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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Friday, 15th February, 1901.

Several other Members took and subscribed the Oath.

PRIVATE BILLS.

Ordered, That Standing Order 195 be suspended, and that the time for presenting Petitions for Private Bills to the House (which shall have been previously (indorsed by the Examiners) be extended to Friday, 22nd February.:(The Chairman of Ways and Means.)

PRIVATE LEGISLATION PROCEDURE (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1809.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That all Petitions deposited at the office of the Secretary for Scotland, pursuant to General Order 77 in favour of or against any proposed Provisional Order the provisions of which are subsequently proceeded with as a Bill in this House under Second 2 (4) of the Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, shall, on transmission from the office of the Secretary for Scotland, be received as if duly deposited in favour of or against such Bill.";(The Chairman of Ways and Means.)

\*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. J. W. LOWTUKR, Cumberland, Penrith): I may perhaps be allowed to briefly explain this motion. The House will remember that under the Private Bill Procedure (Scotland) Act it became the duty of the Lord Chairman and myself to divide the Provisional Orders which had been sent into the Scotch Office, and to place them into two separate classes; one of which should go forward as Provisional Orders and the other as private Bills. The question arose what was to become of the petitions presented against those Provisional Orders which it was decided should go forward as Bills. No provision had been made for dealing with them, and the parties who had petitioned were afraid that they would have to present fresh petitions in this House. The motion which I now have the honour to make is intended to obviate that necessity, and the petitions which have been presented at the Scotch Office against these Provisional Orders will come here and be treated as petitions against private Bills.

MR. JOHN ELLIS (Nottinghamshire, Rushcliffe) said he understood that the motion was to repair what might be described as an omission from the Act, and it related only to the particular petitions specified by the right hon. Gentleman. If the right hon. Gentleman had satisfied himself that the motion did not go beyond that, and that other petitions would have to be deposited in the usual way, there would be no objection to the motion.

\*MR. J. W. LOWTHER: That is so. But it may be desirable, before the end of the session, to introduce a Standing Order to cover cases of omission like this.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid): Will it be possible to present any fresh petitions against these Bills?

\*MR. J. W. LOWTHER: No; I do not think it will be competent for that to be done. The time for the presentation of petitions is fixed by Act of Parliament, and I do not think fresh ones can be deposited after that date. But if the hon. Member wishes to bind me to an answer I should like to have notice of the question.

Question put, and agreed to.

#### PETITIONS.

##### CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

Petition from Maryport, for alteration of law; to lie upon the Table.

##### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (ADULTS IN EVENING SCHOOLS).

Petitions for alteration of law, from Todmorden; Bedwellty; Belper; Hedworth; and Great Yarmouth; to lie upon the Table.

##### MANSA, MAHOMED SOOLEIMAN.

Petition of Mahomed Sooleiman Mansa, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

##### POOR LAW OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1896

Petitions for alteration of law, from Middlesbrough; Tottenham; Waterloo with Seaforth; Great Yarmouth; Acton;

Yardley; Gelligaer; Crick; and Thirsk; to lie upon the Table.

##### RAJOO, NARAYAMA.

Petition of Narayama Rajoo, for redress of grievances; to lie upon the Table.

##### SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS ON SUNDAY.

Petitions for prohibition, from Ulverston; Horsham; and Huntingdon; to lie upon the Table

##### SINGH, JAMAND.

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

##### RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

##### LOCAL GOVERNMENT (IRELAND) ACT 1898.

Return [presented 14th February] to be printed. [No. 2.]

##### WAGES AND EFFECTS OF DECEASED SEAMEN.

Account presented, of the Sums received and paid in respect of the Wages and Effects of Deceased Seamen in the year ended 31st March, 1900 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

##### RAMSGATE HARBOUR

Copy presented, of Statement of the Receipts and Payments for the year ended 31st March, 1900, together with an Account of the Receipt and Issue of Stores [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 3.]

##### GENERAL LIGHTHOUSE FUND.

Account presented, of the General Lighthouse Fund showing the Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st March, 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 4.]

##### POST OFFICE (PARCEL POST BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND NORWAY).

Copy of Agreement between the British and Norwegian Post Offices concerning the Exchange of Parcels by Parcel Post [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

##### ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY PENSIONS.

Copy presented, of Return showing the names of all Constabulary Officers now in receipt of Pensions, of all Head Constables, Sergeants, and Constables, and of all Widows and Children to whom Pensions have been granted since the Constabulary Estimate for 1900&#x2013;1901 was prepared, with the amount and date of Pension in each case [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

##### TREASURY CHEST.

Account presented, for the year 1899&#x2013;1900, together with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 5.]

#### GREEK LOAN.

Account presented, of Moneys paid out. of the Consolidated Fund for Interest and Sinking Fund on that part of the Greek Loan guaranteed by this Country and of the amount repaid by the Greek. Government on account of the same to 31st December, 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 6.]

#### DUCHY OF CORNWALL.

Account presented, of the Receipts and Disbursements of the Duchy of Cornwall for the year ended 31st December, 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 7.]

#### SUPERANNUATION ACT, 1884.

Copies presented, of Treasury Minutes declaring that that the under-mentioned persons were appointed to the offices set against their names without a Civil Service Certificate through inadvertence on the part of the Heads of their Departments, viz.:

John William Gill, messenger, Wake field Post Office Department, dated 5th February, 1901;

Charles Street, labourer, Royal Laboratory, War Office Department, dated 17th January, 1901;

[by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

#### IMPERIAL OTTOMAN GUARANTEED LOAN OF 1855.

Copy presented, of Account for the year 1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

#### CHELSEA HOSPITAL.

Account presented, for the year ended 31st March, 1900, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 8.]

#### CONSOLIDATED FUND.

Abstract Account presented, showing the issues made from the Consolidated Fund of the United Kingdom in the year ended 31st March, 1900, for the Interest and Management of the Debt, for the Civil List, and all other Issues in the financial year for services charged directly on the said Fund; with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 9.]

#### ARMY (APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT).

Copy presented, of the Appropriation Account for 1899&#x2013;1900, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, and upon the Store Accounts of the Army [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 10.]

#### NAVY (APPROPRIATION ACCOUNT).

Copy presented, of the Appropriation Account of the Navy for 1899&#x2013;1900, with the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General thereon, and upon the Store Accounts of the Navy [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

[No. 11.]

#### UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW.

Copy presented, of Annual Statistical Report by the University Court of the University of Glasgow for 1899&#x2013;1900 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 1 2.]

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889 (ORDINANCES).

Copy presented, of University Court Ordinance No. III. (St. Andrews No. 1) (Foundation of the Bute Chair of Anatomy in the University of St. Andrews) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

Copy presented, of University Court Ordinance No. IV. (St. Andrews No. 2) (Foundation of the Chandos Chair of Physiology in the University of St. Andrews) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACT, 1877 (OXFORD).

Copy presented, of Statute made by the Governing Body of Brasenose College, Oxford, on 20th June, 1900, altering Statutes III., V., XIII., and XIV. of the Statutes of that College [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed.

[No. 13.]

Copy presented, of Statute made by the Governing Body of New College, Oxford, on 10th October, 1900, and sealed on the 23rd day of October, 1900, altering Statute III. of the Statutes of the College [by Act]; to lie upon the Table and to be printed. [No. 14.]

UNIVERSITIES OF OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE ACT, 1877 (CAMBRIDGE).

Copy presented, of Statute made by the Governing Body of the University of Cambridge, on 13th October, 1900, altering Statute B of the University Statutes [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 15.]

DISEASES OF ANIMALS ACTS, 1894 AND 1896.

Copy presented, of an Order dated 8th January, 1901, prohibiting the conveyance of animals, etc., to or from any port in Great Britain by the Steamships "King's Lynn," "Burton," and "Peterborough" [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

PENAL SERVITUDE ACTS (CONDITIONAL LICENCES).

Copy presented, of Licence granted to Minnie Wells, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the St. John the Baptist's Home, Pimlico [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

Copy presented, of Licence granted to Annie Combs, a convict under detention in Aylesbury Prison, permitting her to be at large on condition that she enter the London Female Preventive and Reformatory Institution [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

CHINA (No. 1, 1901).

Copy presented, of Correspondence respecting the Disturbances in China (in continuation of China [No. 3, 1900]) [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

TRADE REPORTS (ANNUAL SERIES).

Copies presented, of Diplomatic and Consular Reports, Annual Series. Nos. "2554 and 2555 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

DOCKYARD PORTS REGULATION ACT, 1865.

Copy presented, of Order in Council, dated 13th December, 1900, amending an Order in Council, dated 26th February, 1897, relating to the Dockyard Port of Portsmouth [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

ENDOWED SCHOOLS ACT, 1869, AND AMENDING ACTS.

Copy presented, of Scheme for the Management of the Charity of William Price, in the Parish of Fareham, in the county of Southampton, founded by Will dated 24th August, 1721 [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 16.]

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

1. Bank of England.;Accounts of Exchequer Bills and other Government Securities purchased, and of the Amount of Balances of Sums issued for the Payment of Dividends, &c, for the year ending 5th January 1901 [by Act], to be printed. [No. 17.]

2. Public Records (Clerk of the Peace for the County of Denbigh).;Copy of a Schedule containing a List and Particulars of Classes and Documents in the Office of the Clerk of the Peace for the County of Denbigh, which are not considered of sufficient public value to justify their preservation therein [by Act].

3. Union of Benefices Act (All Saints, Knightsbridge, and Holy Trinity, Knightsbridge).;Copy of Scheme for effecting a union of the Benefices of All Saints, Knightsbridge, and Holy Trinity, Knightsbridge [by Act].

PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES (ELECTORS, ETC) (UNITED KINGDOM).

Address for "Return showing, with regard to each Parliamentary Constituency in the United Kingdom, the total number and, as far as possible, the number in each class of Electors on the Register now in force; and also showing the Population and Inhabited Houses in each Constituency (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 116, of Session 1900).";(Sir Charles Dilke.)

QUESTIONS.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR;PAARDEBERG DESPATCHES.

\*MR. FABER (York): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether Earl Roberts has transmitted to the Secretary of State for War any despatch relating to the battle of Paardeberg, other than the one of the 28th February, 1900, which has been recently published.

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): No, Sir. All that has been received from Lord Roberts as to the battle of Paardeberg has been published.

BOER INVASION OF CAPE COLONY.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, for the convenience of Members, he will have placed in the Tea Room a map of the portions of Cape Colony which the Boers have recently taken possession of, similar to those already placed there of the Orange Free State and Transvaal.

\*MR. BRODRICK: The Boers have not taken possession of any portion of the Cape Colony, though their columns have moved through parts of the colony closely pursued by His Majesty's troops. A map shall be placed in the Library.

MR. FLAVIN: Can the right hon. Gentleman say how much of that portion of Cape Colony have His Majesty's forces surrendered to General De Wet?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order&#x0021;

THE NOOITGEDACHT DISASTER,

SIR. E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he can give the House the numbers of British troops killed, wounded, and taken prisoners at the disaster to General Clements's force at

Nooitgedacht; whether the kopje commanding the camp had no entrenchments or sangars; and if a court of inquiry has, been held, and with what result.

\*MR. BRODRICK: Nine officers and fifty-seven non-commissioned officers and men were killed; seven officers and 180

non-commissioned officers and men were wounded; and fifteen officers and 331 non-commissioned officers and men were taken prisoners at Nooitgedacht. A court of inquiry was ordered to be held, but the result has not been reported.

ARMY AND NAVY PENSIONS; PROPOSED COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY.

MR. WHARTON (Ripon): I wish to ask whether the Leader of the House is prepared to make a statement as to the Government subventions in the case of the widows and orphans of those who have fallen in the war.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): As the right hon. Gentleman is aware, the Government have decided on a system of pensions to be paid out of public funds to the widows and young children of soldiers and sailors who have lost their lives when on active service. This necessarily makes a great change in the character and functions of the Royal Patriotic Fund, or any other body administering the resources for which that body is now responsible. I have been in communication with the Duke of Cambridge, and he, with his colleagues on the Commission, concurs with His Majesty's Government in thinking that an inquiry would be desirable into the best machinery for dealing with the altered circumstances. Probably, the best course would be to appoint a joint committee of both Houses to make proposals on the subject.

JOINT NAVAL AND MILITARY COMMITTEE OF DEFENCE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES (Lynn Regis): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty, can he state the nature of the functions exercised by the Joint Naval and Military Committee on Defence, consisting of five Naval and five Military Members, with two joint secretaries, as set forth in the Navy List. Do these functions resemble or overlap those exercised by the Cabinet Committee of Defence; and, if not, in what way do they differ from them. And, are the members of the Joint Naval and Military Committee appointed for a definite number of years, or during their tenure of other appointments ex officio; do any of its members receive any, and, if so, what extra rank or pay on appointment to this Committee; is any record kept of this Committee's proceedings; and how many times did it meet during the year 1900.

\*THE SECRETARY TO THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. ARNOLD-FORSTER, Belfast, W.): The Joint Naval and Military Committee is an inter-departmental Committee composed of four Naval and four Military Members, with the Under Secretary of State for War as President, and with two joint secretaries, of whom one is Naval and the other Military. The Committee was formed for the consideration of questions of coast defence, in which the Admiralty and the War Office were jointly interested. Subjects for consideration are referred to the Committee either by the War Office or by the Admiralty, or by both in agreement. Subjects may also be referred to it by the Colonial Defence Committee. Subjects for consideration can also be brought before the Committee by individual members of the same. The Reports of the Committee are submitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty and to the Secretary of State for War. The functions of the Committee

do not resemble those exercised by the Cabinet Committee of Defence. The members are ex-officio. They do not receive any extra rank or pay on joining the Committee. A record is kept of the proceedings. The Committee met once during the year 1900.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: Was Gibraltar one of the questions referred to it?

\*MR. ARNOLD-FORSTER: I am not aware; I must ask for notice.

COOPER'S HILL COLLEGE.

MR. CHANNING (Northamptonshire, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India, whether he proposes to lay before Parliament any of the Reports or other documents upon which the decisions of the India Council in reference to the appointments and curriculum of Cooper's Hill College have been arrived at.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Ealing): Yes, Sir, Papers on the question will be in the hands of Members in the course of a few days.

GERMANY AND THE CONGO FREE STATE.

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, is His Majesty's Government aware that in September, 1900, a German force forcibly seized a considerable portion of the Congo Free State, and turned the Belgian forces out of their stations there under a threat of war; and that the Germans have thus taken possession of the strip of territory leased to Great Britain by King Leopold of Belgium in 1894, which territory was abandoned by Great Britain owing to the objections of the German and French Governments. Has His Majesty's Government made any representations to the German Government on the subject, or do they propose to make any. And what grounds are alleged by the German Government for seizing a territory which they objected to being occupied by Great Britain, and the lease of which Great Britain abandoned on German representations; and does this seizure deprive Great Britain of the possibility of connecting British South African possessions with countries occupied by Great Britain in North Africa.

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Lord CRANBORNE, Rochester): His Majesty's Government have no official information as to the circumstances referred to in the question. Inquiry will, however, be made.

THE WRECK OF THE "GOONLAZE."

\*MR. SOARES (Devonshire, Barnstaple): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether his attention has been called to the circumstances connected with the wreck of the schooner "Goon-laze," in Bideford Bay, on the 5th instant, when the whole of the crew consisting of four men were drowned. Whether he is aware that one of the bodies of these men was found while still warm at 8.45 a.m., and that another body was found at 11 a.m. in a field 250 yards away from the edge of the cliff, the deceased man having evidently climbed the cliff and subsequently died of exposure. And, seeing that these bodies were both found within a quarter of a mile of the coastguard station at Peppercombe, whether he will order an inquiry into this matter, and also into the question as to whether the coastguard service at Peppercombe is sufficiently manned.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): Yes, Sir, my attention has been called to the case to which the

hon. Member refers, and I have ordered an inquiry to be held into the circumstances attending the wreck. With regard to the coastguard service at Peppercombe the Board of Trade will place themselves in communication with the Admiralty.

#### ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL TAXATION.

MR. CHANNING: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Report of the Royal Commission on Local Taxation will be completed and issued to Parliament.

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): I understand that the Local Taxation Commission, as was stated in answer to a similar question last December, are considering their Report, but it is impossible to name a precise date for its appearance, though no unnecessary delay will take place.

#### INSPECTION OF BOILERS.

MR. FENWICK (Northumberland, Wansbeck): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he intends to introduce a measure this session to provide for the better inspection of boilers.

\*MR. RITCHIE: I have not in contemplation any general legislation on the subject of boilers; but in the Bill of which I have given notice there will be found provisions dealing with the matter so far as regards factories and workshops.

SCOTCH PRIVATE BILL PROCEDURE. DR. FARQUHARSON (Aberdeenshire, W.): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether, in the case of the seven Provisional Orders applied for to the Secretary for Scotland under The Private Legislation Procedure (Scotland) Act, 1899, which have been ordered to be dealt with as Private Bills and not as Provisional Orders, the 129 petitions which have been deposited in opposition to those Orders at the office of the Secretary for Scotland, and are now superseded, will be held to be petitions in opposition to those Bills in Parliament, and thereby avoid the necessity and expense of depositing fresh petitions

under the Standing Orders of Parliament; and, if so, whether the fees paid on the deposit of those petitions at the office of the Secretary for Scotland will be refunded, or the corresponding fees payable under the Standing Orders of Parliament remitted in the case of the said Orders and petitions, in the event of the said Orders being proceeded with in Parliament.

\*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): The Secretary for Scotland has been in communication with the authorities of the two Houses of Parliament on this point; and it has been arranged that notice of motion will be given in each House on the first opportunity to the effect that petitions relating to Provisional Orders under the Scottish Procedure Act shall in the case referred to by the hon. Member be treated as petitions relating to the substituted Bills. The question of fees has also been under consideration and will be settled as soon as possible, but the hon. Member may assume that they will not be charged twice over.

#### STATE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT; INADEQUACY OF ACCOMMODATION FOR MEMBERS.

MR. JOHN ELLIS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can inform the House by whose authority Members were excluded from the seats in the



gallery of the House of Lords allotted to them when the attendance of the House was commanded by the King on the 14th instant; and by whose authority strangers are admitted, to the exclusion of Members of this House, when their presence is thus commanded in the House of Lords.

The following question on the same subject also appeared on the Paper:;

MR. CALDWELL: To ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the attention of the Government has been called to the totally inadequate accommodation provided in the House of Lords for Members of the House of Commons, whose presence and attendance have been commanded by His Majesty the King; and whether it would be possible to arrange either to increase the space for the House of Commons or to fit up Westminster Hall as a reception hall when the King commands the attendance of both Houses.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: There are two questions on the Paper on the same subject. There is, of course, no doubt that the accommodation in the House of Lords for Members of this House when they are summoned by His Majesty to attend is quite insufficient for the number of Members desiring to do so on an occasion like that which occurred yesterday. It is also true that on similar occasions there is no room in the House of Lords even for all the Peers. The arrangements are in charge of the hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain. A suggestion has been made that Westminster Hall should be used. It is quite impossible for me, without much longer notice and without an opportunity of consulting the persons in authority, to give an opinion upon such a suggestion. I may say, at the first glance, that however well suited for a great pageant Westminster Hall may be, the cost of the fittings for that pageant would be very considerable. I believe that on a previous occasion, a good many years ago indeed, there was a ballot taken in this House to settle by lot who should be the Members of the House to attend the House of Lords. For my own part, if no other solution of the difficulty is proposed, I think that would be a great improvement.

\*MR. JOHN ELLIS: Does not the right hon. Gentleman consider that the arrangements should be such that Members of the House of Commons should come immediately after members of the House of Peers and before strangers?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The arrangements made yesterday were, I believe, in strict accordance with precedent. [Cries of "No."] Certainly, I think they were, but, of course, it does not rest with me; I am not responsible for the arrangements, neither is the Government.

COLONEL NOLAN (Galway, N.): Is it not the fact that during the last thirty years Members of the House of Commons have been always admitted to the side galleries when her late Majesty opened Parliament?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am informed that when Parliament was opened in state the Members of the House of Commons did not have greater accommodation than they had yesterday.

COLONEL NOLAN: The right hon. Gentleman has not given a direct answer to my question with regard to the side galleries.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did answer. I said I was informed that the accommodation given yesterday to the Members of the House of Commons in the House of Lords was in accordance with precedent when Parliament is opened in state. That docs

answer the question.

COLONEL NOLAN: I beg to say that it is a question of the calculation of square feet. I cannot get the Leader of the House to answer the question whether the side galleries were open or not. It has been put forward that the accommodation we got below equals that which we had in the side galleries. That is the point on which the right hon. Gentleman failed to satisfy me.

SIR W. HART DYKE (Kent, Dartford): May I ask whether, considering the very grave dissatisfaction which exists with regard to the accommodation afforded to members yesterday, it would be possible to appoint a Committee of both Houses to go into the whole question?

