the other day about an eminent preacher who was asked how long he took to prepare a speech; and he said if the speech is to be one quarter of an hour in length he would take a week, if the speech were to be half an hour in length he would take a couple of days, but if he were to speak for two hours he could begin at once. I think if hon. Gentlemen on the front bench have to put their remarks in a quarter of an hour they would not like to go on this Parliamentary treadmill where they should spend a week preparing their speeches. An hon. Member in supporting the proposal to limit speeches to twenty minutes duration quoted the number of speeches which could be made on every subject in this House by Irish Members. I agree with him. We have seventy talking Members, and if they were put to it they could speak for twenty five hours. I wonder if the hon. Gentleman who brought forward this motion would be prepared to agree to an idea like that. I do not think he would. I think he would find that seventy Members speaking for twenty minute each would be far worse than a few Members speaking for some time.

*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Gentleman is forgetting what I told him, that the only matter now under discussion is the time limit of Ministers and ex-Ministers.

*MR. TULLY: I regret, Sir, that I was trespassing on your ruling, and I will not pursue the subject. But it is Ministers who take up most of the time of the House, and I do not see, if we are to have a multiplicity of speakers, what advantage it is. I challenge anyone to say if ever an original idea has been enunciated here which was not much better said, and in better form, outside. If we are to have a multiplicity of speakers that would not be an argument in favour of the Amendment. If hon. Members are to be limited, let the right hon. and hon. Members on the front benches be the first to suffer. The hon. Member for Newcastle referred to the advantage of having barking dogs, but there is an old proverb that barking dogs do not bite. As a general rule it is the silent men who do the great things in life. One of the greatest Parliamentarians you ever had in this House, Oliver Cromwell, the man who, in fact, put an end to your Parliament; you do not find many of his speeches in Hansard. Then General Grant, Von Moltke, and other great men were silent men. The men who speak very little are as a general rule the men who do the greatest things in the world.

LORD HUGH CECIL (Greenwich): For my part I am opposed to this resolution, though, if I thought it were to be passed at all, I would gladly see it extended to Ministers and ex-Ministers of the Crown. The purpose of parliamentary debate is not to compress into a few words what is believed to be the substance of an

utterance. It is to enlighten discussion, to enrich ideas, to instruct the public mind on many different subjects, and certainly not to carry through in the briefest possible space a discussion which is supposed to further business-like purposes. The House of Commons does not principally exist to further discussion, but to guide the public mind in this direction or that. If the House were a merely business assembly, it would be judged by its annual output, by the number of Bills that it passes; if it passes more this year than last year, then it would be said that it had done better. But if its function is, on the contrary, to lead the public mind and instruct the nation at large, it is not the number of Bills which it has passed or motions which it has carried through that is the true test and measure of its efficiency. The true test is as to whether it has guided the public mind into wiser channels.

*MR. SPEAKER: The question is as to whether a time limit should be imposed on Ministers and ex-Ministers.

LORD HUGH CECIL: It is important in regard to this Amendment to consider whether Ministers or ex-Ministers would feel it their special and particular function to instruct the House, and, through the House, the country. We have recently had a very interesting discussion on army reform, and I have listened to speeches of Ministers and ex-Ministers without deriving a very clear idea of what they intended to do. In so far as that matter goes I think the hon. Member is justified in saying that the instruction of the community does not appear to be contributed to by Ministers and ex-Ministers at all in proportion to the time they occupy. If you are to carry out a system of regulating debate you must consider that those who would suffer most would be those who, for want of long practice and natural aptitude, cannot compress their ideas into a small compass. Supposing you put a definite limit on Ministers and ex-Ministers; they have spoken a great deal, and being presumably the best Members in the House they ought to be, able to compress their ideas in a way that is not given to the great majority of Members, and therefore ought to find it comparatively an easy task to lay before the House and the country that measure of instruction and enlightenment which they have at their disposal in a limited, number of minutes. I cannot sit down without saying that a time limit is very arbitrary and unwise.

*MR. SPEAKER: That does not arise on the Amendment now before the House.

*LORD HUGH CECIL: I quite accept that. [Cries of "Divide."] I shall vote for the Amendment as preferable to the motion, and against the motion even, in its amended form, if it goes to a division, for I am quite certain that no change in Parliamentary procedure can be more disastrous than one which limits discussion. Question put, and negatived.

Main Question, as amended, put::The House divided; Ayes, 83; Noes, 117.

(Division List No. 185.)

AYES.

Abraham, William (Rhondda)

Gurdon Sir W. Brampton

O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.