MR. GIBSON BOWLES: In case the right hon. Gentleman consented to the appointment of such a Committee, will the Committee be empowered to consider the position and functions of the Lord Great Chamberlain?

MR. T. M. HEALY (Louth, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a large section of members below the gangway were quite satisfied with the want of accommodation yesterday?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I am glad that some one was pleased. In answer to my right hon. friend I cannot tell him now whether it would be a fitting course to appoint a joint Committee of the two Houses to consider this question, because I really do not know on what basis the jurisdiction of the hereditary Lord Great Chamberlain rests.

MR. CALDWELL: I beg to give notice that when the Vote in connection with the alteration of the House of Lords comes on I shall move a reduction.

MR. BAYLEY (Derbyshire, Chesterfield): May I ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he can arrange that the officials of the other House shall receive Members of this House with that amount of courtesy which is consistent with the dignity of the position we occupy as representatives of the nation?

[No answer was returned.]

ALIEN IMMIGRATION.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT (Sheffield, Central): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether the absence of any mention of an Alien Immigration Regulation Bill in the gracious Speech from the Throne is an indication that His Majesty's Government has abandoned its intention to introduce legislation upon the question, in spite of the declarations thereon of the Prime Minister on 17th July, 1894, and 23rd May, 1898, and of the Home Secretary (when President of the Board of Trade) on 10th February, 1897.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: No, Sir. As my hon. friend is aware, the absence of a particular measure from enumeration in the King's Speech by no means indicates, one way or the other, the policy of the Government.

SIR HOWARD VINCENT: Can my right hon. friend mention a date when the Bill will be brought in?

[No answer was given.]

THE CORONATION OATH.

MR. WINGFIELD-DIGBY (Dorsetshire, N.): I beg to ask the first Lord of the Treasury whether there is to be an alteration in the Coronation Oath; and if so,

whether any alteration can take place without an Act of Parliament.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It would require an Act of Parliament, and I do not propose to introduce one.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): May I ask whether an Act could not be introduced to omit from the Coronation Oath the words which refer to the Roman Catholic religion as superstitious and idolatrous?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I did not catch the hon. Member's question.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: I will repeat the question on Monday.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): Would the right hon. Gentleman have any objection to having a copy of the terms of the Coronation Oath sent to the Irish Catholic soldiers now serving in South Africa?

ADJOURNMENT.

Resolved, That this House, at its rising this day, do adjourn till Monday next.:(Sir William Walrond.)

NEW MEMBER SWORN.

Edward Charles Thompson, esquire, for County of Monaghan (North Monaghan Division),

BALLOT FOR BILLS AND MOTIONS FOR THE FIRST FOUR THURSDAYS.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: In moving the resolution which stands in my name, I may say that although, as it appears on the Paper, it is proposed to make it a Standing Order I do not in the least desire to press that if hon. Members think we have not had sufficient experience of the rule to make that course desirable. It would not be worth while having a discussion on it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That no Bills, other than Government Bills, be introduced in anticipation of the ballot, and that all Members who desire to ballot, whether for Bills, or motions for the first four Tuesdays of the session, do hand in their names at the Table during the sitting of the House on the first or second day of the session, and that a copy of such notices be handed in at the latest during the sitting of the House on the third day of the session. That the ballot for the precedence of the said Bills and motions be taken on the third day on which the House sits, at a convenient time and place to be appointed by Mr. Speaker, and that the introduction and first reading of Bills on the fourth sitting day be taken before Questions and as soon after Three o'clock as Mr. Speaker may deem convenient.";(Mr. A. J. Balfour.)

MR. LOUGH (Islington, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman consider the desirability of making a different use of Fridays in the future?

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; That is a totally different matter. Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this Order be a Standing Order of the House.";(Mr. A. J. Balfour.)

MR. T. M. HEALY said he had no desire to oppose the motion, but he would suggest that the right hon. Gentleman might go a little bit further. Fifteen years ago a recommendation was made by a Standing Committee that the absurd custom of bringing in Bills by first asking permission and then being called from the bar to the Table, and all that sort of humbug, might be abolished. Surely the First Reading was sufficient in itself.

\*MR. SPEAKER: That is not relevant to the question before the House. It has been decided to adopt a certain Sessional Order, and the point is now whether the Order, worded as it is, shall be a Standing Order.

Mr. T. M. HEALY: But if we now make it a Standing Order we shall defer our hopes of reform on this point. So long as it is merely a Sessional Order we can raise the question every session in the hope of inducing the Government to introduce a change which is certainly most desirable. You, Sir, must realise its absurdity when you have to call a hundred members to the Table.

\*MR. SPEAKER: I must stop the hon. Member. The subject is quite irrelevant to the question before the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: After the expression of the opinion of the hon. Member, I do not wish to press the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

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

[SECOND DAY'S DEBATE.]

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

"Most Gracious Sovereign,

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

Question again proposed.

MR. CHAPLIN (Lincolnshire, Sleaford): The House is much fuller now than it was when I rose for the purpose of addressing it last night. When we adjourned I was calling attention to the serious epidemic which had broken out in Manchester and the north of England, and by which so many people had been rendered grievously sick, and so many lives had been lost. I was asking, too, for an assurance from the Government that they would take some action with regard to this question during the present session. I had expressed my deep disappointment that there was not even the slightest mention of the question, or any expression whatever of sympathy with the sufferers, contained in the gracious Speech from the Throne or in the utterances of Ministers, and I further added the opinion that so important and, in my humble judgment, so urgent was the matter, that it ought to be dealt with without delay. I was pointing out that the fact of a Royal Commission having been appointed was no justification whatever for delay, inasmuch as the facts had already been ascertained and the causes of the epidemic proved, and I was asking the leave of the House to prove these assertions when the hands of the clock pointed to the hour of twelve, and the debate stood adjourned. With the permission of the House, I will resume now where I left off, and I will endeavour to prove that the statements I concluded by making last night are absolutely borne out by the facts of the case.

I relied on the testimony of witnesses from four different quarters. In the first place, I referred to the commission appointed by the Manchester Brewers' Association to inquire into this question the moment there was reason to believe that the illness and deaths were due to the presence of arsenic in beer. The

admission made in the commissioners' report was very significant, because they are necessarily interested parties. They say they consider;

"that it is clearly established that the arsenic found in deleterious quantities in the beer was solely due to the sugars which had been used in its manufacture supplied by a certain firm, and further, that the arsenic in the sugar was undoubtedly derived from the sulphuric acid used in its preparation."

I come next to the opinion of some of the local authorities chiefly concerned, based on the expert opinions of their analysts and medical officers. There is the very important report of the Sanitary Committee of Manchester itself;

"The outbreak [they say] has been due to the consumption of beer and stout, especially the former, of the cheaper kinds, and it has been confined to adults, which practically exonerates bread, jams, syrup, cheap sweets, etc."

This is important, because it had been suggested that these articles might be responsible for the outbreak. They go on to say;

"The quantities of beer used to produce symptoms did not, in some cases, exceed three or four glasses daily. The amount of arsenic present in those beers must therefore, at some period, have been large, or arsenic must have been present in a specially poisonous form."

Now, with regard to the number of casualties that have occurred, there has been a report presented by an Inspector of the Local Government Board, and recently laid on the Table of the House, in which he tells us; what I have no doubt is perfectly true; that he is unable to give any reliable estimate at present of the number of deaths which have occurred. But the Sanitary Committee of Manchester estimate the number of deaths in 1900 at little less than 100, calculating them as follows;

"From peripheral and other neuritis there have died in 1900 thirty-five persons more than in 1899. These deaths must be ascribed, we think, to the arsenical glucose and inverts. From cirrhosis of the liver there have died in 1900 thirty-three persons more than in 1899. The majority of these are probably due to the consumption of arsenical beers and stouts. From alcoholism there have died in 1900 twenty-eight more persons than in 1899. A portion of these have probably owed their deaths partly to the presence of arsenic in beer. The number of deaths, however, is by no means a measure of the widespread disablement which has been caused."

They further add this very important statement, that;

"Though the danger is less than it has been probably for a considerable time, it is impossible to say that injurious results are not still being produced."

I may go on to point out that although the commission was appointed on the 11th January, and their report is dated the 30th, they wind up with the following resolution, adopted by the Corporation of Manchester at a full meeting;

"That having regard to the serious loss of life and injury to health which are disclosed the Local Government Board be respectfully requested to take into their grave and immediate consideration the state of the law affecting the question, with a view to the same being strengthened by further legislation."

Now I pass from the city of Manchester to the reports of the Public Health

Committee of the county of Lancashire, and I will read a few words from these in order to put before the House what are the views entertained by that very highly responsible body. In the first place they say, referring to the large number of cases of peripheral neuritis, that they were;

"clearly traced to the consumption of beer contaminated with arsenic. Further examination showed that the presence of the arsenic was due to certain invert sugar used during the process of brewing being heavily charged with that drug."

The medical officer in his report goes on to add;

"The number of deaths in the county I have not so far been able to ascertain, but there is reason to believe that many deaths not always recognised as due to arsenic have taken place during the past few months."

He further makes this very important statement;

"But the evil has not yet passed away, as two of the samples purchased on the 8th inst. (January) had each been found to contain one tenth of a grain of arsenic per gallon."

That, I am informed by the highest authorities, is an amount of arsenic in beer which is likely to prove most exceedingly dangerous. The analyst for the county of Lancashire deals with two points in particular which I desire to urge upon the attention of the House, for I am sure they are deserving of serious consideration. He gives, in the first place, a very complete contradiction to the statement, which has been so freely circulated, that the mischief;the accident, as in some quarters it has been called;was due to the misconduct or the misfortune of one firm alone. Indeed he gives quite a different view of the question, because in his report will be found this sentence;

"Besides the one firm of manufacturers alluded to, the sugar from two other firms has been found to contain arsenic. One of them whose product was sent from different districts of the country had evidently been using for making sugar pyrites sulphuric acid imperfectly purified."

I submit that, if three cases have already been found out, it is not unreasonable to suppose there are many more cases which have not yet been detected. The second point to which I wish to call attention is this. He shows that the scare which it has been endeavoured to raise with regard to arsenic in malt itself is practically devoid of any serious or any real foundation. What he says is this;

"All malt necessarily contains on its surface, as it comes from the kiln, traces of arsenic, which can be removed by the ordinary process of brushing and cleaning."

Then he adds;

"It is evident that some maltsters do not clean their malt. As a rule the traces which remain are of no more consequence than the arsenic in the air of every city burning coal as fuel."

It is right and only fair that I should add the following extract;

"In the course of my investigations some samples of beer;i.e., beer brewed from malt and hops ;have been found containing more than traces of arsenic which was derived solely from uncleaned malt, and in a few instances it was considered advisable to destroy the beer and to send back the remaining malt to be

cleaned."

That is a matter which he treated in this way. He said the arsenic can be easily removed, and that all that is necessary is that maltsters should be careful with regard to the cleaning of their malt.

I think, Sir, I have said enough for the present with respect to the views of the various local authorities. But before I part with the question I should like to add that it seems to have been a very dexterous move on the part of our opponents to try and create great alarm with regard to the presence of arsenic or other poisonous matters in malt. There are, however, two answers to that which I think deserve the serious attention of the House. So far as I know, the methods of malting to-day are precisely the same as they have been for many generations in this country, and if it be true that there is this hidden danger lurking within it, can anybody explain why it is that during all these hundreds of years there has not been the slightest trace of danger? There is another very remarkable coincidence. I am informed that in the suburbs of Manchester itself, in the heart of one of the districts in which this epidemic has been raging, there is a well-known brewery which brews from nothing but malt and hops, and, up to the time of my information, in the whole district supplied from that brewery, although illness and death were daily occurring all round, there had not been one single case attributed to the beer from that brewery. I think these two points go far to justify the confident belief which I entertain that there is really little or nothing in the alarming scare which it has been endeavoured to create on that point. I do not want to weary the House, or I would refer to reports which have been received from the health authorities of the counties of Shropshire and Staffordshire, each of them tracing the mischief to its source in much the same way as the other bodies whose reports I have quoted. There are other testimonies which favour the view I entertain. There has been the inquiry before the Coroner at Manchester, and there is also the report of Dr. Buchanan, the Inspector of the Local Government Board. As to the coroner's inquiry, which lasted over a great number of days, and in the course of which evidence of a most voluminous and exhaustive character was taken, the ultimate result was that, although the jury differed as to the persons on whom the blame was to be affixed, they were absolutely unanimous in the view that the epidemic was due to the presence of arsenic in beer. One jurymen, indeed, went so far as to say that no sane person could have any doubt as to that. The report of Dr. Buchanan has been published within the last few days, and I think it will be sufficient for me to say, in regard to that, that he emphatically confirms the evidence already given by the other bodies I have alluded to, tracing the evil, in the first place to arsenic in the beer itself, from the beer to the sugar, and from the sugar to the acids which were used in its preparation. Having said this, I submit to the House with all confidence that I have made good my assertion that, so far as the epidemic which has been raging during the last few months in Manchester and the Midlands is concerned, the facts have already been ascertained, and that what is wanted at the present moment is action on the part of His Majesty's Government, rather than further inquiry.

Let me remind the House what has happened in regard to this matter. The last time this question was raised in Parliament was in 1896.\* Then, as now, it was proposed to refer the whole subject for inquiry. My hon. friend the Member for Sudbury, who has for years made this question his own, and who has stuck to it with a tenacity which I believe sooner or later must meet with success; a success which will be well deserved; agreed, wisely, as I thought at the time, to the proposal for an inquiry. An inquiry was accordingly held. It was entrusted to a Committee which was described by the present Chancellor of the Exchequer as the best Committee that could have been constituted upon the question. So it was, no doubt, from the Treasury point of view. It was most careful, whatever else it did, to do nothing in the world that could prejudice or interfere with or injure in any way the revenue. But when we come to the much more important question of the public health, the question which was really before the Committee, then I am bound to say that in my humble opinion, judging by the light of subsequent events, I doubt very much if the public can altogether endorse the high encomiums passed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon that Committee. We all remember what happened at the time. The Committee consisted of six members, and one of the number, in a Minority Report, basing himself entirely on the evidence given before the Committee, declared that, in his opinion, legislation was urgently necessary. The

\*For discussion on motion for Second Heading of the Beer Adulteration Bill (1896), see The Parliamentary Debates [Fourth Series], Vol. xxxix., page 86. remaining five declared that none of the substitutes for malt which at that time were used were deleterious, nor was any danger to be apprehended from them. They, therefore, reported that no legislation whatever was required. Yet within a few months; because many of these cases of poisoning are said to have occurred at least six months before public attention was called to them; we find that thousands of people became grievously ill and that deaths occurred by the score from causes against which Parliament had been already more than once warned. The history of the past and the facts of the present being what they are it is not very surprising that a great deal of alarm and consternation has been aroused throughout the country, and that it has been strikingly manifested during the last few months in a variety of ways. To my own knowledge within the short period resolutions have been passed by between 300 and 400 different public bodies in the country, notwithstanding the fact that the recent death of Queen Victoria put a stop to all proceedings on public questions for a considerable time. Still, boards of guardians in great numbers have passed resolutions on this subject. So too have parish councils, county councils, and public meetings of all sorts and kinds. Besides that, numerous agricultural bodies have followed their example. Let me say just one word on that point.

It has been suggested in some quarters that this is nothing but an agricultural movement. It would be very odd indeed if agriculturists were not very deeply interested, seeing that farm labourers form probably the most numerous class of working men in this country, and are at the same time among the chief consumers of beer throughout the United Kingdom. But I want to point out to the House that this movement is not by any means limited to agriculturists, for I can give a



list of trade unions which to my knowledge have already taken up this question, and are deeply interested in it. There may be, for anything I know, a great many more, but I am in a position to state that among those who have already taken action are the trade union organisations of Manchester, Salford, Newport (Monmouthshire). Hull, Southport, Heywood, Radcliffe, West Bromwich, Edinburgh, Gloucester, Preston, and North Staffordshire. All these have passed resolutions calling upon the Government to promote such measures in Parliament as will ensure that only pure and wholesome beer shall in future be sold to the public, and they go on to urge that legislation shall be immediately introduced without waiting for the Report of the Royal Commission. No doubt this Commission will be accepted as one of the best ever appointed, and deservedly so. So far as I am concerned I desire to speak with the very highest respect of its personnel. But when I remember the result of the investigation conducted by the last Committee, I am not greatly encouraged with regard to the prospects of this Commission.

We may be asked what it is that we propose. If we are, my reply would be this. If the case is so grave as to call for intervention, no one, I think, will deny that it is for the Government, with all the means and all the resources it has at its command, to make its own proposal for dealing with this important subject. But there are various methods by which as it seems to me it might be dealt with by the Government. The Government might prohibit the use of substitutes altogether, as is done in Germany at the present time, or they might limit their prohibition to the use of sugars which have been proved to be injurious, or they might restrict the use of sugars within such limits as would be safe; a course which, personally, I am inclined to think might be the better; or they might discourage and sufficiently limit their use by imposing a higher duty on the beer in the production of which sugar is used, or, if it be thought preferable to go a step further, they might revert, to some extent, to the system which formerly prevailed, and charge the duty on the materials instead of on the product. By a higher duty they might effectually discourage and restrict the use of those sugars which have been so much complained of. I myself pronounce no opinion on the merits of any of these proposals. It is no part of my business, nor is it my duty to do so to-night.

But if the Government are not prepared for any of the methods I have suggested as possible, there is one expedient to which I cannot conceive there can be any very substantial objection. They could, by a very short Act of Parliament, give the public an opportunity of knowing what, when they ask for beer, they are really invited to drink. And they could effect this by simply requiring a declaration showing what substitutes, if any, are used for malt in the manufacture of beer. That principle has been established quite recently in another Act of Parliament, and why should it not be extended to the manufacture of beer? I want the House to remember that there is a new terror in connection with this question for the consumers of beer which has only been recently disclosed. It is not only arsenic that is to be dreaded. The latest discovery by competent experts, as has been pointed out in a journal strictly devoted to these subjects, a journal of great reputation, namely, the

Lancet, is that there is another poison called selenium, which, it is stated, is equally liable, when these substitutes are used, to have most injurious effects upon the consumers of beer. It is well to remember, too, that the Commission which has been appointed to examine into this question will find that this particular point is beyond the scope of their reference, as that reference, from beginning to end, in every line, is strictly limited to the question whether arsenic is present in the beer. It is possible that some hon. Members in this House, and some opponents of this movement, may contend that the precise causes of this epidemic have not yet been sufficiently proved in all their different details, but I defy anybody in this House or elsewhere, at all events, to deny that the presumption that the use of these substitutes is attended with danger to the public, is absolutely and conclusively established. And, if that is so, I say we have no right in Parliament to allow the continuance of this danger until any Commission, however responsible, has reported its verdict and its opinion. Let your Commission proceed by all means, and let it make its report as early as it can, but until it has done so, and until you have from it the assurance that these things do not constitute a danger to the public, I say that the very least you can do is to give the public the opportunity and the means of protecting themselves by allowing them to know what it is they are going to drink when they ask for beer; to protect themselves, remember, against such a calamity as occurred only the other day, and which might very easily have been attended with even more serious results. From the information, we have, it might very easily have been a supreme disaster.

I have made these few observations to-night in no spirit of hostility whatever to His Majesty's Government; my old friends and associates on that bench will give me at least credit for this; but I have spoken to give them the opportunity of explaining most fully what are their intentions with regard to this question. It has never been my habit, nor is it my intention to-night, to say anything whatever in the nature of menace or threat; but I sincerely hope that the reply will be one favourable to the views which I entertain; views which I know are shared at this moment by a great number of Members in this House. In the meantime, I should shrink from what I regard as a positive duty if I were to say anything else than this. Should the reply we receive be entirely unfavourable, and should it hold out no hope and give no indication of any intention on the part of the Government to deal with this grave and urgent question during the present session, why then, of course, we must reserve to ourselves the right to take whatever steps we think desirable for the public safety.

\*MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I notice from the speeches delivered by hon. Members opposite with respect to the war in South Africa that there is a disposition to attribute to those on this side whose opinions are antagonistic to the war a desire to take advantage of the difficulties of the situation, and to declare that it is because those difficulties are increasing that we, are urging more strongly than ever that steps should be taken to put a stop to hostilities. Such a charge is not at all warranted by the facts of the case. We realise that there is a moral law for nations as well as for individuals, and it is because the war at the present moment has reached a phase entirely different

in every respect from what it presented at its inception that we urge its cessation. In the opinion of many it could always be looked upon as a blunder, but in the present situation it must be looked upon as absolutely wrong and a crime. It can be said that the war ought to have come to a conclusion on many dates since it began. One opportunity which was not taken advantage of by us to urge the acceptance of terms of peace was when we had succeeded in repelling the invasion of our territory. There was again an opportunity for further efforts being made when we occupied Bloemfontein. There was a third, and perhaps the best opportunity of all, when Johannesburg and Pretoria were occupied by our troops, and when we practically obtained military supremacy. In place of any real efforts being made to stop the war we by our own action, as I shall prove conclusively, revitalised the war and gave it a further term of life. After the fall of Pretoria what was the state of the Boer commandoes in the field? They were disheartened, demoralised, bewildered, and they were wavering. If at that time British policy had in any way been a conciliatory one towards them, or, what is even more important, a definite one, there is every human probability that the war would have been over. I want the House to contrast the spirit of the Boers at that time and now. We see now not only a complete change in the character of the war, but in the spirit of the men who are fighting. We see a stubborn doggedness and courage such as was not expected. How is this to be explained? The Afrikaner character is a character which can be led but cannot be driven. The Afrikaner is patient and long suffering until he is aroused, when he becomes stubborn and unforgiving, and it is because these men have been aroused by a sense of gross injustice practised on them that we see the present situation. Their memory is a long one. They have a longer memory as a nation than perhaps any in the world. They are not likely to forget the injustices to which they have been treated. How have the promises we gave them by the proclamations of Lord Roberts after the occupation of Pretoria tallied with our performances of them? We promised them protection immediately after the fall of Pretoria; protection and freedom from molestation under certain conditions. The conditions were that they should take the oath of neutrality and surrender their arms. I believe the feeling which animated them when they heard that proclamation was one of astonishment. They saw through the darkness a ray of light. They believed that what they had heard about British pretensions was false, and that, after all, we intended to treat them generously. They acted in accordance with this proclamation. All the evidence goes to prove that after the occupation of Johannesburg and Pretoria the number of arms given up was unprecedented, and greater than it has ever been since. But alas! they were again disillusioned. Our performances did not come up to our promises. One of our first acts was to demand that some of their leading citizens should come forward and travel as hostages on the trains where the lines were damaged and broken up; a proceeding such as had, never hitherto disgraced British military annals in the conduct of war against belligerents in the field. So indefensible were such proceedings that they could not be continued because they were contrary to all military law. Well again, the Boers saw themselves, in spite of the proclamation that they would be protected

and unmolested, threatened with fine and taxation on their land, because, forsooth, different parts of the railway were being broken up by the belligerents in the field. They were even obliged to act as heralds off the proclamation in their own district, and they saw; and here comes the worst of those features; farms burned over whole districts. To a certain extent that farm-burning has gone on since the inception of the war. We have heard that Lord Methuen after crossing the Orange River commenced this farm-burning. It is sometimes denied that this farm-burning took place. I do not wish to give any anonymous statements, and I shall read what Lieut. Morrison has published under his own name. He served in the Canadian artillery, and in view of what he states it would not be right to be silent. I will only read a few words which he has written describing this farm-burning. He writes;

"The country is very like Scotland, and we moved on from valley to valley lifting cat de and sheep, burning, looting, and turning out women and children to sit and weep in despair and utter misery beside the ruins of their once beautiful homesteads."

And then he goes on to say;

"We burned a track about six miles wide through these fertile valleys, and completely destroyed the village of Wilpoort and the nourishing town of Dullstroom. The column left a trail of fire and smoke behind it that could be seen at Belfast. Many of the houses were surrounded with beautiful gardens abloom with roses, lilies, and hollyhocks, and embowered with fruit trees, and with my glasses I could see the women and children bundled out, their bedding thrown through the windows after them. The cavalry would ride rapidly away, and the poor women and children, utterly confounded by the sudden visitation, would remain standing in the yard or garden watching helplessly their homes disappear in fire and smoke."

This is a written statement made by an officer who took part in the fighting, and who is mentioned in despatches for his gallantry in action. If false, I why is it not taken notice of by the Government and contradicted? I say that when these facts come to be known not only shall we be convinced that the Boers have been treated with injustice, but that the whole character of the war has changed. We are face to face with a very different situation now from that at the time when we were asked to vote supplies on the issue of the ultimatum and the invasion of our territory. But even as a matter of policy alone what an impolitic action it has been. The Boers had nothing more to lose and everything to gain by continuing the struggle. It is said the Boers in many cases broke their oath of neutrality which we forced on them, but from their point of view the oath was a conditional one, and if our part of the agreement was not carried out they were naturally freed from theirs.

A further thing which prevented the war from coming to a conclusion was, after we occupied Pretoria, the injudicious action in the successive appointments we made. The attention of the House has already been called to this matter by the very complete disclosure, which attracted so much notice, by the hon. Member for Macclesfield last session.

I have evidence in my hand on this matter from a very unexpected quarter. It is

from the very men for whom we are supposed to have gone to war; namely, the Uitlander body. What do these men say as a protest against our own action after we occupied Pretoria with reference to those one-sided partisan appointments? They say;

"No sooner did the end of the war appear to be in sight than the capitalists, who had hitherto apparently been actuated by a desire for 'good government and pure administration' threw off their disguise, and with unseemly, indecent haste they rushed in to seize the spoils of war. Pretoria had barely fallen when Field Marshal Lord Roberts and the Military Governor at Johannesburg were already surrounded by an atmosphere of 'interests,' and the most responsible civil positions in the Transvaal were filled by former representatives of the interested corporations, many of whom, by virtue of their new offices, became armed with the most extensive powers for prying into the private financial affairs of the absent community."

This is the language of Uitlanders of Pretoria, dated October last year.

"The Transvaal capitalist is not an Imperialist, although he has rendered valuable assistance to the Imperial cause, but only to attain his own sordid ends."

So the Uitlanders have discovered the truth at last, and perhaps in time the people of this country also will learn it.

"Even the large sums of money he has contributed towards the equipment of men to fight for the Empire he regards as but part of a necessary business transaction, seeing the great interests he has at stake. The main idea in his policy is expressed by the words monopoly and centralisation."

\*THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westhoughton): Can the hon. Member tell me who signed that?

\*MR. PIRIE: It is contained in a protest issued by the Uitlander Refugee Committee at Cape Town, and giving an account of a mass meeting of refugees on Saturday, 27th December, to be addressed by his Worship the Mayor of Cape Town, Hon. A. Wilmot, Colonel Schermbrucker, Mr. Zietsman, Major-General Brabant, and Major Crewe. It is a protest against capitalistic legislation.

\*LORD STANLEY: Who made that particular speech?

\*MR. PIRIE: This is from the protest issued by the Refugee Committee. There was a further inducement to the Boers to resist in the wholesale exportation from their country of even crippled and physically infirm men under charges which were to a very great extent exaggerated. I exonerate the military from participation in these exaggerated charges because they were misled by the very men against whose appointment I have been protesting, but they should have guarded themselves against the pernicious influence of the "atmosphere of interests" in place of being led by it. After the speech of the hon. Member for the Macclesfield Division last session, even the Chancellor of the Exchequer was unable to defend the appointments, and had to admit that they were made on the spur of the moment and would be revised. But the harm was done. The question had to be settled on the spot, and the Boers were instigated to continue their resistance by such partiality and injustice. The Leader of the House yesterday said that he did not think the Government or anyone else was very much to blame

for the mistake of thinking the war was over in September. To my mind a greater confession of absolute ineptitude could not be made by any Government. It was their duty to know the real facts of the case. There was not only a want of grasp of the situation, but also an utter inability to realise the natural feelings of manhood which ought to animate every nation struggling for its liberty and country. That was at the bottom of the ignorance and the want of provision made by the Government. They ought to have known that this would be the natural result of their policy, but it is hard perhaps in these days for anyone, much less His Majesty's Government, to realise that there are still people who will fight for justice and ideals. This example of the Boer Republics will live in the history of the world, and benefit humanity at large. When the names of our commanders are forgotten the names of Cronje and De Wet will be honoured by the world, and their example admired by all true soldiers. I listened with the utmost regret to the speech of the hon. Member for the Totnes Division last night, and, while I would be the first to compliment and congratulate him on the gallant part he has taken in the fighting, I do not think there has ever been a more unsoldierlike speech made by a soldier, in whom respect for a brave enemy ought to be a first quality. The idea of saying there is no such thing as honour in the Boer vocabulary; That may be the opinion of the hon. Gentleman, but it is not the opinion of Lord Methuen or of General Porter, or of scores of other brave soldiers who have seen most of the active service. I took but a humble part in duties on the line of communication, but I met a great many officers, and I say that the more the officers came into contact with the Boers, and the more actual fighting they saw, the more deeply were they impressed with the soldierlike qualities and bravery of the Boers. The right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for the Colonies said in 1881, after enumerating their characteristics;

"Are not these qualities which commend themselves to men of English race? Are they not virtues which we are proud to believe form the best characteristics of the English people?"

And there are scores of others to the same effect. Sir George Colley says;

"The Boers are in the main a brave and high-spirited people, and actuated by feelings entitled to our respect."

I have heard the same thing from the lips of the late Sir Herbert Stewart, who was made a prisoner by the Boers, and than whom the House could not listen to a braver or more humane soldier; and who was never tired of extolling the manhood and bravery of the Boers. Since the issue of the Ultimatum the situation has in my opinion entirely changed; it was then our bounden duty to strain every effort to repel the invasion and to furnish supplies for that purpose, but under the changed conditions, owing to the lack of all endeavour to conclude a peace, as far as I am concerned, unless we get some proof positive from the Government that some genuine communications are going to be entered into with the Boer leaders, and that some terms other than unconditional surrender are to be proposed, I

should absolutely refuse to vote any further supplies. It is said to be our pride that is preventing us taking such action. In my opinion it is

vindictiveness, and it appears to me that the spirit which is animating the Government at the present time is that of a vindictive bully. There is never any shame in generosity or magnanimity, especially to a beaten enemy. Our military supremacy has been proved as far as numerical strength is concerned; we have occupied the capitals of the States, and surely it is time we brought statesmanship to work.

Doubtless I shall be told it is wrong to bring out these facts, but the Government are responsible for them. The charge of defamation of one's own country is the last resource of those who have no other defence to make. Lord Salisbury's speech yesterday was not only injudicious, it was impolitic, it was directly playing into the hands of the young Dutch party; men who are not greatly interested in cementing the bonds of friendship between our colony and ourselves. Our action has been not only a great blunder but a great crime, and unless we get such guarantees as I have indicated, I, at any rate, shall refuse to vote any further supplies for this war.

\*SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER (Suffolk, Sudbury): It is very difficult to bring one's mind all at once to the difference between the smiling, fertile lands of the Transvaal, to which the last speaker has alluded, and the slums and the alleys of Manchester, to which I desire more particularly to refer. I also regret that the speech of the hon. Member should have followed that of the right hon. Gentleman behind me, who from his long experience and his well-known and honoured career at the Local Government Board and other departments of State, made just the sort of speech we should have expected from him under the circumstances. It can but add to the force, dignity, and welfare of the movement with which I have been so long connected to have associated with it one so deservedly loved and respected as my right hon. friend.

There is a very strong volume of opinion in the country, and also, I believe, in this House, as to the injudicious-action of the Government in not making any allusion in the King's Speech to a calamity of such great importance as has recently occurred in the north of England. Without being in a position to produce actual proof, I have repeatedly hinted that there was distinct danger under the present conditions, and that must be remembered when we consider whether or not the officials of the Government departments have had warning. It is clear that the action of this Commission, if it is to be thorough ;as I am sure it will be when I consider of whom it is composed; must necessarily take some time. We have heard that another serious poison, entirely outside the terms of reference, has been discovered, so that unless the terms of the reference can be enlarged, I presume that when this Commission has reported we may look forward with hope to the appointment of another Commission to inquire into this fresh poison which has unfortunately cropped up at the very moment the constitution of Commission No. 2 has been settled. I say "Commission No. 2," because the House will remember that the Government granted a Committee in 1896, and I suppose they hoped that that would be the last. But it so happens; that, although the majority of that Committee reported that there was nothing deleterious in beer, that the Inland Revenue authorities had ample powers, and that everything was as serene as it could be, and although only this last autumn

one of the officials, on some festive occasion, congratulated the brewers that there was an end to all that fantastic movement called the "pure beer movement," and that they were to be left alone in future in full enjoyment of their innocence and purity, at the very moment he was speaking, their able and intelligent medical officers in the north of England were finding out that what had been put down previously to alcoholism was a fearful disease traceable to the action of arsenic. It is a very dangerous thing to prophesy until you know, and I hope that in future, until you know what is in the cask, we shall have no more prophecies from the officials of the Government. The real question is, ought we not to have had some reference to such an important question, and if not, are we not to look forward with hope to the explanation of my right hon. friend the President of the Local Government Board? It is a great pleasure to think that we shall have an explanation from him, because they always come from him with so much eloquence that if you do not agree with him you know that he has done what he thinks is right. He has only recently gone to that department, and we do not expect him to do more than others would have done in his place. I should like the House for a few moments to consider what he has done. A terrible epidemic breaks out, and even to the man in the street it occurs what is the proper thing to do. I ventured to write to The Times newspaper, and I stated that it was the first duty of the Government to institute an inquiry and find out the real cause of this epidemic. Instead of doing this they let the brewers in before them.

\*THE PRESIDENT OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. WALTER LONG, Bristol, S.): We did not do that. We decided to send an inspector, and later we thought it best to have the assistance of another inspector.

\*SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER: The brewers had formed a committee of experts, but amongst them were two experts usually employed by the Government Department, and the unfortunate man in the street could only come to the conclusion that it was a sort of inquiry by the brewers, assisted by the distinguished men who advise His Majesty's Government. We now hear that the right hon. Gentleman sent down a distinguished officer connected with his own Department to make those inquiries, and that distinguished gentleman has reported. I have his report here, and I do not know whether the House has had time to read it during the recess. I admit that the time is short, but I do not see the advantage, when you send an eminent man down to ascertain the cause of a disaster of this kind, involving an independent examination, of getting a report second-hand. This, in my opinion, detracts very much, not from the ability of the gentleman employed, but from the value of the report. What

is the general effect of this report? Does it contain a description of the examination of the materials which caused the epidemic? No, it does not. Has the inspector obtained samples for himself? Perhaps the right hon. Gentleman will be able to answer. Has he obtained samples for the Government laboratories? Has he obtained any first-hand information as to the disposal of the incriminated materials and beers, or has he thrown any new light on the causes or extent of the poisoning? Has this inspector given us any figures of his own as to the amount of poison in any of the samples of poisoned beers or sugar? No; the



report is a compilation of secondhand information, gathered from sources to which we have, for the most part, had access for some time. I am endeavouring to deal with this report, because, no doubt, it is going to be put forward as a reason for not granting what we demand. Up to the present moment we have no authoritative information as to the amount of arsenic or other poison present in the beers and sugar which have caused such dire mischief. Surely in this, the first Government Report on the subject, we might have expected such vital points as these to be fully dealt with. I do not blame Dr. Buchanan, and I wish to make it perfectly clear that I am not attacking him personally in any way. What I do say is, that the matter has not been dealt with from the beginning in the manner that its importance demanded. I ventured to point out in December last the necessity for immediate action, and I can only suppose that when Dr. Buchanan arrived upon the scene the materials which he required had either been destroyed or else placed beyond his reach. What would have happened in France if a calamity such as this had occurred in that country? It would have been immediately referred to the Council of Hygiene, or in Germany to the Imperial Board of Health, and upon their report the Government would have either taken action or refrained from doing so. They would have received from the local authorities the samples required; but what is our system here? One medical officer of health says he believes that the impurities are confined to the glucose of one manufacturer. The next day another expert says it is not confined to the glucose of any one manufacturer. The fact is that these dangers, whether of arsenical or selenium poisoning, are all discovered, not by the Government authorities or the brewers, but by private individuals. I consider this so serious a question, that the Government ought to have taken some more adequate action. If they do not feel inclined to introduce legislation, some of us can undertake it ourselves, if the supporters of the Government will assist us. If the Government will not protect us, then we must try to protect ourselves. There are ways by which we can protect ourselves, and all I blame the right hon. Gentleman's Department for is, not that they have not done perhaps all that they were in a position to do, but that they have not placed themselves in a position to deal with any such future outbreak in a more thorough manner. I cannot believe that the appointment of a commission with so wide a reference as the present Arsenical Commission will achieve much good. A good deal has been made out in regard to the discovery of arsenic, which is now being found everywhere. It has been stated that arsenic is to be found in malt, but I do not think many of us would have been alive now if there had been any appreciable amount of arsenic in malt. I will tell the House why. A very eminent professor; Professor Campbell Brown, of the University College, Liverpool; has made an analysis of a sample of sulphuric acid taken from Messrs. Bostock's works, and he has made a calculation of the total amount of arsenic found. This calculation extended for thirty weeks in the summer delivery, and it gave a total of over four tons of white arsenic in the season, which was upwards of 300 lb. per week, or 2,191,000 grains per week. The professor goes on to state that if this quantity of arsenic were divided into equal doses and administered at one time

to people, it was enough to kill 1,000,000 people per week, or the whole of the inhabitants of Great Britain in a season. The most curious part of all this is that no one has published any figures showing that anything approaching a deleterious quantity of arsenic per gallon has been found in any beer brewed from malt and hops alone. I do not think it has ever been seriously stated that beer brewed from barley malt and hops contains any appreciable quantity of arsenic, or, indeed' any arsenic at all. From time immemorial beer has been brewed from malt and hops, and the people have flourished. I think it is absurd to compare these minute quantities of poison found in some malts with those found in the condemned sugars. We want some remedy which will ensure us getting what we ask for, and if we insist upon beer being made of barley malt, hops, and water we may take it as absolutely certain that we shall be safe from any similar calamity.

COLONEL KENYON-SLANEY (Shropshire, Newport): I have for a long time been identified more or less with the subject which underlies that which we are now discussing, and, loyal supporter as I am of His Majesty's Government, I should be failing in my duty if I did not place distinctly on record my regret that the Government have not seen fit to take up a different line of attitude on this subject than they have done. I can assure the representatives of His Majesty's Government who are present, that if they would go into many parts of the country, not only in the rural districts but in some of our largest towns, they would find that this question has occupied attention in only a secondary degree to the events in South Africa. We had hoped that we should have seen an appreciation of the serious condition of things which has prevailed in consequence of this outbreak, and we had hoped to hear some promise of legislation dealing with the manufacture and the sale of beer. My right hon. friend who introduced this subject alluded to a very widespread and mistaken fallacy on this question. He spoke of the idea being entertained that this question was being pressed forward by a large section of this House solely and only in the interests of agriculturists. There are very few agriculturists who are not perfectly aware of what was stated by the representatives of the brewing interest not long ago, to the effect that any such measure as that which is now being advocated would undoubtedly do away with the purchase of some of the inferior class of barley, and that the trade would suffer rather than gain from such action. Farmers

are aware of that, and have taken it into consideration. I would remind the House that, if this is to be talked of as an agricultural question, it is easy to demonstrate that it is not merely an agricultural question, but one touching the immediate fringe of a great national question, probably one of the largest with which we have at present to do; namely, the re-population of the rural districts, the finding employment for our agricultural labourers, and the re-establishment on the land of that large section of the people who are some of its most valuable inhabitants, and on whom we depend to draw our recruiting strength for our military forces. Therefore, if I am to be challenged on that point, I have a very conclusive answer, and can rapidly transfer the scene of action from the agricultural to a broad, national point of view. I want to say

on this subject that, although we naturally utilise to the utmost the arguments provided for us by the recent cases of poisoning in Lancashire and in other parts of the country, still we do not for a moment wish to allege that the only and sole reason for justice being done in this case and for action being taken by the Government, depends on the recent poisonous outbreak. We believe we have an absolutely clear case for supporting the elementary right of the consumers of beer to a proper legal definition of that which they asked for and which they expect to be supplied to them. That is a point of law on which there seems to be considerable doubt. I believe that, from recent experience, we have a right to demand the recognition that the consumer shall be fairly protected when he asks to be supplied with beer as one of the well-known articles of food and diet.

Recent legislation tends altogether in that direction. The analogy of the Margarine Act is extremely close, although I will not follow it up; and I know no fair reason why the consumer of one article of food and diet should not be protected as well as the consumer of another. What is needed is to bring this elementary right into action, and to give the people the advantage of it. What is wanted is, in fact, a reasonable definition of that which the consumer has a right to be supplied with when he

asks for an article by a certain name Why is that definition not given? There would be nothing startling or revolutionary in providing it. Some of us may desire that it should be a very narrow definition; others that it should be larger and wider. But that would be a matter for the wisdom of this House. At all events a definition ought in fair play to be legally established. I am not sure; I am not an expert in these matters; but that some of the Government Departments themselves would not be very anxious to see this definition established. I am not quite sure that a lack of such definition is not owing to the action of some of these Government Departments, and that when a change was made in Inland Revenue legislation in 1880<sup>1</sup>, the power was not given which would have been quite sufficient to enable these departments to supervise the use of substitutes for malt in brewing, and to limit their employment if there was the slightest notion that they contained any deleterious mixture. I rather think that these powers are already in the Statute-book, and I see no reason why they should not be called into play, and why consumers should not have that protection which the law intended them to have. If it is so, and if these powers have been allowed to lie dormant for a want of definition, it is not unfair to call on the Government or its departments to take steps to immediately provide such a definition as will be reasonable and effective and give the consumer those rights we are now demanding.