Hall, Edward Marshall

Partington, Oswald.
Agnew, Sir Andrew Noel
Hamilton, Marq. of (L'nd'nd'ry
Pirie, Duncan V.
Allen, Charles P (Glouc., Stroud
Hardie, J. Keir (MerthyrTydvil
Plummer, Walter R.
Allsopp, Hon. George
Harris, Frederick Leverton
Rea, Russell
Archdale, Edward Mervyn
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (Bristol, E.)
Reid, James (Greenock)
Ashton, Thomas Gair
Johnstone, Heywood (Sussex)
Renwick, George
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John
Jones, William (Carnarvonsh'e
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)
Bain, Colonel James Robert
Keswick, William
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney
Balfour, Capt. C. B. (Hornsey)
Langley, Batty
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.
Balfour, Maj K R (Christchurch)
Law, Andrew Bonar
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-
Bill, Charles
Lawrence, Wm. F. (Liverpool)
Sadler, Col. Samuel Alexander
Brookfield, Colonel Montagu
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage
Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)
Bull, William James
Leigh, Sir Joseph
Shaw, Charles Edw. (Stafford)
Cautley, Henry Strother
Leng, Sir John
Smith, James Parker (Lanarks.
Colville, John
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N.S.
Soares, Ernest J.
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)
Lockwood, Lt.-Col. A. R.
Spear, John Ward

Craig, Robert Hunter
Loder, Gerald Walter Erskine
Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E.)
Cross, Herb. Shepherd (Bolton
Lowther, C. (Cumb., Eskdale)
Thomas, J A (Glamorgan, Gow'r
Denny, Colonel
Lucas, Col. Francis (Lowestoft)
Tufnell, Lieut.-Col. Edward
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst
Lucas, Reginald J. (Portsmouth
Vincent, Col. Sir CEH (Sheffield
Finch, George H.
M'Crae, George
Vincent, Sir Edgar (Exeter)
Firbank, Joseph Thomas
M'Killop, James (Stirlingshire
White, Luke (York, E.R.)
Forster, Henry William
Moore, William (Antrim, N.)
Willoughby, de Eresby, Lord
Fuller, J. M. F.
Morley, Charles (Breconshire)
Wilson, John (Glasgow)
Goddard, Daniel Ford
Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (Elgin & Nairn
Nicol, Donald Ninian
Grant, Come
Norton, Capt. Cecil William
TELLERS FOR THE AYES; Sir Joseph Dimsdale and Major Rasch.
Greville, Hon. Ronald
Nussey, Thomas Willans
NOES.
Abraham, Wm. (Cork, N.E.)
Fitzmaurice, Lord Edmond
O'Kelly, Conor (Mayo, N.)
Age-Gardner, James Tynte
Flavin, Michael Joseph
O'Malley, William
Allhusen, Augustus H. Eden
Flynn, James Christopher
O'Mara, James
Arrol, Sir William
Gilhooly, James
O'Shaughnessy, P. J.

Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis
Gordon, J. (Londonderry, S.)
O'Shee, James John
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)
Green, Walford D (Wednesb'ry)
Palmer, Walter (Salisbury)
Barry, E. (Cork, S.)
Greene, Sir E W (B'ry S Edm'nds
Pemberton, John S. G.
Bell, Richard
Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp
Bentinck, Lord Henry C.
Gretton, John
Power, Patrick Joseph
Blake, Edward
Grey, Sir Edward (Berwick)
Purvis, Robert
Boland, John
Hayden, John Patrick
Redmond, John E. (Waterford
Brassey, Albert
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Chas. Seale-
Redmond, William (Clare)
Caldwell, James
Healy, Timothy Michael
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)
Henderson, Alexander
Roberts, John H. (Denbighs
Carew, James Laurence
Hope, J.F. (Sheffield, Brightside
Robinson, Brooke
Carvill, Patrick Geo. Hamilton
Johnston, William (Belfast)
Roche, John
Causton, Richard Knight
Jones, David Brynm'r (Swansea
Ropner, Colonel Robert
Cavendish, V.C.W. (Derbysh.)
Joyce, Michael
Round, James
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)
Leamy, Edmund
Saunderson, Rt. Hn Col. Edw. J.
Cecil, Lord Hugh (Greenwich)

Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie
Seely, Chas. Hilton (Lincoln)
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse
Levy, Maurice
Seton-Karr, Henry
Colomb, Sir John Charles R.
Lewis, John Herbert
Simeon, Sir Barrington
Compton, Lord Alwyne
Lough, Thomas
Stanley, Hn. Arthur (Ormskirk
Condon, Thomas Joseph
Lundon, W.
Sullivan, Donal
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)
Macdona, John Cumming
Thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan, E.
Cranborne, Viscount
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.
Thomas, F. Freeman- (Hastings
Crean, Eugene
MacNeill, John Gordon Swift
Thornton, Percy M.
Cullinan, J.
Maxwell, W. H. J (Dumfriessh.
Tollemache, Henry James
Daly, James
Mooney, John J.
Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray
Delany, William
Morgan, Hn. F. (Monmouthsh.
Tully, Jasper
Dickson, Charles Scott
Murphy, J.
Valentia, Viscount
Dillon, John
Nannetti, Joseph P.
Walrond, Rt. Hn. Sir William H
Donelan, Captain A.
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)
Warde, Colonel C. E.
Doogan, P. C.
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Md
White, Patrick (Meath, North
Duke, Henry Edward
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny

Williams, Osmond (Merioneth
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin
O'Brien, P. J. (Tidparary, N.)
Wylie, Alexander
Esmonde, Sir Thomas
O'Connor, Jas. (Wicklown, W.
Young, Commander (Berks, E.)
Farrell, James Patrick
O'Donnell, John (Mayo, S.)
Ffrench, Peter
O'Donnell, T. (Kerry, W.)
TELLERS FOR THE NOES;
Fisher, William Hayes
O'Dowd, John
Mr. Emmott and Mr. Banbury.
Adjourned at twelve minutes after Twelve of the clock.