I will not elaborate on this subject, although it is one which would bear considerable elaboration. I wish the Government to recognise that this is no small or factious cry, but is the deliberate demand of a very large number of His Majesty's subjects, based upon fair grounds, after the exercise of a great deal of patience, and one which I think no Government can afford to delay granting even this year. I may be told that a definition would not sufficiently establish protection for the general public; but if we had a definition so as to exclude all deleterious mixtures, the public would be supplied with a sound

article and would be saved from the effects which have struck the country with consternation. It would be for the Department to take the necessary steps to protect the public at large, and there is no reason why what we ask should not be rapidly given without waiting for the report of the scientific results of the Royal Commission.

\*MR. WALTER LONG: I suppose I may state at once that the Government entirely sympathise with the remarks made by my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford, with reference to his whole attitude to the Government on this particular question. No Member on these benches, any more than any other Member, would ever think of attributing to my right hon. friend any other than the very highest motives; and the House has seen to-day, from their experience of his treatment of this question, that not only can he bring the facts of the case clearly and forcibly forward, but that he can do it in that particularly agreeable and practical manner which lends a special charm to any subject which my right hon. friend chooses to make his own.

I have no right to complain, indeed, I do not wonder that this question has been raised in debate early in the session. I confess I am sorry that my right hon. friend and those who act with him should think that by omitting from the King's Speech any reference to the recent lamentable epidemic in Manchester we have been guilty of any want of sympathy with the sufferers from the unfortunate outbreak, or that we have desired; as I understand to be my hon. friend's comment upon our action; to ignore altogether the serious character of that outbreak. I very much doubt whether it has been the usual practice to make references in Speeches from the Throne to epidemics of this character. Whether that be so or not, I can honestly say that the Government learned of the epidemic with the greatest possible regret; that we felt the deepest possible sympathy with the unfortunate sufferers; and that we; I speak not so much for the Government as the Department with which I am specially connected; felt that the gravity of the case and the serious consequences arising from it, and, if I may say so, the fact that

these consequences might and ought so easily to have been avoided, required that the greatest possible care should be exercised in dealing with the case, and that it should receive from the commencement our unremitting attention. The remarks which have fallen from my right hon. friend, and also from the hon. Member for Sudbury, rather appeared to me to reflect their opinion that the Local Government Board has not taken sufficient action in reference to this matter. We have been found fault with because an inquiry was not instituted as soon as the existence of the epidemic was known, and that when one was so instituted, it was not of a sufficiently weighty character. Well, I do not know what inquiry of a better kind could have been instituted. Supposing at that time we had appointed a Royal Commission what would have been the immediate result? The House will agree that the first thing to do was to find out, if possible, what brought about this epidemic; and, if possible, to take all steps that were possible to arrest or stop it altogether. If we had appointed a Royal Commission immediately, the brewers, their employees, the medical officers of health in the various municipalities; all those connected with the manufacture and distribution

of beer, or with the care of the public health; would have had their attention diverted from their proper work, instead of devoting themselves, as they were doing, to the examination of the facts of the case and taking the proper steps to arrest the epidemic. They would have been compelled to come up and give evidence before the Royal Commission, and that would have been throwing impediments in the way of their most important work. But in addition to that, I submit that to send down a competent inspector, a man whose name is well known throughout the country, was the best practical means of getting, first of all, the information we wanted.

It will be admitted that this epidemic came like a bolt from the blue upon everybody. It is perfectly true that there had been some suggestions made before the Committee upon the Pure Beer Bill that certain ingredients used in brewing might contain poisonous matter. The only reference I have come across in my researches in that respect was in the supplement to the Report of that Inquiry, and that reference related to the possibility of arsenic being found in glucose manufactured from potatoes. I want to say one word as to the epidemic itself. This was a case where suddenly it was found that a large number of people had been seized simultaneously with a disease which when it occurred in individuals had been regarded as an alcoholic disease and had not previously been considered to be related to this particular poison, arsenic, or to be a disease which could occur as an epidemic. It was necessary at once to ascertain the facts of the case, so far as they could be ascertained, in Manchester itself. It was also necessary that every step should be taken to ascertain whether this poisonous beer, if it were found to be poisonous, was in general circulation in Manchester or elsewhere. The Department despatched, first of all, a single inspector to Manchester; and then, as soon as that officer reported that his labours were getting rather heavy, we sent to his assistance a second inspector. In addition to that, we issued a circular to county councils, corporations, and other local authorities in which we called their attention to the fact that arsenic had been found in beer manufactured from glucose and other substitutes for malt, and that it was their duty, as the local authorities responsible for the public health of their districts, to secure that proper articles of food were supplied to the people, to obtain samples, and test by experiment whether there were chemicals in these articles of food which contained poisonous ingredients. It was also pointed out that there was no difficulty in detecting the presence of arsenic. Well, we have been found fault with for bringing to light the fact that arsenical poisoning ingredients might have been found in other articles than beer. The Local Government Board has been found fault with for calling attention to the fact that this poison might be found in other articles besides beer. But surely that was the absolute duty of the Public Health Department.

\*SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER: I am very loth to interrupt the right hon.

Gentleman, but no one has blamed him for making the investigations complete. He is blamed for not making them complete enough.

\*MR. WALTER LONG: I gather that my hon. friend blames me for the course I have taken since the outbreak. He animadverted on the sending of an inspector down,

and he questioned the work done by the inspector on the spot and the report afterwards presented. I am explaining to the House what I did with respect to the appointment of the inspector, and also the instructions given to the local authority.

\*SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER: If that is the idea the right hon. Gentleman derived from my speech it was certainly the very opposite to what I meant to convey. It was not a prompt, thorough, and complete investigation.

\*MR. WALTER LONG: I do not know how we could have made this inquiry in a fuller manner than we did. I have already said that I did not know any other form in which to make the inquiry except through the medium of an inspector, which is the usual and most direct course. No inquiry by a Royal Commission or a Departmental Committee could have been so prompt and so effective at the first stage of the epidemic as the form we adopted, namely, the sending down of an inspector who, by his own knowledge and training, could deal with the questions that arose in a manner that no layman could possibly have done.

My hon. friend went on to say that this report is not of very much value because it contains statements obtained at second hand. I am quite unable to follow my hon. friend, as I cannot understand how the facts relating to an epidemic of this kind can be ascertained otherwise, and I am very glad to hear from him that he did not suggest any slight on the Government. I am quite sure that if my right hon. friend the Member for Sleaford had knowledge of the immense labour performed in Manchester, and if he could realise how hard Dr. Buchanan worked, and for how many hours he was engaged in prosecuting his inquiry, he would immediately acknowledge the valuable service rendered by that gentleman. The evidence he obtained justified further inquiry into the matter. I really think that my hon. friend, although I entirely accept his assurance that he meant to cast no reflection on the inspector, did him at least a kind of injustice when he said it was a report at second hand, and that there was nothing in it to contribute to our knowledge of the subject. I think the community at large are deeply indebted to Dr. Buchanan for the work he did, and for the accurate knowledge which he has placed in our possession in regard to this serious and grave condition of things.

My right hon. friend, who dealt with this question generally, and who devoted a large portion of his speech to proving that this epidemic had arisen from the presence of arsenic in beer; my right hon. friend and his friends blame us; or rather, I do not say blame us, but are disappointed because we have not taken immediate steps in the form of legislation. No one denies for an instant, so far as I know, that a large quantity of beer in the Manchester district, and other places, brewed from certain substitutes, was found to contain arsenic which was highly poisonous and dangerous, and that this particular epidemic was caused in the main from beer brewed from those substitutes for barley malt. It certainly appeared at first that the circumstances were clear and simple. At first it appeared that nearly all the cases were those of people who had been large consumers of beer. But before the inquiry had proceeded more than a short time it was quite apparent that many of the sufferers had been consumers of very small quantities of beer; in some cases a pint or a pint and a half per day of

stout or beer. I have no more technical knowledge of this subject than an ordinary layman, but this immediately offered to the scientific experts to whom I have to resort for advice and information a new field of inquiry with regard to this particular form of poisoning. The question immediately arose whether this particular result appearing in people who had not been large consumers of malt liquors was due to cumulative effects of arsenic in small doses which hitherto had hardly been suspected, whether it was due to some special circumstances connected with the individual or his condition at the time, or whether the arsenic so absorbed in the system came into bad company by meeting some other poison which made it suddenly become active where previously it had been locked up and doing no harm. These were the questions immediately raised by the scientific experts and brought before me, and which justified, and not only justified, but called for the appointment of the Commission to which so much exception has been taken to-day. My right hon. friend who initiated this debate knows better than I do, because he has had longer experience, that in questions of this kind to a very large extent the President of the Local Government Board must look to experts, and rely upon their assistance. We could rely with absolute confidence in this matter upon the medical officer of the Local Government Board. Distinguished as have been the Board's medical officers in the past, Sir George Buchanan and Sir Richard Thorne Thorne, the Department is now fortunate in having as their successor one who is so eminent scientifically, and who has so much administrative ability as the present medical officer. In his judgment and knowledge I can place the fullest reliance, and that being so, I had no hesitation in accepting the advice given to me that it was absolutely necessary a further scientific inquiry should be made into this before the Department could accept certain allegations as facts. In addition to this it was suggested by some; reference has been made to it in the speeches of my hon. friends to-day; that do what you would, brew from what you like, glucose or malt, some quantity of arsenic would be found. It was suggested that in some cases the amount of arsenic which might be found might be so small as to be medically harmless, and that no exception ought to be taken to it. If that be the case it is all the more a subject for investigation by a scientific body. Further than that, and this is a most important point, if it be the case that under certain circumstances this terrible poison may be introduced into the substitutes used for brewing beer, it may be necessary to impose on the manufacturers of these articles greater restrictions than at the present time. This all shows that it is a subject on which we required further inquiry by a scientific body to which we could look for advice and guidance. The suggestion which has been made by my hon. friends who have spoken is, that we should adopt what is called "pure beer" legislation of one form or another. My hon. and gallant friend behind me says that sound legislation of that kind ought to be adopted, not because of the public health so much as because he considers that the individual has a right to know what he is buying. I need not say more about that than, in passing, to remind him and the House that the legislation to which he refers was not initiated and passed through the House in

the interests of public health. It was passed through the House in order to prevent fraud. I am bound, for the purpose of this discussion, to look at this question solely from the point of view of public health; solely how the health of the community can be best protected, in view of the facts disclosed by this epidemic, and what is the duty of the Department responsible for the administration of the public health laws. I do not think I have exaggerated what the position of this or of any Government must be in regard to any legislation upon a subject like this. Surely, it would be impossible for the Government to introduce legislation either of a prohibitive character, or of a character to enforce the declaration of the articles from which beer is made, unless three conditions were first fulfilled. Surely, it would be necessary to show, before prohibiting the use of substitutes altogether, or differentiating as against them by the alteration of duties, or by imposing any other of the numerous restrictions suggested, that the use of these substitutes was so inevitably connected with danger to the public health, either in whole or in regard to a large part of the substitutes, that their general use must be made illegal. Surely, if you are forbidding one of the articles used in the manufacture of a particular thing, and therefore confining the manufacture to the only remaining one; barley malt; that one also must be indisputably proved to be always sound and wholesome, so that no risk, however small, would be run. Witnesses who believe in one article or another may give their evidence, but the House knows perfectly well that before

a Government Department can adopt, legislation such as this they must have all the doubts, whether great or small, cleared away by careful scientific inquiry. They must be satisfied before they adopt legislation of that kind that it is based on just and reasonable grounds. The third condition the Government must be satisfied of before asking the House to legislate is that the measure they are proposing is one which can be carried into effect, and will do the work it is wanted to do. Not one of these conditions will be fulfilled at the present stage of the inquiry. My right hon. friend referred to the fact that there is in one of the reports the statement that arsenic was found in sugars supplied by firms other than Bostocks. I saw that statement at the time, and I took what steps I could to ascertain whether there was anything in that statement. It does not rest on the same solid foundation as the statement with regard to Bostocks. It is undoubtedly the case that a great deal of the sugar was supplied to the brewers through middlemen, and it is very probable that after the poison was detected in Manchester all the poisonous sugar was not discovered to have come direct from Bostocks. I think that, in common justice, I ought to say that, notwithstanding the fact that the brewers of Manchester stood to lose very heavily, they offered to supply every possible facility in the inquiry conducted, and did all in their power to help in the elucidation of the facts of the case. The investigations of the inspectors and the evidence given in nearly all the cases, and the reports of local medical officers, all went to show that this particular epidemic in Manchester and district was due, as I said before, to the substitutes supplied by one-manufacturing firm, into which the poisonous matter had got, owing to carelessness so extraordinary that it is difficult to



realise even now how it could have happened. When it is considered how easy it is to prevent the introduction of this poison, and when it must or should have been known that this sulphuric acid was to be used for certain purposes, it is almost inconceivable that such carelessness could have taken place. I think there can be no doubt that this particular epidemic was due to glucose manufactured by one

firm, and I am informed that that firm only manufactured about five per cent. of the beer substitutes manufactured in this country. Now, I put it to the House that the evidence so far is practically, if not absolutely, confined to that one firm. There seems to be very strong evidence that the epidemic, if not entirely at an end, was arrested and dealt with almost as soon as the poison was discovered. There would appear to be scarcely any cases in which poisonous symptoms appeared for the first time after the nature of the epidemic became generally known. Therefore, would it be possible for anybody to say, speaking on behalf of the Department, that the case against substitutes was so firmly established, either in whole or in part, as to justify prohibitive legislation, or even declaratory legislation? I was astonished to hear my right hon. friend suggest in his speech, and I think the suggestion was taken up by the hon. Member for Sudbury, that the allegations about barley malt were a red herring drawn across the path. The statements were not invented by the brewers or the brewers' friends, or by anybody of that kind. The statements emanated from men whose sole object was to ascertain facts, and to put the public in possession of the truth. The first I heard of this was in a report by the public analyst of the city of Manchester. It is said it referred only to arsenic in minute quantity. This is not the case. He found arsenic to the extent of one-tenth of a grain per gallon. If proper precautions are adopted with regard to the treatment of substitutes the same must follow in the case of barley malt. Do you mean to tell me that the presence of arsenic in malt is not important? It seems to me to be perfectly clear that the same precautions will have to be taken in all cases. I am the last person in the world to raise a scare about the existence of poison either in barley malt or anything else. I feel very strongly that an epidemic of this kind opens up a new field of knowledge and inquiry, and that it is my duty to see not only that everything is done that can be done under the law as it stands, and that all possible information is given to those who are locally responsible for the protection of the public

health, but also that every inquiry is made that is likely to throw further light on the subject, in order, if necessary, to take any fresh legislative action that may be taken on the solid basis of ascertained fact. Therefore it is that, I submit to the House, in the present state of our knowledge there cannot be given by those eminent scientific and medical men on whom the Local Government Board rely that clean bill of health which would surely be an absolute condition before it would be possible to exclude everything else and leave the manufacture of beer to one article alone. My hon. friend the Member for Sudbury drew a very moving picture of what might happen if things go on as they are at the present time. He gave us some remarkable figures, and asked if the Government is going to do nothing. I ask my hon. friend and those who agree

with him what would be the safeguard, even supposing the conditions he asked for could be fulfilled; and though I were prepared to recommend to the House immediate legislation such as he desires, where would be the effect of that legislation upon this immediate epidemic and this immediate danger? There is, to say the least, very strong division of opinion amongst those who know as to whether legislation of this kind could be effectively enforced. I do not wish to make comparisons between different scientific witnesses, but I have read every word of the evidence given before the Committee to which my right hon. friend has referred; I have read it three or four times absolutely impartially; I had no preconceived views, but I approached the subject from the public health point of view; and I do not hesitate to say that anybody who will take the trouble to read it will find that the bulk of the evidence given either by scientific or practical people shows that there is the gravest doubt as to whether legislation of this particular kind could be given effect to or not. It would be practically impossible to apply the test in the open market, to go into the open market and test the beer and ascertain whether it was made with one class of materials or the other. It would be trifling with the House of Commons for the Government to come forward and propose legislation of that character when they are face to face with this mass of evidence;

\*SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER: I am sorry to interrupt my right hon. friend, but he rather took me to task for trying to minimise the evidence of the Local Government Board. That being so, I do not think it comes well from him;

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; The hon. Member is replying.

\*SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER: But I think I have a right to complain that the right hon. Gentleman is attempting to minimise the evidence;

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order;

\*MR. WALTER LONG: I really do not think my hon. friend's criticism is justified. Surely I am entitled to read and weigh the evidence carefully, and come to an opinion as to the side on which the balance lies.

\*SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER: We have neither the resources of the Local Government Board nor the brewers.

\*MR. WALTER LONG: My resources are my eyes; I have read the evidence and arrived at a conclusion. What my hon. friend means by the resources of the Board of Trade or the brewers I have no idea.

\*SIR CUTHBERT QUILTER: You compared the evidence of our experts with those of the other side.

\*MR. WALTER LONG: I think my hon. friend is unduly sensitive. What I say is, that having approached the subject with an impartial mind, and having most carefully read the evidence, I was forced to the conclusion that the balance of scientific evidence lay on one side and not upon the other. But apart from that altogether, how could legislation deal with this immediate problem? Supposing the Government felt that legislation was urgently necessary, and we came down to this House and asked for the suspension of all the Standing Orders, and asked the House to pass with the utmost rapidity this protective legislation, it would be impossible for it to be

enforced against beer which had been legally brewed from these materials, which, after being analysed by experts, was certified to be free from deleterious and poisonous matter. Such legislation would not stop the epidemic, and the Government is not justified in proposing it. But what, on the other hand, are we to do? We have appointed a Royal Commission; I am the Minister responsible for the appointment of the Royal Commission, the justification for which was found in the existence of this scientific question, as to which our knowledge now is imperfect, and upon which further information is required, and my action was based on the recommendation of expert medical advisers. Moreover, I earnestly assure my right hon. friend that, in order that I might have the advantage of obviously unbiassed opinion, I did my best to get outside advice. So far I have not discovered any eminent scientific opinion to point out that we are wrong in the course we have adopted in asking the Commission to elucidate some of these questions.

It is said that the Commission covers too wide a ground because it covers arsenic which may be contained in other food; but knowing as we do that arsenic has been found in this brewing substance, and knowing that this glucose is used for the manufacture of other things; confectionery and sweets, particularly of the cheaper kinds; is it fair to say that we are only to inquire into one branch of the subject? We are bound to ask the Commission to look into it with respect to all classes of food. Is it unreasonable to suppose that, realising as they must the seriousness of this particular epidemic, if the Commission can give some answer to the greater question we have submitted to them that they will do so, and does the House doubt for one moment, when we are in possession of the knowledge necessary for us to act, we shall hesitate to act in such a way as to ensure that the law of the country shall be effective? The hon. Member for Sudbury asked a question as to selenium. So far as I can ascertain, the knowledge upon this subject is not very great, but this poison is one that can be found if it exists in any substance.

With all the good will in the world, I do not think it would be possible for one in my position to advise his colleagues to take any line other than the one we have taken on the facts as they exist. I am quite certain it would be a most unfortunate thing for a public department to take action upon a question like this, affecting public health, concerning scientific questions such as those referred to in this inquiry, unless we had ascertained and solid knowledge. To enter into legislation of this kind in this way would be absolutely disastrous to public health. My right hon. friend and those who feel strongly with him may rely that we shall not hesitate to act, and we shall not be afraid to do our duty in the interests of public health at the Local Government Board. In this matter we have nothing except the interest of the health of the community at heart; that is the sole consideration which guides us; and while I regret that I am unable to give the promise asked for, when the Royal Commission recommends a course, either by legislation or otherwise, which they consider necessary or sufficient for the purpose, we shall lose no time in dealing with the subject.

\*MR. STRACHEY (Somersetshire, S.) said he could not help thinking that the position taken up by the right hon. Gentleman amounted to a non possumus. It was

undoubtedly the fact that the production of impure beer had had a very disastrous effect on the public health of the country, though happily at the moment the serious epidemic was not recurring. It was not only a question of dealing with pure beer upon the ground of a great epidemic; it was necessary to approach the question from the point of view of the consumer, and he could not help comparing the present speech of the right hon. Gentleman with the attitude taken up by the Government during the existence of the last Parliament, when the question of adulteration of food and drugs was before the House, and when the right hon. Gentleman was not ready to prevent the people getting sham milk and butter instead of pure milk and butter by stopping the colouring of margarine and of separated milk. The right

hon. Gentleman was apparently quite-ready to allow the brewers of this country to adulterate their beer by brewing, not with barley malt and hops, but any kind of substitute which would produce a beer which publicans would not be able to refuse to take owing to the system of tied-houses. A great number of brewers were brewing from foreign substances and sending out beer to tied houses which were obliged to receive it, and it appeared to him that those brewers were to be allowed to brew from any materials so long as the revenue did not suffer. That was the position taken up by the right hon. Gentleman: in the previous year, when speaking on the arsenic epidemic caused by adulterated beer, and when he said it was a matter which had to be looked at to a great extent from the point of revenue.

\*MR. WALTER LONG: No.

\*MR. STRACHEY: Did not the right hon. Gentleman say it must be looked at to a great extent from the point of revenue?

\*MR. WALTER LONG: My hon. friend has put on my remarks so different an interpretation to that which I intended to convey that I did not recognise them.

\*MR. STRACHEY expressed great satisfaction that the idea that the question of revenue should stand between the consumer and his beer was repudiated by the right hon. Gentleman. At the same time, the right hon. Gentleman having taken up the attitude that the Government could not do anything at the moment, it was to be hoped when a Bill dealing with this subject was introduced into the House by a private Member he would at least allow it to go to Second Reading.

At the present moment there was no definition of beer at all in the same way as there was a definition of milk and butter. Beer could be made from any kind of rubbish; but it was only fair that when a consumer asked for beer he should receive an article brewed from barley malt and hops, and not from substitutes of various kinds. To the threat of the brewers that if they were not allowed to brew from these substitutes

they would buy foreign barley and brew from that he would reply. Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes. The barley growers of this country did not, in supporting legislation for pure beer, come to the House and ask for protection in any shape or form; all they asked for was a fair field and no favour. Many people outside the House regretted that the Government had not seen their way to promise legislation of some kind on this subject, in order that the public when they asked for pure beer might be certain they were getting it and not some mixture

containing anything which might be cheap, in order to enable the brewers to pay the very large dividends they were continually declaring. He hoped that the Government would be forced to change their mind with regard to this question.

SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): There is one question connected with the war in South Africa which has not hitherto been brought before the attention of the House, but which excites and will continue to excite considerable interest in the country. That question is the terrible loss that our armies in the field have sustained through the ravages of preventible disease. I think the subject deserves the consideration of the House, and as the Report of the Hospitals Commission has just been placed before the country it is only right that I should refer to some points connected with this matter. With reference to the terrible losses sustained by our forces in the field I need refer only to the fact that up to the end of last year the loss was 7,500 men from disease alone, while some 30,200 men were invalided home not because of wounds inflicted by the enemy, but in consequence of being attacked by disease during the progress of the campaign. The death-rate per thousand of our soldiers was no less than 37·5, which is about six times the rate in the same class of population during times of peace. That is a condition of things which at all events requires some consideration. If you analyse the figures up to the end of September; the figures to the end of the year have not yet come into my possession; no less than 3,642 deaths, or nearly one-half, were caused by typhoid or enteric fever, which is eminently a preventible matter. Up to the 28th September, no less than 15,655 men were stricken by that disease, of whom 9,128 were invalided home. When it is remembered that each one of those men had gone through an illness of probably four or five weeks' duration in South Africa and then came home at the expense of the Government and were invalided here for a further period, it will be seen what an enormous amount of loss that means to the country. The death-rate from typhoid fever alone has been about ten per thousand men engaged in the campaign, which is eight or nine times as great as the death rate under similar circumstances on service in this country or South Africa. This mortality is to be all the more regretted because it exists among those men who under great hardships and at great sacrifice have been devoting themselves to the defence of our Imperial interests, and I feel compelled therefore to call special attention to this grave matter. I have held for a long time past that a great deal of this disease was preventible, and the more I study the Report of the Hospitals Commission the more I am convinced in that opinion. It was certainly foreseen, but just as certainly as it was foreseen it was not provided for. Everyone who considered the nature of the war saw that we should lose more men by disease than by the weapons of the enemy. The war was to be in a country in which these diseases are practically always at home, and therefore it was only right that precautions should be taken. That was the reason some of us at the commencement of the war thought special provision should have been made to try and place the troops in a position in which they would be protected as far as possible from the ravages of these diseases. With that view I thought, and I still think, the Government ought to have sent out a special corps or body of men to look into these matters. The Government did

wisely in sending out a certain number of men to look after the surgery of the campaign, but they must have known that we were going to lose double as many men by disease as from wounds, and it was even more incumbent upon the War Office to guard against that danger.

I myself suggested that some such steps should be taken, but the answer from the War Office was in these words;

"The need of special assistance is not the same in sanitary matters as in surgical operations. The general practice of an Army doctor must necessarily make him inferior as an operator to skilled specialists, but sanitary investigations are amongst the most important of his daily duties, and he is constantly accumulating evidence in regard to them. The Director General, therefore, does not regard as necessary the establishment of such a Commission as you recommend."

That is to say, the War Office, acting on the opinion of the Director General, did not think it necessary to send out any experts to consider this question of the sanitation of camps and other places in which the soldiers were congregated, because the Army Medical Department was quite competent to undertake this work. That conclusion, arrived at deliberately by the War Office in November, 1899, is absolutely contradicted by the Report of the Hospitals Commission. The Report is full of evidence that the War Office was wrong in that particular matter. There are several extracts which point to the necessity of improved sanitation. On page 44 there is a remarkable sentence or two which I think ought to be placed before the House. In speaking of the sanitation of Bloemfontein, where, it will be remembered, some of the saddest occurrences connected with the epidemic took place, the Report says;

"At the end of March a sanitary inspector was appointed by the military authorities for the whole town and camp, but he was not a specially trained sanitary authority. Some difficulty was experienced in getting a suitable man for the post, as is evidenced by the fact that the inspector had to be changed more than once by the military authorities. That some trouble arose by reason of the defective sanitation of the town we think is very probable, although we do not consider that the great outbreak of enteric fever or any considerable portion of it was due to preventable causes."

In that passage the Commission point out that the necessity for a sanitary officer was felt at the time, and an endeavour was made to meet it, but there was nobody qualified to do the work. At Pretoria there was the same kind of experience. Then, after the epidemic at Bloemfontein and the equally deplorable and lamentable scenes witnessed at

Kroonstadt, it was determined as far as possible to remove these evils, and not only to have persons treated more satisfactorily, but to do all that was possible to prevent disease. So at last the authorities consented to the kind of assistance they ought to have had at the beginning of the war, and they sent for Dr. Turner, Medical Officer of Health to the Cape Government. He was consulted on the subject by Lord Roberts and authorised to deal with the sanitation, and matters were soon remedied.

"Previous to his appointment great need existed for a good expert sanitary

officer properly to supervise the town and the camp, and also to select proper and healthy sites for the troops to camp upon."

These are the very grounds upon which I urged the necessity of having such officers, and at Pretoria the evidence placed before this Commission was so strong that it is mentioned in the Report that such a course was necessary. The need of this is shown by a statement of Dr. Turner in his evidence that; "a very insanitary site was selected for the Welsh Regiment on its arrival, which might have led, if it had not been changed, to considerable sickness being developed in that regiment."

I believe there are other cases in which serious sickness has been developed through bad sites being selected, but all such conditions would have been avoided if there had been proper sanitary experts attached to the forces fighting on our behalf. These extracts are sufficient to show that the mind of this Commission has come absolutely to the point which the Government refused to recognise in November, 1899, and the fifth recommendation at the conclusion of their Report is the appointment of properly qualified officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps to undertake sanitary duties. The finding of this Report, both in the letterpress where it deals with the facts brought out in evidence, and in the conclusions which are put forward as necessary for the proper organisation of the Medical Service, absolutely contradicts the conclusion at which the War Office arrived and supports the suggestion which was made to the Department as far back as November, 1899. I therefore feel that that suggestion has been justified by the re-

sults of this Inquiry, and I want to know from some responsible member of the Government what steps are proposed to be taken to carry out this recommendation, and to prevent the lamentable loss of life on the part of the brave fellows fighting for their country in South Africa, by the appointment of some special corps to look after these sanitary matters. This Commission will not have been issued in vain if it has the effect of bringing about such a reform as that; a reform which, I believe, will save scores of lives in the future by giving the Army that sanitary advice which in this campaign has been so evidently lacking. I should like to refer here for a moment to the excellent work done at Pretoria by the hon. Member for Bow and Bromley. Before, or possibly after, the sanitary expert was called in a local commission or body of gentlemen were appointed to look after sanitary matters. The hon. Member for Bow and Bromley happened at that time to be in Pretoria, and he took an active and distinguished part in carrying out the sanitation of the town. I think the country is indebted to him for the services he performed there. Many admirable things were done, which unfortunately were left undone at Bloemfontein, in order to lessen the virulence and severity of the epidemic. The hon. Member found that at Pretoria the pail system was used for carrying away the refuse and excreta from the hospitals, in which excreta were contained the very germs which caused the spread of the epidemic. The Report ingenuously says that these excreta were in most places properly buried at sufficient depth. They ought to have been buried at sufficient depth in every case. But the hon. Member took a better, more scientific, and more thorough method of protecting the lives of the soldiers: he

made arrangements for doing away with this pail system, and had furnaces erected in which all this poisonous stuff was destroyed by fire and thus rendered innocuous. Such furnaces would have been erected at Bloemfontein if there had been a proper sanitary authority to look after the matter. I believe the record of the lack of foresight shown by the War Office in this matter is to be found in the loss of hundreds of lives in the course of the campaign.

This Report has been described in some of the papers as a "whitewashing" Report. I do not think that that is altogether an accurate description. A good deal of whitewashing has been attempted, possibly with the best of motives, but the whitewash was apparently not sufficient to extend over the wide surface to be covered. Here and there it is extremely thin, and you see the lurid facts betraying themselves under the covering with which the Commissioners have endeavoured to hide them. There is in this Report an almost absolute confirmation of the statements made a few months ago in connection with what was called the "hospital scandal." The Commissioners say that they do not think there was a hospital scandal. If there was not a hospital scandal there were certainly very grave conditions affecting the nursing and treatment of our soldiers which should be sufficient in this or any other country, even under the conditions of warfare, to cause a considerable amount of heart searching and trouble on the part of those responsible for the work. The hon. Member for Westminster, in a very remarkable letter in The Times, drew a graphic and, I am inclined to think, after reading this Report, an absolutely unexaggerated account of the conditions existing at Bloemfontein. What do I find on reading this Report, which practically says there was no scandal in South Africa? In the pages referring to Bloemfontein I find there are admitted evils in connection with one of the hospitals there, and the same evils with reference to No. 9 Hospital. What are these evils? There is admitted to have been overcrowding. In one case, the capacity being for 521 persons, there were 1,398; and the other hospital, with the same capacity, had no less than 1,600 persons in it at one time, or more than three times as many as the staff and equipment were equal to. Then there were too few doctors and too few orderlies, and these doctors and orderlies were not properly supervised and looked after. Some of the orderlies are admitted to have been inattentive and drunken. Moreover, many of these men had to work thirty-six hours out of forty-eight; and all honour to them for such devotion to their duty, but all blame to those who caused such work to be necessary. We

were told that there were not sufficient nurses up to the end of May to look after the patients. Then there were insufficient clothing and insufficient hospital utensils; and yet the authorities were able to accumulate food and supplies for the whole army for forty-five days, and while that was being done these unfortunate men who were lying in the hospitals at Bloemfontein had not the ordinary appliances that were necessary. Again, the washing was improperly done, whilst in other hospitals it was done properly. The cases were not properly distributed, and the latrines were not properly covered up. There had been delay in serving patients with food, due to the fact that there was not sufficient boiling water to be obtained; and in other cases the proper cooking



utensils for these men who were dying were not provided. There was also a deficiency of blankets to cover them; and yet in the stores at Bloemfontein the Commissioners' Report shows that there were plenty of blankets if the medical officers had only known where to send for them. The Commissioners also speak of the lack of organisation, for when deficiencies arose the officers did not seem to know where to apply. Then there is the very serious charge that some of the patients who were too ill to walk were often obliged to walk to these hospitals. I remember some years ago an epidemic of cholera which occurred in Dublin. There was a hospital specially opened for this epidemic, and what puzzled everybody there was the fact that a larger proportion of the patients in the ward upstairs died than was the case in the ward on the ground floor, although in both wards the patients were treated on the same principles, fed with similar food, and attended by equally skilled nurses. The staff at that hospital were puzzled to account for this, and they could not understand why the patients upstairs did not get well so quickly as those downstairs. The reason was that the patients upstairs had their vitality broken by the last straw of effort in having to walk upstairs. Therefore the fact that these men suffering from typhoid fever had to walk to the hospitals was one way of adding seriously to the mortality of this campaign. I mention this simply to illustrate the gravity of this admission on the part of the Commissioners. I am very glad that, in some respects, this Commission has not distributed blame too widely, but in many cases they have been almost superstitiously delicate in avoiding blame. This particular hospital is referred to in this way;

"The principal medical officer, owing to the crowded state of his hospital, had many things to attend to";

A man is likely to have a good many things to attend to when he has in a hospital intended for 500 patients no less than 1,300. The Report proceeds;

"and great difficulties to meet, and this probably accounts for the fact that he was so seldom seen in the tents of the hospital or amongst the patients."

I think that is an unworthy attempt to try and get rid of responsibility. So much for the reference to Bloemfontein. I think that those who read between the lines of the Report will find that it contains the same confirmation of the statements made by those who spoke plainly months ago on these benches and elsewhere. There is also a confirmation of those scandals in connection with the hospitals at Kroonstadt. The condition of things there was appallingly bad, and I find the Commissioners reporting this, which I think ought to be mentioned before the House. This was the first place where there was any delay after Lord Roberts's march from Bloemfontein, and many men attacked with typhoid at Pretoria pluckily determined to go on with the onward march. Some of them fell out, and others struggled on with aching limbs and parched tongues, only to fall down helpless at Kroonstadt. And how is their condition described? Professor Henry Edward Clarke, chief surgeon in charge of the Scottish Hospital, in his evidence, shows how urgently aid was needed at Kroonstadt even on 25th May, when he arrived there. The town had been occupied ten or twelve days before. The Report says;

"He found all the buildings which had been taken as hospitals overcrowded; for

instance, he found men in the Grand Hotel lying on and under the billiard table and on the settees and floors. All had mattresses, but three-fourths of them had no bedsteads to lie on. Owing to the lack of orderlies and utensils, he found that

some men remained unwashed for some few days, and that their clothing remained unchanged even, in a few cases, when fouled by evacuations. He further says that sometimes they could not get proper comforts, and that there was a temporary deficiency of certain medicines, and he adds that this condition of affairs lasted till about 8th June."

I do not see how that can be excused. There was a condition of things necessarily tending to add to the mortality from disease, and add to that long death-roll which is one of the saddest features of this campaign in South Africa. These admissions as to Kroonstadt and Bloemfontein are the two greatest blots on our campaign, and they prove the case that these unfortunate men, from some cause or other, did not have that attention which I am sure this country and every Member of this House desired that they should have. It has been said that they could not have them on account of the difficulties of transport. With reference to that I will make this observation. While we have admissions as to the gravity of the conditions under which these poor fellows were placed, we have the evidence also that during the time the army was at Bloemfontein, Lord Roberts had sufficient transport at his disposal to accumulate food for forty-five days for the army before he made his advance. I have no doubt this was a proper advance to make from a military point of view: but surely if you could accumulate food for an army of 40,000 men for forty-five days, there might have been the delay of a day or two in order that something might have been done to alleviate the suffering and the disgraceful conditions under which the sick and wounded were placed. It was not essential that Pretoria should have been taken on any particular day, and it was a matter of moral certainty that it would be taken, whenever the advance was made. There was no necessity to keep to the time-table of a particular day, and if Johannesburg and Pretoria had fallen a week later and this had saved a few hundred lives of our soldiers it would have been a national gain. That might be a question for military experts, but it seems to me that there was in this campaign, from some cause or other, a lack of preparations for the sick and wounded, and a breakdown of the arrangements which ought not to have occurred, considering the way in which the Government have been backed up by the country, and the generous way in which the public have endeavoured to do everything they can to render the condition of our soldiers satisfactory and healthy.

I want to know from the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary of State for War whether steps have been taken to remedy these defects, and whether he proposes to reorganise, as far as possible during the continuance of the war, the medical services so that these things cannot occur in the future. This Report recommends the reorganisation of the Royal Army Medical Corps to a considerable extent, and it recommends also the appointment of a further Committee. I want to know what kind of a Committee the right hon. Gentleman is going to appoint to do that work. Will it be a body calculated to do the work in a thorough fashion, or will

the inquiry be referred to a small Departmental Committee, or a body of men of whom we shall hear nothing until we have their Report before us? I think this question ought to be approached in a broad and vigorous spirit, and I believe the right hon. Gentleman's intentions are strongly in this direction. I believe that he is desirous of meeting the difficulties which have overtaken the Army Medical Service with a strong hand, and of making it not only better manned, but placing it under better conditions and more fit for future service. I think that should be done. I will not use the word "radical," but I hope it will be done in a spirit of thorough reform in order that we may have none of these difficulties and dangers in the future. While the Report of the Commission recommends this reorganisation, I think it gives us also a sufficient justification for all that has been said in this House, and for all that has been written in the newspapers as to the breakdown of our Army Medical Service, which would have been considerably greater if it had not been for the splendid efforts made by private generosity. I do not think that we ought to rely upon private generosity in this matter, because the taxpayers of this country are quite willing to find the money necessary to make the Army efficient and to protect the health of the men. We ought not to rely in the future on private effort coming to our aid, and we ought not to rely either too much on civil surgeons to supplement the deficiency of the Royal Army Medical Corps, but we should equip our Army with a proper medical service just as thoroughly as we should equip the Army with artillery. We should also have the same foresight with reference to disease as we ought to exhibit in every other military operation. I will ask the right hon. Gentleman in his reply to give us some assurance that he will deal with this matter from top to bottom in a thorough spirit, so that the condition of things to which I have referred can never occur again.

\*MR. GUTHRIE (Tower Hamlets, Bow): As this is the first occasion upon which I have addressed the House, I ask hon. Members to grant me their indulgence. I thought it desirable to refrain from speaking before, because I had every confidence in the Government, and I believed that they would do everything in their power in order to inquire fully into these matters with a view to the reorganisation of the Army Medical Department. Now that the Commission has reported, and the matter is no longer sub judice, I would like to pass a few criticisms not only upon the action of the Government, but also upon the Report of the Commission itself. I am not going to pass my remarks in any spirit hostile to the Government, but I make them because at the last election I pledged myself to the electors to use every effort in my power to force the Government to go on with Army reform, and I feel that I should be neglecting my duty if I did not call attention to some things which came within my own personal knowledge during the time I was in South Africa. I have not the slightest doubt that when the fever was at its height at Bloemfontein the Government were quite as ignorant as the country as to the true state of things existing in that city. I remember the consternation and surprise caused in Bloemfontein upon the receipt of the speeches made in London by Sir William MacCormac and Mr. Treves. Sir William MacCormac said;

"It would not have been possible to have anything more complete or better arranged than the Medical Service in this war."

Mr. Treves endorsed those words, and he also went out of his way, if I may say so, to wantonly insult a body of women in South Africa, some of whom, I admit, were perhaps very much in the way in Cape Town, but many of whom were doing good service to their country, and in my opinion their patriotism was not less than that of Mr. Treves. I do not wish, to belittle the services which were rendered to the country by Mr. Treves, which I have no doubt were underpaid at the rate of £5,000 per year, but I repeat that I do not think that he had any right to insult certain women in South Africa who were working simply for the love of their country, and not for £5,000 a year. When the celebrated letter of the hon. Member for Westminster was published, consternation was, I believe, widespread; it came like a bombshell to the English people. With regard to the appointment of the Commission of Inquiry into the hospital arrangements I am only sorry that, when the debate came on in this House and the Government promised to appoint that Commission, they did not consult the opposing faction with the view to allowing them to nominate one member to represent their views on that Commission. I am certain that the Government had the intention of getting at the truth of the matter, and I think they made a mistake in not appointing one man from the other side. Naturally, great weight is attached to the evidence given by the officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps. I hold in the greatest esteem many of the medical officers out there with whom I came into contact. General Wilson has given evidence which shows what a lot of good work they did. On the other hand, you have to weigh very carefully the evidence they give, because they are practically on their trial, and therefore the evidence of civilians ought to carry more weight with the Commission than the evidence given by these men belonging to the Royal Army Medical Corps. Perhaps the most glowing tribute which has been paid to the Royal Army Medical Corps is that of a colonel, who says;

"I never saw a thing more splendidly done by the Government; and goodness only knows what the bill will be when it comes in."

When I read his evidence in The Times I

could hardly believe my own eyes, when I saw that this man had had the audacity to go and give evidence before the Commission. I went to the War Office and I asked if I had made some mistake in regard to this man, and I asked whether they had received certain reports concerning him. I was unable to see anybody but the private secretary to the Adjutant General, Sir Evelyn Wood. I asked if I was right in supposing that this officer had been in charge of 1,700 patients in Bloemfontein, and if I was right in supposing that he was the same man who had been placed under arrest for what rumour generally spoke of as drunkenness. The reply which reached me from the War Office was as follows;

"Dear Sir,;You are quite right in supposing that a report about Lieut.-Colonel;had reached the War Office. It has, and his employment has been discontinued in consequence, I drew the Adjutant General's attention to these facts, and he thought it would be best for him to write to the Secretary to the Commission. I enclose a copy of the letter he is sending. This does not, of

course, preclude you from making any other communication you wish. If you desire to make any further inquiry here you had probably better see the Adjutant General. I go on leave to-morrow evening.;Yours truly, P. HANSON."

Here is the copy of the letter which the Adjutant General wrote to the Secretary of the Commission. It is addressed to Mr. Church, one of the members of the Commission;

"Dear Mr. Church,;It has been brought to Lord Lansdowne's notice that some of the evidence tendered by Lieutenant-Colonel;conflicts with that tendered by other witnesses to your Committee. I am directed, therefore, to inform you that the officer in question, who was on the Retired List, and was especially employed in South Africa, did not give satisfaction, and that as Colonel;'s employment is about to terminate, Lord Lansdowne thinks you should be in possession of this information in order to estimate correctly the value of any evidence which Colonel;may have given.;Yours sincerely, EVELYN WOOD."

Now when I take up the Blue-book I find there is no mention whatever in the cross-examination of this officer in regard to this fact, neither was he recalled to be re-examined in regard to it. There is not a word about it in the Report. Now I do not find that the Commission were so delicate in dealing with the feelings of others who did not happen to hold so high a position, I notice that there is

a footnote to the evidence given by Captain Barrett Lennard, as follows;

"Untrustworthy ;charges were not well founded."

If any evidence ought to have been received with a certain amount of doubt it is the evidence of a man who is found so unfit to retain his post that he was dismissed and sent home in disgrace. I would, if I had time, like to have analysed a good deal of the evidence that was given by civilians in order to compare it with the evidence given by the Army Medical authorities, for I think I could have shown to the House that instead of credence being placed in the evidence given by civilians, more weight has been attached to the evidence given by the officers of that very branch of the service which is practically on its trial. There is a story well known to every Member of this House, which created some sensation when it appeared in one of the letters written by the hon. Member for Westminster. I believe the Leader of the House said that were it true it would make one's blood run cold. The Commission took special pains to investigate this story. They examined myself on this particular subject, and they also examined the hon. Member for Westminster, Colonel Exham, Captain Lawrence. Dr. Stoker (the surgeon in charge of the Irish Hospital, to which these men were eventually admitted), and others. I have since read the evidence I gave, and I find it agrees with the evidence given by these other witnesses, with the exception of Colonel Exham. I find that in the Report of the Commission they have not only disregarded my story, but they say that the facts were not fully known to me; and they practically take for gospel the story of the very man who is responsible for the mistake occurring. They disbelieve my story, but certainly do so very politely, they do not actually say that I lied to them.

They also believe Colonel Exham's story as against the story told by the surgeon

of the Irish Hospital, who had nothing to conceal and who had no personal interests to serve. I will give an extract from the evidence of Colonel Exham, who says;

"The men were suffering from fever, which subsequently proved to be the early stage of enteric. They were mostly asleep, and none were in such a condition to make an early removal an urgency."

Dr. Stoker says;

"These were all serious cases of enteric. One of them had double pneumonia when he arrived, with a temperature over 105. Three others were also very bad.

Honestly, I am afraid those two poor chaps are dying."

And yet the Commissioners preferred to believe the evidence of Col. Exham. He says he went to the station, but I did not see him, although I was there the whole time. If he did examine them he could not have done it with any care, and how could he under these circumstances have come to the conclusion that none of them were serious cases of enteric? I believe it is almost necessary in order to diagnose an enteric patient to undress the man, to see exactly the condition of his body. He also says that supplies of food were ordered to be sent from No. 9 General Hospital; no doubt they were, but I very much doubt if they ever arrived. I have mislaid the quotation, but the Commission summarised their statement by saying that this was more or less a unique occasion; that it did not occur very often. Now, one of the witnesses, Captain Lawrence, the railway staff 'officer at Bloemfontein, a man who had every opportunity of judging, because his work kept him at the station all the day and night long; in fact he slept at the station.; was asked by the Commission whether there were many occasions on which men were kept waiting a long time at the station, and his answer was, "I am sorry to say there were; it was a constant occurrence." He agreed with me that this was only a typical instance, and in truth I was only taking one of a very great many cases which I myself saw occurring day after day. Well, I went to report the case to the P.M.O. at Bloemfontein, and asked him if it were not possible to have an orderly specially in the station on permanent duty, to attend to these cases on arrival; and he said he would consider the matter. But what I say is this: he ought not to have considered then, but months before. It was perfectly easy to get men from the base. I find no fault with the authorities for not getting up supplies. I quite believe it was impossible to get up supplies, although every man from Lord Roberts downwards did everything he could to do so. But the P.M.O. could have got orderlies and nurses from Cape Town, and if the Surgeon-General had had an orderly at the station at Bloemfontein constantly on duty, none of these horrible catastrophes would have occurred; and I have no doubt that from the want of an orderly if lives were not lost, at least health was very seriously injured. Then I was asked, while giving evidence before the Commission, by the President to suggest the name of any witness whose evidence might be useful to the Commission and among others I gave the name of a civilian who was my assistant in Bloemfontein, and who had spent a good deal of time in the station, who knew the town thoroughly, and saw a great deal of work in the hospital there. I wrote to this gentleman and asked if he

were willing to give evidence, and he at once wrote from Germany, where he was travelling at the time, to the Secretary of the Commission and said he would be delighted to come over and give evidence on any day appointed. The only answer he received was that the Commission did not think it worth his while to take the trouble of making such a long journey to give his evidence. Then I come to another civilian whose evidence was not given, but whose evidence would have been of more importance than much which appears in the whole of the Blue-books; I mean Dr. Murray of Johannesburg. That gentleman wished to give evidence before the Commission; he made repeated inquiries as to how he could give it, but he could never find an opportunity and was never invited to do so. Then Dr. Kelner, the head of the Volks Hospital in Bloemfontein, why was his evidence not taken? and why were the valuable statistics he had compiled refused by the Commission when tendered by Dr. Stoker? I have not the slightest doubt had these statistics been printed they would have compared favourably with any statistics offered to the Commission. I find that I made a few mistakes in my evidence before the Commission, because, contrary to all precedent, no proof was sent to me for correction. I called on the Commission one day in London to inquire when it would be convenient for them to hear my evidence, and was told that if I did not give it there and then I would have no other opportunity of doing so. I protested as strongly as I could against this, and pointed out that I had none of my notes with me, and that to give evidence at a moment's notice and without my figures before me, was extremely difficult. However, I proceeded to give the evidence as best I could, but again I say it is not my fault if a few mistakes were made, because they did not take the trouble to send me a proof. One of these mistakes related to Colonel Stevenson. I said that he had taken no trouble to requisition things in the town, and had bought nothing in the town or elsewhere. I ought to have said that he bought comparatively little, and that he might have bought more, because I knew for a fact that a great many things had been bought by other people. The Colonel says in his evidence that he spent £9,000. That is no doubt true, but he spent about Pretoria £7,000 of that after the Commission had started their work, and after Mr. Coutts's charges had been brought forward. I bear this well in mind, because Colonel Stevenson came to me and said, "Where have you been able to buy these things in Johannesburg? Will you give me a list of the shops where I can get them?" I should like to pay, at this point, a tribute to the success of the Irish Hospital, and the skill with which Sir William Thompson, surgeon-in-chief, and his staff conducted it. The Commission say there were some little discrepancies between the evidence of some of the witnesses in regard to the management of this hospital, but the essential fact was that the 500 beds had been committed by Lord Roberts to the Irish Hospital. All I can say is that the charge never was taken or accepted by the Army Medical authorities or anybody else except the Irish Hospital. The total staff of that hospital was 198, of whom sixty were natives: only one single man, a corporal, belonged to the Royal Army Medical Corps. And yet the Commission, instead of paying some little tribute to the services of the Irish Hospital, took any credit there was for the Army Medical Department.

Then the Commissioners go on to say that there was some evidence to the effect that there was a deficiency in regard to drugs, dressings, and blankets, but that on the whole they thought these articles were not wanting to any substantial extent. Well, when I arrived in Pretoria every hospital in the town was absolutely deficient in everything, with the exception of a few bandages, a few utensils, and in some cases beds. The others were in a most deplorable condition. I was not working without authority at that time. I had a letter from Colonel Stevenson, the Principal Medical Officer, authorising me to visit the hospitals, to look at the books, and to ask any questions I liked of the medical officers. I went over the hospitals and made out a list of their wants. I wished to submit it to the Commission, but I had not got it with me, for the reason I have stated above, when I gave my evidence. But when Sir William Thompson gave his evidence he tendered the list, which was refused by the Commission, and which would have proved conclusively that the hospitals were not only deficient in a few articles, but absolutely deficient in nearly every necessity. I am not talking of luxuries, but of those things which no hospital ought to be without. Why, there was only one clinical thermometer to every 150 patients; And yet the Commission report that there was some evidence that there was a deficiency in drugs, dressings, and blankets; Sir William Thompson, as I said, tendered this list to the Commission of the articles supplied to the Pretoria Hospitals, which cost, roughly speaking. £15,000 to £20,000, and which had been bought in the course of a week or ten days. The articles distributed amounted to over 100,000, and they were all procured by private initiative.

I have not passed these criticisms in any hostile spirit to the Government; for I am sure that the Government wish to arrive at the truth, as does everybody else. I hope they will forgive me for pointing out the faults in the Report of the Commission and I suggest that when the new Committee which will institute an inquiry into the Royal Army Medical Corps is appointed, it should not be a Departmental Committee, but should be a Committee of a much wider scope, and should have on it a representative of the civilians who took some part in the management of the hospitals in South Africa, so that the Committee may not be entirely at the mercy of the Royal Army Medical Corps officers for information. I thank the House for having listened to me so long and so patiently.

MR. POWER (Waterford, E.): We have listened with very great interest to the speech which has just been delivered by the hon. Member for Bow and Bromley. I may venture to say that it was on a subject in which hon. Members on this side of the House are much concerned. It is notorious that a great number of our fellow-countrymen are serving in South Africa; and, consequently, it is the duty of their representatives here to see that those who have to fight have proper assistance when wounded or sick, and that everything is done for their recovery. In regard to the Speech from the Throne, opinions have varied in various parts of the House; but from the Irish point of view, I think it is the most unsatisfactory that I have ever heard. One would have been inclined to think that at the commencement of a new reign and the commencement of a new century some matters of pressing Irish interest might have been alluded to. Nothing is



said as to the constitutional disabilities under which Irishmen suffer at present, and there might have been some allusion to placing the Irish people under the same guarantees for constitutional liberties as the people of the rest of the United Kingdom enjoy. We should have thought that something would have been said as to Irish University education, which is certainly ripe for legislation. During a visit which the late Queen paid to Ireland Her Majesty granted a Charter providing for the University education of her Catholic subjects in Canada. Now, of the whole population only 40 per cent. were Catholics, whereas the Catholic population of Ireland was 90 per cent. of the entire inhabitants. It is a remarkable fact that in that year, 1852, when the late Queen granted a Charter to the Catholic population of Canada, that great Englishman Cardinal Newman drew attention, in a remarkable letter, to the condition of Catholic education in Ireland. We are also naturally disappointed that no allusion was made to an Irish grievance admitted, not by a body of Irishmen, but mainly of Englishmen. I refer to the grievance brought out in the Report of the Irish Financial Relations Commission, which examined the greatest financial experts in the country.

We naturally take a deep interest in the question which occupies the minds of most people at the present time, I mean the war in South Africa. We have this peculiar interest: that however this war goes, Irish blood has been spilt fairly freely on both sides. I am cognisant of one case in which two brothers lost their lives; one on each side. The most lamentable thing in connection with this war, which is costing two millions a week, is the fact that though the people of this country may advocate the war strongly, not one in twenty can tell you what the war is about. I remember well in this House, before hostilities commenced, and when negotiations were going on between the British Government and the South African Republic, that the Colonial Secretary said there was little or no difference between them; that the two Governments were agreed on nine-tenths of the questions at variance, and that the remaining question was as to whether the franchise should be given in seven or five years. I know that the most warm supporters of the war maintain that it is about the question of suzerainty, but we say that it is a war for gold and territory. I do not think that any candid man, looking at the war and the way in which it is being conducted; no matter what his views may be in other respects; can say that it has redounded to the credit of England, but quite the contrary. What is the condition of affairs?

When you recently sent an armed force to China, it was thought that a British general would command the International army. But so great was the prejudice existing amongst the Continental Powers against English generals, owing to the bungles they had lately made, that no European Power would send a contingent if it was to be commanded by a British officer. I believe that to be the case, and I am not astonished at it when we remember the advice that was tendered at the commencement of the war by a distinguished Irish general, Sir William Butler, when we remember that he was almost degraded when the Queen went to Bristol, and when we remember the pride and arrogance with which you said you were going to subdue these Boers in a few months, and then found that your calculations had been completely upset. And what about the whole conduct of the war? So many

generals have been sent back that it proves that you had not the confidence in your own generals which possibly you think you ought to have. And how has this war been carried on? It has been carried on in the most wanton and inhuman of ways, and when you have not been able to beat these poor farmers fairly in the field, you have had recourse to other means and resorts which reflect great discredit on you, because it is notorious that wherever the force opposed to you was even fairly equal to yours, these poor farmers held their own and more than their own. I think that it is inhuman in an especial manner to burn not only the homes of those on commando, but the homes of the prisoners you hold in St. Helena and in Ceylon and other places. That is notorious. I am glad to say that voices, even from the Conservative party, have been raised against the present system, and that a Member of this House; I forget his constituency; wrote to the papers from the front, complaining of the farm-burning, which, he said, so far from doing good was doing harm, and, in his opinion, was preventing peace. If we want to see the harm which it has done, we have only to look at one of the greatest generals of the Boers; General De Wet; to find that he was at first opposed to the war; but when his farm was burned and his family had to take to the veldt, he felt that there was nothing else for him to do but to go on with the war. I will venture to read an extract from a letter which appeared in my part of the country, from a soldier serving at the front. I believe that this letter may carry some weight from the fact that the writer and I do not agree on many points. In that letter he alludes with great pride to Lord Roberts, and to the ride to Pretoria, He said;

"We represented the old country in the annexation parade and the grand march past."

Then he goes on;

"I see by the press that they are raising a fund to erect a memorial to Lord Roberts at Waterford. I was glad to hear it, and I hope it will be successful."

In regard to that point I may be allowed to say this: Lord Roberts's father was connected with my constituency, but I disagree in toto with the views put forward by this soldier in regard to the proposed memorial to Lord Roberts. I hope that nothing will ever induce my constituents, the people of Waterford, to turn the great Franciscan ruins in that city into a memorial of a war which has been carried on with such barbarity. But I wish to read what the writer says in regard to the burning of the farms that is going on. He says;

"It is our awful fate to witness and hear the cries of the women and children looking on at their houses and homes and all their belongings burned. I am fairly sick of it. The bailiffs work, too, fairly sickened me. The fellows in the regiment are going wild over it; but we have to stick at it. If we set to work against it, we know what we would get."

He has to do it, and many of these Irishmen have to do it.

And this brings me to a point I wish to make. I can well recognise that if Irishmen are with the colours, they must do their duty to the colours. I recognise that our race is a martial race, and that the Army will always have attractions for people of Celtic blood. But when I look at the condition of the rural population of Ireland, at their poverty, at the constitutional

disabilities under which they suffer, I ask myself what possibly can induce Irishmen to spill their blood so freely in upholding a cause and a Government under which they have suffered so much. I say I am lost in wonder, considering the way we have been treated, and the brutality of many of those wars in which Irish blood has been too prodigally spent in upholding the cause of England. I suppose we shall have an Amendment on the main question as to the way this war has been carried on. But I venture to say that the Boers have given a lesson in humanity to the British; and the treatment British prisoners have received at the hands of a people they call barbarians compares favourably with the treatment given by the British authorities to Boer prisoners when these had fallen into their hands. We feel it our bounden duty to express our opinion, and the opinion of those who sent us here, upon this war, and the policy of this war, and the way it has been conducted. It reflects the greatest discredit upon you, and our admiration is unbounded for these people who are anxious for peace, but to whom you will not give peace because you think they are weak and unable to resist you.

\*MR. O'DOHERTY (Donegal, N.): Rising for the first time to address this House, I do not think I should be true to the constituency which I represent if I did not protest against the oath taken by His Majesty yesterday. I regret that legislation has not altered the form of the oath, which is an insult hurled at millions of His Majesty's Catholic subjects throughout the Empire, and the numerous Catholic sovereigns who were here as mourners at the funeral ceremony of his late mother.

Last night and to-day I have listened with great interest to many speeches on both sides of the House in relation to the Boer War; I have listened to the history of atrocities perpetrated, as some allege, by the Boers, but, as we allege, by the British Army. I think those stories may be exaggerated to a certain degree, but it is on record that the British Army has violated Boer homesteads and outraged Boer women. I heard the hon. Member for Sheffield in strong and animated language yesterday refer to the atrocities committed by the Allied troops in China, and I regretted he had not similar words for the conduct of the British troops in South Africa. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury admitted yesterday, I think, in his speech that the only terms to be offered to the Boers was unconditional surrender: that if they laid down their arms and went back to their farms they would hear no more of the war, and that after a year or two of Crown colony administration they would receive self-government. But I take it that the Boers have read history, and have heard of the surrender of the Irish troops at Limerick, and have seen how the people of this country broke

the treaty before the ink with which it was written was dry. And what guarantee have the Boers that similar treatment will not be meted out to them at the close of this atrocious war? I am also of opinion that the Boer leaders must have read the history of the Irish rebellions written by the hon. Gentleman the junior Member for Dublin.

Passing from that question, as coming from a constituency which to a large degree is a congested district, I regret exceedingly that the Speech from the

Throne did not contain some reference to future legislation with regard to the congested districts of Ireland. I thought the journey of the right hon. Gentleman the Chief Secretary through some of the congested districts would have borne fruit; that having seen the poverty of those districts he would have taken steps to introduce in this House this session some remedy for the poverty that exists in some parts of Ireland. With regard to the reference in the Speech from the Throne to the factory legislation to be introduced by the Government, I would point out to the Minister responsible for the Bill in the present session that the Factory Act passed for England and Scotland last session does protect the persons of those districts, but that the conditions of labour in our country are quite different from those here, and Acts which are required for the protection of the industrial classes in England have been used in Ireland for the purpose of driving out the few industries we have left in that country. I would suggest instead of the administration of the Factory and Truck Acts, so far as they relate to Ireland, being as they are at present under the control of the Home Office, they should be handed over to a new Department in Ireland, which should give the various exemptions required in the factories in that country. I do not intend to address the House further now, and can only thank hon. Members for the patient hearing they have given me.

\*MR. TULLY (Leitrim, S.) said protests had been made from the Irish benches against the war. The Irish Members had been perfectly consistent in the attitude they had adopted towards the war.

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

\*MR. TULLY (continuing) said the Irish Members had nothing to regret and nothing to recant with regard to the war. They had gone on the same lines all through. They had been against the war at every stage, and they would continue to oppose it. When the war was finished; and perhaps it will not be in one or two years; English Members would regret that they did not take the advice tendered to them from the Irish benches. When they wanted to be taught the proper management of hospitals, when they wanted generals who could win and soldiers who could fight best in the hour of trial they came to Ireland, and he thought they would have done better if they had gone to that country for a policy also in South Africa, and there would have been no war,

It was an extraordinary thing that so much of the time of the House on the first two nights of the session should have been occupied in discussing, not the war in South Africa; the greatest they had been engaged in for over a hundred years; but the peculiar beer produced and sold in Manchester, and the question whether it was poisoned or not. Gentlemen on the opposite side of the House had reproached the Government with having taken no steps to deal with the epidemic caused by poisoned beer, and they got very little satisfaction from the President of the Local Government Board. The only satisfaction they got was to be told practically, in the words of one of the leaders of the Manchester school of political economists, that adulteration was a form of trade competition, and that this adulterated beer must be imposed on the public as a legitimate article of trade. He hoped that Members on the opposite side were satisfied with that

statement from the Government benches. They had heard a great deal last year about the effects of the poisoned fumes of lyddite in knocking out the Boers. It did not seem to have occurred to Gentlemen opposite that one of the resources of civilisation they might use against the Boers in South Africa would be some of the Manchester beer.

It was an old trick in Ireland to use-poisoned wine when they wanted to get rid of a leader. They had tried it with success on a great Irish chief, Owen Roe O'Neill.

The speeches they heard on the Liberal side of the House on the South African War dealt in a gingerly way with the great issues involved. As long as that was the spirit which animated the Front Opposition Bench the Liberals were destined for a long time to sit on these benches. The hon. and gallant Member for North Aberdeen had condemned the war and everything connected with the war. If the Liberal Opposition had had courage to act as he did, and if they had denounced the war and all its works, they would not have been humbugged as they were at the General Election by lying bulletins from the front that the war was over.

Until the Liberal Opposition faced this question in the same manly way as the hon. and gallant Member for North Aberdeen had done that night, the Liberal party would be simply a mockery and a reproach, and probably, as an article of politics, would be no better in the market than some of the Manchester beer. The hon. Member for Totnes had related his great feats in the war. Although they were told that the war was over, it was going on still, and the hon. Member was there at his leisure in the House of Commons, instead of helping to finish the war in South Africa. The hon. Member made a bitter attack on the Boers, and stated that they had no respect for the sanctity of an oath. The Boers professed a religion similar to that of the great majority of the Members of that House.

He thought that if the respect which the Boers had for the sanctity of an oath were compared with the respect which Englishmen had for oaths and treaties and their plighted word the Boers would come out of the comparison with very great advantage indeed. In the present war how many incidents had they heard of; and they could only bear of them from English sources; where there had been deliberate breaches of faith when dealing with the Boers; In the despatches published in the London Gazette a few days ago there was one remarkable evidence of British want of faith in dealing with the Boers. He referred to what Lord Roberts did at

Paardeberg. When General Cronje and 3,000 or 4,000 men were surrounded by 50,000 or 60,000 British they asked an armistice to bury the dead. The British officer then in command gave the armistice, but when Lord Roberts arrived on the scene he broke the armistice. They talked of these men not trusting the English word, but even Lord Roberts had been guilty of a gross breach of faith. [An HON. MEMBER: Lord Roberts is an Irishman.] He is an Irishman who has been through the English mill. The hon. Member who attacked the Boers about breaking oaths seemed to have the impression that there would be no war at present in South Africa if these men had observed the oaths of neutrality when they surrendered on the faith of some proclamation issued by Lord Roberts. That also was the view put forward in jingo newspapers. Hon. Members who made use of that argument proved

either too much or too little. Let them take it for granted that 3,000 or 4,000 Boers took the oath of neutrality and broke it. Well, if that were so, then 3,000 or 4,000 had been able to keep the war going up to the present moment, and had occupied the whole attention of 300,000 British. That seemed absurd on the face of it. If a few thousand Boers, by breaking the oath of neutrality, had coped with the best generals and an army more than a quarter of a million strong, what would happen when they had patched up some kind of peace, and when the other Boers who were in exile came back to settle down in the land if they broke their oaths? When last year the Irish Members said the Government had bitten off more than they could chew they were sneered at but who would have believed that when Parliament met in February of this year, instead of being conquered, the Boers would be more formidable than ever, that that specially favoured general, Lord Kitchener, would be surrendering towns which had been captured and withdrawing to his lines of communication, and that General De Wet would be actually operating in British territory? British tactics in South Africa had entirely failed to bring about the desired results. The tactics of Lord Roberts in his rush to Pretoria to save the gold mines; in moving like a greyhound instead of slowly like a tortoise had only taught the Boers; if they needed to be taught; what they could do by attacking the lines of communication and practically stale-mating the immense army in the field. Lord Roberts was therefore brought home, and in his place was put a general whose name in connection with the proceedings at Omdurman it was expected would strike terror into the hearts of the Boers and put an end to all further resistance. There was plenty of evidence in the letters which had been allowed to trickle borne in spite of the strict censorship that most horrible brutalities had been carried on by soldiers and officers under the direct orders of the commanders. The atrocities connected with the burning of houses, the flinging out of women and children to starve on the veldt, and the concentrating of people in the towns, beat anything in the record of savage warfare. Tears of hypocrisy were shed over the sufferings of the Armenians, but none of the deeds of Bashi-bazouks could equal the atrocities which had been perpetrated under the direct orders of the British commanders. The Boers were asked to surrender unconditionally, but they knew what Ireland's experience of surrendering unconditionally to England had been, and they knew that England would treat them as she treated the Irish in Leinster. As long as a single Boer could bear an arm the struggle would be continued, and England would at last have to restore the freedom and independence with the manliness and courage of the Boers deserved. The unfortunate and defenceless people who surrendered their arms very speedily found out what were the English ideas of liberty and freedom. Over and over again, almost immediately after persons had taken the oath of neutrality, they had their houses burned over their heads. Then there was the case of Hans Cordua, who was brutally murdered on evidence on which one would not hang a dog. There had been a great deal of canting hypocrisy about the unjust treatment of Dreyfus by the French, and yet as soon as there was a chance much worse treatment had been meted out to this unfortunate man. Reference had been made to the hospital scandal. Wounded soldiers had been

practically left to die and rot for lack of proper care. Some of the Irish yeomanry who distinguished themselves so greatly at Lindley had been practically butchered by the inexperienced doctors who had to treat them. The war was conceived in a lust for gold, and it had been carried out by corruption, speculation, and brutality, without any regard for human life or suffering. Such a war was not going to end in a month, or six months, or a year. The case was not hopeless for the Boers. In 1881 the British occupied Pretoria as now, but yet they had to surrender, and if the Boers continued fighting with the same resolution and determination fair and honourable terms would eventually have to be made with them. At any rate, they would have no faith in British benevolence, as British benevolence was like British beer: it was poisoned at its source. They were promised equal laws, local self-government, and autonomy; but all these things had been promised to Ireland, and therefore they knew exactly what to expect. The Irish Members had been hostile to this war all through; they had nothing to regret and nothing to recant, but on every possible occasion they would fight the policy of the war and oppose the voting of further supplies for its continuance.

MR. LABOUCHERE (Northampton): One of the most important issues before the House is as to the point upon which the late election was fought. The Leader of the Opposition has stated his opinion, and it was the opinion of everybody. The country was told that the war was at an end, and the electorate were invited to vote in favour of the Government because their policy had proved triumphant and there was to be no more money spent or lives lost. What is the reply of the first Lord of the Treasury to that? I am accustomed to the breezy way in which he puts aside all attacks, but I really was surprised at his astounding statement upon this subject. The right hon. Gentleman said that the Government had never said the war was over, and afterwards he explained that the Governmental organs had stated the war was over, but that was simply in anticipation that it would be over if it was said to be; because the Boers would be such fools and understand their own interests so thoroughly as at once to submit and surrender at discretion. If that is the way battles are to be won there will be a great many more battles won than history records. Not only were we told the war was over, but every effort was made to encourage the belief; troops were brought home, and glorious receptions announced. A great many deluded electors believed it was over, and the Leader of the Opposition said he was himself misled. The right hon. Gentleman has been very long in public affairs, he has been at the head of Departments, he is a cautious and careful man, and is endowed with a full measure of that caniness which is characteristic of his countrymen; and if he was misled is it surprising that the poor innocent elector should have been misled also? But I was not misled, because I have no confidence in the Government. I began with a certain amount of belief in them; but they have made so many misstatements, either through ignorance or; I will not say of deliberation, but they have made so many misstatements that I do not believe a single word that any Gentleman sitting on the Treasury Bench says. We have to face the actualities of the moment. The war is a fact, and the

Parliamentary majority of the Government, however improperly obtained, is also a fact. The right hon. Gentleman the First Lord of the Treasury laid down the policy of the Government and what their intentions were. He said they were going on with the war until absolute and complete conquest of the enemy and the enemy's country had been achieved. He added a few vague words that the Boers would perhaps receive free institutions, and that they might receive autonomy some day. Do you believe that that is enough to convey to the Boers the impression that they are ever to receive free institutions or autonomy? Do you suppose that "some day" is enough in these matters? What did Lord Salisbury himself say; Lord Salisbury, the head of the Government, the man best fitted to tell the Boers what are our intentions? Are they not to believe Lord Salisbury? He told the country, and, through the country, the Boers, that it would be generations before they had free institutions, and that they were never to receive one single shred of independence. My right hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition put before the House the contrary policy. He spoke as the Leader of this side, and I think everyone will agree in the policy he suggested. He said that so long as the war lasts we are necessarily obliged to send out reinforcements to feed the army in the field; it would be monstrous if we did not, or if we sent out an inadequate number of troops, ordered them to fight, and refused to fill up the vacancies or to send a sufficient number for the job. But he also said he wished the Boers in some sort of way to have it made clear to them that they would receive full autonomy and some sort of arrangement on the Australian model of a Commonwealth. The Leader of the House was defiant, and replied that surely some time must elapse between the end of hostilities and a settlement on such lines. Nobody denied it; everybody knows that the Australian Commonwealth took some time to build. But what we want is that in some way we should make known to the inhabitants of these Republics that our aim is so soon as possible to give them such a scheme of government as exists in Australia; *mutatis mutandis*, of course. By "so soon as possible" I do not mean that we are to wait to see how they conduct themselves, but to at once tell them that that is our aim, and that "as soon as possible" simply means as soon as it is possible to arrange the matter and give it practical effect. All agree that it is desirable the war should cease. We have these terrible death lists every day, and we are carrying on the war in what I should call a somewhat un-English fashion. Probably I am an old-fashioned Conservative in these matters, but while the mode in which we are carrying on the war at present may perhaps be necessary if you wish to crush out a national uprising of people against being conquered, still it is a way against which we have protested again and again in the cases of Poland, Turkey, and others. We have shown our superiority of arms in the field. [Irish cries of "No."] Of course it exists. It is a war between a small country and one of the greatest Empires in the world, and when it comes to meeting face to face in a battle we must in the end win. We have, in fact, occupied their capitals and shown what is called our superiority in arms. [Renewed Irish cries of "No."] When the greatest Empire in the world is fighting against 50,000 or 60,000 peasant farmers it would be ridiculous not to suppose that our superiority in arms not only existed before,



but that it must show its effects in the war. What we are fighting against now is this; we have the area against us; we have the climate against us; we have the determination of these men against us. It is a noble determination on their part, although it may not be one of expediency. Certainly when I hear of men determined to incur all risks and all cost in fighting rather than submit to a foreign foe, I honour them for doing it. But on the broad grounds that we wish this terrible loss of life to come to an end, that we ourselves do not wish to continue spending about £2,000,000 per week, that we wish these means which we are told are necessary, but which I regard as un-English and inhuman, to cease; on all these grounds every Gentleman in this House must desire the war to come to an end. But there is a stronger ground still, and that is that we are at present acting against our own permanent interests in South Africa and against the permanent interests of the Empire. You have a Dutch majority in South Africa; you cannot alter that fact. In Cape Colony you have a majority of the inhabitants who are of the kith and kin of the people against whom you are fighting, and, if they do not overtly join their kinsmen, unquestionably their sympathies are with them. In the Transvaal you have people whom you wish to make citizens of the Empire, and whose territory you want to include in the area of the Empire, but who will be bitterly hostile if you do it by force of arms. If you overcome their resistance by conquest, the very fact of being conquered will rankle in the breasts of this majority in South Africa; you will by the fact of conquest itself sow the seeds of disaffection. It is not such a desirable thing as some gentlemen seem to imagine that we should obtain the results we desire by conquest alone. You admit the fact that even if we bring this war to a close by conquest we shall have to have a huge garrison in South Africa. It is not as if you had in that country a race that was dying out, for it is an increasing race, and you will find that the proportion of Dutch as compared with the English will increase. I think that truth is admitted. Now, what is a reasonable solution in view of the present situation? The only reasonable solution that we ought to aim at is that we shall be able to establish in South Africa such a Commonwealth as exists in Australia and Canada. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has said that a Commonwealth is a federation of independent sovereign nations, and we ought to try to establish one of these independent nations in South Africa. That would be a source of strength and not a source of weakness to the Empire. A federation based upon conquest and upon the predominance of the race representing the minority over the majority will not create that sort of Commonwealth which will be a strength to us, and which would be loyal in its connection with the Empire. There is no place in our Empire for such a Commonwealth. That would not be a Commonwealth, but simply a garrisoned dependency consisting of new citizens forced into citizenship without the sympathies of citizens, and they would think that they were being treated as an inferior race.

Can anybody tell me in this House why we should not propose terms to these people? I do not know that there is anything dishonourable in proposing terms. The Government issued a proclamation saying upon what terms the Boers might surrender. Soon afterwards they modified that and promised to issue another.

They managed to pick up a quantity of miserable emissaries and induce them to go into the Boer camp. They wore, not to address themselves to the commander of the Boers, but they were to try to suborn some of the Boers into deserting their own flag. I have seen it stated in the newspapers, and I think I have heard it said in this House, that General De Wet perpetrated a brutal murder in shooting one of these peace emissaries. Now Lord Kitchener is not a very mild man, and I wonder what he would do if a Boer were to appear in the British camp and try to induce, say, an Irish regiment to lay down their arms and surrender. I think such conduct as this is mean and contemptible and degrading to the country. I read in a newspaper a few months ago that we had now adopted a new plan. This story was probably not true, because it was in a newspaper, and we are getting quite accustomed to the sort of lies that are so often palmed off as facts. I speak of the telegrams from South Africa. I read that we have induced the wife of General Botha to go to her husband in order to prevail upon him and the Boers to surrender. I can understand meeting your enemy in the field; but could anything be more utterly contemptible than to send the wife of the Boer commander-in-chief in order to urge her husband to surrender, and to tell the Boers that they are mistaken, that it is not to their own interest to hold out and to try with all her womanly feelings to induce her husband to give up? I hope that this story is not true for the sake of the country. Will hon. Gentlemen opposite cite me one single case in which terms have not been offered to an enemy when one country is engaged in war with another country? I cannot remember one. This is all the more monstrous when we remember that this war partakes of an internecine struggle between ourselves and people who acknowledged our flag. I think this is the very case in which you ought to propose terms of accommodation. Putting aside all questions of humanity. I can imagine nothing more utterly impolitic than the course taken by His Majesty's Government in this matter. Our aim is that all should live happily together. We wish to safeguard our interests so that there can be in our South African colonies, as in Canada and Australia, the Pax Britannica. But we are not going the right way to arrive at that. You are now taking the course which must end in making those great countries in South Africa hostile to us, and they will no doubt seize the very-first opportunity when this country is in difficulties elsewhere to turn against you. I think the Leader of the House asked, Whom would you negotiate with? He asked; How would you do it? We do not want such questions, for we want the thing to be done. We want a proclamation to be put out and conveyed to the enemy. I do not believe in this idea of refusing to negotiate with your enemy. You should at least see if you can come to a peaceful arrangement which will be satisfactory both to them and to us. Of course in all these things you cannot expect the status quo ante bellum to continue. There must be a certain amount of give and take on both sides. When you get men meeting together honestly determined to look to their mutual interests then you might possibly come to some arrangement which would be infinitely better for us and our permanent interests than by carrying on the war as at present. My right hon. friend the Member for East Wolverhampton, who is a belligerent Nonconformist, I believe, went about the country swaggering and

saying that we ought to fight it out to the bitter end. [An HON. MEMBER: He said "fight to a finish."] I am not so well acquainted with the prize ring as my right hon. friend appears to be. That was his idea, at any rate, of what we ought to do. The Government, however, seemed to prefer to do everything else. They said they would conquer, and therefore they must conquer. They have not the strength of mind to admit that they have been in error, for it requires a strong hand and not a weak mind to do it. I can see nothing but drift and weakness in the policy pursued by the Government. Complaints have appeared in their own newspapers of the weak, wobbly way they have carried on the war, and they do not understand their own vile business themselves. [Ministerial cries of "Order, order&#x0021;"] If that word is too strong I will say their own glorious business.

I cannot help saying that in this matter the Government are doing exactly what they have often complained that we have been doing, and that is that they are preferring their party to their country. They know that they have blundered and muddled. First one member of their own party attacks them and then another. They have made a mess of the hospitals and of the war, and they have made every species of mess and folly, and it would be difficult for them to discover any more follies for them to commit. They now hope, if they can only appeal to the passions of the people, as they have appealed before, that they will ride off on the

general triumph of their policy. That is why they are keeping up this war, and why they refuse to follow the advice of the Leader of the Opposition. The Leader of the House is a great deal too fond of lecturing us, but I would remind the right hon. Gentleman that we have opposed the war from the first, and we were told that we were traitors. We urged conciliation, and we were again told that we were traitors. We said the Government were mistaken in saying, that the war would not cost more than £;10,000,000, and again we were called traitors. We took the liberty to criticise the military operations of the Government, and still we were traitors. We now urge terms of settlement, and again we are traitors. But we have had wars before. Lord Chatham protested pretty strongly against the American war, but he was not called a traitor. We had the French wars against which Mr. Fox protested, but he was not regarded as a traitor. We had the Crimean War, and Mr. Bright protested against it, but he was not called a traitor. [An HON. MEMBER: What about Majuba?] But is the Government always right? You revile that great man Mr. Gladstone at the present moment, but you cowered before him when he was alive. But be this as it may, we are quite ready to accept the responsibility ourselves in tendering this advice to the Government. We were opposed to the war at the beginning, for we thought it impolitic, unwise, and unjust. Here is an opportunity to bring it to an end, and we believe our leader has suggested the best means of bringing the war to an end in the best interests of the Empire. We are ready to accept the responsibility, and all we ask hon. Gentlemen opposite to accept is the responsibility for their own actions. Instead of doing this they are always shirking their responsibilities. You tell us that the war would be over very soon if it were not for us wretches on this side. They say you must trust everything to the

general; but who ever heard of trusting politics to a general? We do not have a committee of colonels in this House, and say to them that whatever they do is wise in regard to politics. We do not throw any sort of responsibility on them. We accept the responsibility

for what we do, while the Government try to evade their responsibilities upon every single occasion. I say deliberately that if I knew that a continuation of the war for one week only would lead to this conquest and surrender, I should still be in favour of conciliation, because I believe that that conquest and surrender would be the most injurious and harmful thing that could happen to the Empire. I do honestly believe that at the present time the Boers perceive that we are stronger than them. If you are ready to spend the money and find the troops, and send them out to South Africa, in the end you must, in the very nature of things, wear the Boers out. But in doing this you are preparing for yourselves a terrible future in South Africa. That is not the way the Commonwealths of Australia or Canada or New Zealand were founded. That is not the way to inspire loyalty amongst these people. Sir Wilfrid Laurier has said that this war is the most unfortunate war in which England was ever engaged. I think I saw the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs here just now. He said that he regarded the war as an unmixed blessing. I rather agree with Sir Wilfrid Laurier, for has not Canada become loyal to the British by becoming an independent State? And your best way to arrive at that end in South Africa is not to fight to a finish and insist upon conquest and surrender, but try to induce the people, as practical, sensible men, to come within the area of the British Empire, by giving them a guarantee and an assurance that they will have the fullest autonomy, and be able to continue to live under their old laws and customs. You must not be surprised if they distrust you. They remember the raid, and that after that Mr. Rhodes gloried in being at the head of it, and he was afterwards made a Privy Councillor. The hon. Member opposite referred to Majuba. They remembered what happened when we in the most infamous manner, declared that they were to form part of the British Empire, and then we cheated them out of their independence. We assured them that they should have a free independent Government and a full representative assembly, and we did not keep our promise. That is why I am so anxious that we should make it clear at the present moment that if they will only accept our terms they shall have the fullest autonomy. For my part I do not care whether they call themselves republicans or subjects of the Sovereign. Surely the German Empire is a strong Empire; then let the Boers have Republics like the Hanse towns in Germany, and let us be generous in all these minor details.

\*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): That is inaccurate and absurd.

MR. LABOUCHERE: Oh, everything is absurd and ridiculous that the hon. Gentleman does not believe in. The German Empire is one of the strongest in the world, and there you have a State that; owes its allegiance to the German Empire and recognises as its overlord the German Emperor, and that is a republic. That is why I say it is comparatively unimportant whether the Boers call themselves republicans or anything else if you pursue the course indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, and substitute conciliation for this fighting to the bitter end.

Your; object is to win their affection. We have now fulfilled our duty. The right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the Opposition has told you what the policy of the Liberal party is, and what we think is desirable in the interests of the Empire in order to put an end to the war. We are in a minority, and the recent election proves nothing except the hard fact that you have a majority; but that majority was obtained upon a false issue, and if we had another election now I think it is probable that we should have a majority. But we are now face to face with the fact that you have a majority. We are absolutely powerless' and can do nothing. We do, however, claim our right to free ourselves from the responsibility for the continuation of this war without submitting terms to the enemy. I am perfectly convinced that every day that this war continues will bring a greater number of adherents to our views than are likely to be won over by your policy. I think you will admit that the war is not quite so popular as it was, and every day that it continues; and these terrible losses go on, entailing

enormous expense, you will find it more difficult to say that the war was necessary. You say that you do not like the burning and the desolation that is absolutely necessary to carry out your policy, but all this will tell with the country. The new phase of the war is less popular, and time is with us, and if the Boers continue to resist the time will come when you will be ready to admit that the Leader of the Opposition gave you good advice.

\*LORD STANLEY: I have to ask the [indulgence of the House while I address a few remarks to hon. Members upon this subject. I do not intend so much to go into controversial matters, which will be dealt with by my hon. friend the Secretary of State for War, but I will try and deal with a few questions with which I have been brought into personal relation, and about which there seems to be some misunderstanding.

It appears from what one hears and sees that there is a prejudice on the opposite side of the House, in that they believe that because the Members on this side of the House support the war, believing it to be right and inevitable, therefore they must be pro-Boer in the way they speak of an Englishman as against a Boer. I am not one of those who wish to run down the Boers as men or as a nation. I do not agree with those people who run him down as a coward, for to do so would be to depreciate the courage of our own troops, and I appreciate the courage of the Boers. As a race I think they have their failings, but we must admit that they have some of those qualities of tenacity which we are in the habit of priding ourselves upon possessing. The right hon. Member for South Aberdeen, who spoke last night, fell foul of the hon. Member for Totnes, who spoke about the Boer having no sense of honour. I know what the hon. Member for Totnes means, and when he used that expression, while I knew what he meant and felt with him, at the same time I could quite feel with the Member for South Aberdeen and those who agree with him. As a man, I do not think that we can say that the Boer is devoid of honour when we consider the humanity he has always shown to our sick and wounded, but I should not wonder if some hon. Gentlemen on the other side will not agree with me when I say that when you come to the question of the Boer's honour in fighting tactics, to put it mildly,

he has a sense of honour peculiar to himself. His idea of fighting is to go out with the prospect of killing; [Ironical Nationalist cheers.] So is ours; but at the same time, he thinks it no dishonour to fire from under the white flag. [Nationalist cries of "Oh."] In that way, I say, his sense of honour is, to say the least of it, peculiar. Again, there is the question of taking the oath of neutrality. That has been mentioned as one of the instances where the Boer has not much appreciation of honour in the way that we consider honour in regard to an oath. There is not the slightest doubt, as my hon. friend the Member for Totnes has reminded the House, that in many cases Boers have been taken with not only one but several oaths of neutrality upon them. In one case, a well-known field cornet of one commando came to a small post, took the oath, and two days afterwards, at the head of a commando, demanded the surrender of that small post. So their sense of honour with regard to an oath is also a little peculiar. At the same time, let me be as perfectly fair as I can be to the Boers. I think that the new way of dealing with the Boers has proved to be better than that which we pursued at first; namely, allowing them to come in and voluntarily surrender their arms, placing them in big camps, and giving them all possible protection. I believe myself that it will be found that many who under other circumstances would not have been willing to come in are now perfectly prepared to do so.

The right hon. Member for South Aberdeen made a speech which was undoubtedly a pro-Boer speech; he will not be prepared to deny it; but at the same time, as a reason or excuse for making that speech, he said he was certain that no words uttered in this House or in this country had any influence on the Boers in South Africa. Now, the right hon. Gentleman is too modest; that is a fallacy which it is easy to disprove. When the troops got into Kroonstad there was found there the latest edition of the well-known Boer paper, the *Standard and Diggers' News*, in which there was an account of the

National Liberal meeting. I do not know whether the account was a true one or whether it was garbled; but at all events, in a paper that is not large there was a good column given up to this meeting, and a leading article as well. To show what effect that meeting had upon the Boers, I would ask the permission of the House to read a sentence from that article. That article, referring to the Members of the Volksraad, said;

"There is the same clear ring of conviction about him, and the same spirit of stubborn resistance, and in his attitude as a whole he finds opportune encouragement from the views of Liberalism, which proclaim him in the right, urge him to continue, and in the meantime condemn the men of Downing Street and all their doings."

Will anyone deny that these words have reached South Africa; or will he deny, whatever the effect of this article, the wish of the writer was to show that the voice of Liberalism was used in this country to help the Boers in their country to continue the war? Therefore I beg hon. Members opposite; who must remember that, however anxious they may be for the finish of this war, we are equally anxious on this side; to let no words fall that will in any way prevent the conclusion of that peace for which we all hope. The right hon. Gentleman the

Member for South Aberdeen also said he thought we had not taken enough opportunities of communicating our terms to the enemy. I interrupted him last night in order to mention the case of the Commander-in-Chief having communicated with General Louis Botha, and the right hon. Gentleman asked me whether he communicated with Steyn. May I say that quite early in the campaign, on 13th May, a telegram was sent to Steyn; I forget what it referred to, but not, I think, communicating terms of peace; and also to Mr. Kruger. The telegrams were answered respectively by De Wet and Botha, who said that all communications should be addressed to them. Therefore, after that, it was not necessary to make any communications either to Kruger or Steyn; any communication was made to the commanders of the opposite forces, De Wet and Botha. First of all, as to whether any communication was made to Botha. On 8th June a verbal message was brought from Louis Botha requesting an interview with Lord Roberts. Lord Roberts answered the letter in his own hand consenting to an interview between the outposts, but Botha's answer was not satisfactory in that he would not agree to the terms on which they were to meet. I myself have not seen the actual letter, but I believe Botha stated that he did not mean to consider any terms unless independence was assured. With regard to De Wet, on 17th September the District Commissioner of Kroonstad, with P. M. Botha, met De Wet, with Lord Roberts's sanction, to discuss the uselessness of continuing the struggle. De Wet declined to discuss any terms whatever unless the independence of the two Republics was first guaranteed.

MR. DILLON (Mayo, E.): I wish to ask the right hon. Gentleman whether he can lay any Paper before the House giving actually what passed between General Botha and Lord Roberts.

\*LORD STANLEY: Would the hon. Member be good enough to put a question on Monday, because I cannot do it on my own responsibility? I do not know what hon. Members may think, as to what terms should have been discussed, seeing that the question of independence was to be discussed with other terms. My object was really to try and show the House that so far as my late chief was concerned he had done his best to communicate with both Boer Commanders-in-Chief, and to show that he had been perfectly ready and willing to meet them and discuss terms. The question of farm-burning has been brought up, and there have been many arguments as to whether it is right or whether it is wrong. Hon. Members have rather taken it that those farm-burnings were done without authority by irresponsible persons. [HON. MEMBERS on Opposition side: "No, no," and "Proclamation."] If I remember right, Lord Roberts, in his proclamation, did not say that when the railway was broken farms within ten miles should be burned, but that they would be liable to be

burned. For some time afterwards no farm was burned. After that farms were, by Lord Roberts's special orders, under certain conditions, burned. These orders were to general officers commanding to the effect that, if they were convinced that a farm had been used to harbour in any way those who meant to break the line, or who had broken the line, or that if an act of treachery had been committed on a farm, then that farm was to be burned, provided the general officer commanding thought that it was right that that course should be taken,

but it was only to be done under his written order. This burning of farms has been done under a system which, I believe, has existed in previous wars; and nothing, I am perfectly certain, would have made so humane a man as Lord Roberts put his name to such a proclamation if he had not felt that by that means, however harsh it might seem, he was doing something to bring the war nearer to a conclusion. Whilst down in the south this policy may not have had any great effect, in the north it undoubtedly had a great effect, and the burning of a very few farms had completely stopped, except in one place, the breaking of the Delagoa line and of the Standerton and Johannesburg line. Moreover Lord Roberts, having given freedom from such burnings so long a trial, was justified, when he saw his leniency was abused, in taking the other means which hon. Gentlemen opposite think so harsh. I will now deal with one or two smaller questions in regard to the war. The right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean has made a mistake, if I may say so, with respect to what he said as to the C.I.V. Mounted Infantry.

\*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I did not use a single word of my own. I quoted General Mackinnon.

\*LORD STANLEY: General Mackinnon could not have meant mounted infantry. If so, he must have spoken not from what he had seen himself, but from information he had received from another.

\*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I will read the words. General Mackinnon was the officer commanding.

\*LORD STANLEY: No, he was not.

\*SIR CHARLES DILKE: Well, I will read General Mackinnon's words. He wrote; "Soon after our arrival the mounted infantry went to the front&#x2026;The sending of the Volunteers straight into action is a proceeding which I hope will not be regarded as a precedent&#x2026;They have not sufficient practice in the art of war to enable them to take their place in the first line &#x2026; and could not possibly be fit to do immediate duty alongside of Regular troops."

\*LORD STANLEY: I admit at once that the right hon. Gentleman is perfectly right in his construction, but, as a matter of fact, it was not so. The mounted infantry arrived some time-before General Mackinnon. They went up, when they arrived, to Modder, they then came from Modder, and had their first fight at Jacobsdal, when they pleased everybody and were well pleased themselves. [Laughter.] They had every right to be pleased with them selves at their first fight. It will be remembered that the colour which they carried through the streets of London when they came back was the colour which they took at Jacobsdal. What ever, therefore, General Mackinnon's view may have been from second hand evidence, as a matter of fact these so-called untrained men, whom he was not willing to send to the first line, did go to the first line and did extremely well. Much has been said about the deficiency of supplies in South Africa. I must say, in justice to those at home sending out supplies, that it is not right to say that there was a deficiency of supplies. The difficulty was to get the supplies from the seaports to the troops at the front. He had Lord Roberts's authority to say that never once had he had occasion to ask for supplies of food or forage from home, for they were always at hand before he had



to ask for them. It was only right that that testimony should be known, as the good work done by the Army authorities at home is rather liable to be overlooked in the general praise of anything out in South Africa. The insufficiency of horses has been alluded to. I admit at once that that is one of the most difficult questions that

anyone can take up and argue before this House or before a Committee. I have not the slightest doubt that the great proportion of the horses sent out were good.

A certain percentage were undoubtedly bad, but at the same time you must remember the great trials to which the animals were put. It was impossible to do anything else than to take the horses off the ship and send them up country. If it had been possible to allow the horses a short rest after they had been landed from the transports, and again to have given them a week or ten days rest when they had been brought up country, I have no doubt whatever they would all have proved most serviceable. But that could not have been done. The animals had to be used at once, and, as a consequence, the mortality among them was, I am afraid, perfectly appalling. I know that there were suggestions to have places up at the front where we could have kept horses and have got them fitter before we gave them out; but the Commander-in-Chief felt that, however desirable it was to have rest-places when the horses came up, it was impossible at the time. In fact, we had not sufficient horses for the men.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Why were the horses not ordered sooner?

\*LORD STANLEY: The horses were ordered in plenty of time. The question was the getting them up and feeding them. The consequence was a breakdown to a certain extent in the Remount Department, but I do not think that in that respect it could be put down to the authorities at home; it was due to the difficulties of transport and the hardships of the campaign.

One word, in conclusion, in regard to the future in South Africa. It is very hard, it is impossible, to prophesy as to the future of South Africa. But my own idea, from my own experience, is that there is not that exceeding bitterness of feeling between the two races in the country which, according to some people at home, will keep them for ever apart. I believe that, given peace, it will not be long before the country settles down

not under the old conditions but under a much happier state of things. Sir Redvers Buller told me a story, which he repeated in a speech in this country, that, meeting Joubert or Kruger; I forget which, but I fancy it was Kruger; just after the peace of Laing's Nek, they both agreed that they did not like the peace. Kruger said it would not last, for he had noticed that when two fighting dogs were separated they were not satisfied until they fought again and one got the mastery. At the time of the peace the two dogs had been separated, but now they had fought it out, and we had won. [Nationalist cries of "No."] The Boers themselves admit we have got the mastery. But whatever we may think, let us hope that when a Government is established which shall not legislate entirely in favour of the Uitlanders, and when the Uitlanders recognise the claims of the Boers and the Boers recognise the claims of the Uitlanders, we may see a Government formed between them that will conduce to the happiness and prosperity of South Africa.

\*MR. BURDETT-COUTTS (Westminster): I hope I will not offend the sense of the House by breaking the continuity of the debate and returning to the subject discussed before dinner in two very interesting speeches. I am sorry that the noble Lord who has just spoken has not given me a cue with regard to the medical arrangements in South Africa by defending their deficiencies in the same manner as he defended them when he gave his evidence before the Hospitals Commission. I hope the House will allow that in returning to this subject I stand in a somewhat different position in relation to it from that which I occupied in the debates last summer. I only mention that in order to relieve myself of the necessity of bringing forward matters which would in any way resuscitate the spirit of those debates.

What I desire to do in the few minutes I will address the House is to look rather at the question of reform. But before I do so, I am bound to make one or two observations on matters which have arisen since I last addressed this House. I hope I may be permitted to explain the last step that I have thought it my duty to take in criticising in a public manner the Report of the Royal Commission. I would ask the House to consider for a moment what has been my motive throughout the action I have taken. And in stating it I should like to answer a charge which, although it has not been formulated here, has been put forward in other quarters, and which may possibly be in the minds of some hon. Members whom I am now addressing. It has been said that the action which I took in disclosing the state of things in South Africa was calculated to injure the popularity of the military service, and so conflict with interests of the Army. My answer to that is, that the real danger lay in the fact that the state of things which I disclosed was allowed to exist at all, and in the fact that there seemed to be little effort to change it. I disclosed nothing to the Army or to the classes from which the Army is drawn. I gave them no information. I listened last night with pleasure to the speech of the hon. Member for the Totnes Division. The House will remember that he travelled over the whole field of the operations of the forces in South Africa, and that he paid a tribute to everyone, from the highest general down to the drummer boy; to Yeomanry, Volunteers, and Regulars; but I did not hear him pay any tribute to the medical arrangements. Now, the real fact of the matter is, that everyone who has been in South Africa knows that my account of these things was not exaggerated, and in bringing them forward I gave no information to the rank and file of the Army, but I only related what every man in every regiment in South Africa had seen with his own eyes. The real danger to the rank and file of the Army, and to the classes from which they are drawn, was the fact that once the question was raised there seemed to be a desire in this House rather to conceal and palliate the defects of the Medical Department than to face these defects and endeavour to reform them. I remember that during the whole of the debates last summer there was no promise of reform from beginning to end upon the part of the responsible

Minister to the Crown: there was no promise even of conditional reform, and it seemed to me that that was the real danger. The lesson that the rank and file of the Army drew from those debates was that it was more important to defend a

Department than to remove the causes of the defects that emanated from the Department. Then came this Royal Commission, and although I think many Members of this House, and many of the people to whom we talked, did not expect very much from it, yet undoubtedly many of the rank and file of the Army did imagine that a great and impartial tribunal was being set up which would not fail to find out the nature and extent of the evils from which they had suffered, and to point out some way by which these things could be remedied. Well, Sir, in my opinion they have found that these evils have been; I do not like to use so trifling a word as whitewashed, but buried in the lame and impotent conclusions of the Report, and therefore I consider it necessary to point out to the public that that Report does not deal in a satisfactory manner with this question, and that the inquiry has not been conducted in a way that was calculated to elicit the whole truth.

Now I should like to call the attention of the House to one or two points which I think will justify what I have said as to the impression which the Report will produce in the minds of the people unless that impression is contradicted. I will take one question, which no one who has been in South Africa can deny has been one of the most crying evils of medical mismanagement. The trains which went down from the front, crowded with wounded and sick, but principally with sick, who generally travelled in open trucks, were supplied with food which was entirely inappropriate to the condition of the patients who travelled. These trains throughout were crowded with men suffering from enteric and dysenteric fever. Now, I ask the House whether they can believe that the great majority of those trains which were sent down from the front to the base, a five days' journey, were supplied with nothing but bully beef and hard biscuits. I am not complaining of a grievance, and I maintain that I

have never brought forward a grievance, which could be excused by the common phrase "war is war." The grievances which I have mainly exposed are those which have arisen through culpable mismanagement, and which could have been easily remedied on the spot. It would have been a perfectly easy thing for an orderly in any of those trains to have had a portable stove and to have made beef tea or warmed condensed milk and given it to the patients. It was solely want of management and want of thought; an incapacity for recognising the commonest necessities of the case; and it was entirely due to want of management and medical care that it was not done. When this was pointed out to the Commission the only reply they had to make on perhaps the most widespread and most culpable defect in these respects in the war was that "this did not apparently recommend itself to the medical authorities." Well, when many of the thousands in this country whose comrades and friends have suffered from this cause either out there or on the journey home read that this is the only thing the Report has to say in regard to an error of management which is patent to everybody, I do not think they can be expected to have much confidence in the Commission.

There is another point; the question of robberies by orderlies, almost the only question with which the Commission deals with any strength, and the Commission points out that robberies by orderlies of the hospital stores, of the patients' food, and of the patients' kits has been a widespread practice. The Commission

then goes on to say that this is owing to the large number of untrained orderlies, who are private soldiers, like the men who are patients in the hospitals. Now what have we got? We have the rank and file being told that it was their own comrades who callously robbed them of their food and their kits, when they know perfectly well ;and it has been brought home in more than one instance;that the robberies were done and permitted by the orderlies of the Royal Army Medical Corps. And as every private soldier knows, this has been the tradition in Army hospitals, and it is a defect which has nothing to do with the under-manning of the

Corps, but is owing to the want of discipline and want of management within the Corps itself. The patients who have suffered from robbery, and who had their kits emptied of the little treasures which they had gathered during the campaign, will not have much confidence in the treatment of such a question in the Report, and will not believe that it can tend to improve the medical arrangements in the future. Then there is a spirit which permeates-the Report which I might almost call one of contempt towards the private soldiers who have suffered so much for their country. In regard to this I must call attention to one or two cases, although I could refer to several. Witnesses have stated that on occasion patients in field hospitals at Bloemfontein had lain almost in the mud; and this is the way in which the Report treats that subject;

"We come to the conclusion that though after rain there was some damp in some of the tents, the tents inside could not fairly be called wet and the men inside could not properly be described as lying in the mud&#x2026; We do not think that the dampness, to which we have referred caused any suffering or annoyance to patients."

That is the opinion formed by the Commissioners, and I say before the Commissioners had a right to come to that conclusion on behalf of the soldiers they ought to suffer from enteric in a wet tent and remain lying on the damp ground, after which they might be justified in saying that being ill under such conditions would not cause any suffering or annoyance to patients. Then, in dealing with the question of milk, they said;

"It is true that some of the patients did not like tinned milk, but some of the patients who complained of the condensed milk only did so after they were told that there was no fresh milk, never having noticed the difference before."

Now what will our soldiers think when they read that in the opinion of the Commission they do not know the difference between tinned and fresh milk? That passage of the Report will be received with derision by the rank and file of our Army. I will take one more point. Speaking of the Woodstock Hospital at Cape Town, at the base, which

was one of the best hospitals there, the Report says;

"With regard to another disagreeable feature, being an old building it was undoubtedly infested with bugs, but they had never been in such numbers as to materially affect the comfort of the patients."

One is really tempted to ask what is the tale of bugs; do they measure them by the yard or the quart? or how many must browse upon a patient's body before he can be officially described as uncomfortable?

I only give these as instances, but I can assure the House, if hon. Members will read the Report through, and bear these instances in mind, they will find that spirit colouring the whole of the Report, and that that spirit will be apparent to the rank and file of the Army, and will cause them to characterise this Inquiry as a humbug and a sham. What effect does the House suppose the refusal of patients' evidence by the Commission will have upon our soldiers? It has been my duty to bring forward some cases of refusal of evidence. I gathered valuable evidence from soldiers who had been in the hospitals during the five months I was in South Africa. The Commission refused to take the evidence in England before they left for Cape Town, because they said they were going to take it when they got back here; and when I offered it here they refused it. What is the value of this class of evidence? It derives its chief value by the process of corroboration. It is only by the repetition of these cases that you can raise them from the position of isolated incidents into a condition of practice, but the practice which would have been made apparent by such evidence being taken by the Commission has not been brought forward in the Report. I want to point out the effect of the verdict of the Commission, that there was no scandal and no breakdown. As hon. Members know well enough, under the words scandal and breakdown; they were not my words; the rank and file of the Army and the classes from whom in this country they are drawn believe are comprised all complaints and all defects. Those who have witnessed and suffered from all those defects which are represented to them by the words scandal and breakdown, when they have the authoritative verdict of this tribunal that there has been no scandal and no breakdown, will come to the conclusion that in the opinion of the Commission there was no justification for their complaints, that none of the evils from which they have suffered really existed, and that there will be no reform.

With regard to reform, I should like to show very briefly how leniency to and partiality for a Government Department has coloured the Commission's recommendations of reform to such an extent that they are extremely imperfect and, in fact, begin at the wrong end. The fault is not only medical but economic. The Army Medical Department has always at command an unlimited supply of civilian doctors and nurses to draw upon in case of emergency. This arrangement obviates the necessity of keeping up an inflated regular staff. Yet the first recommendation of the Commission is that the Department should be enlarged. The Commission has proved that the Department is imperfect and deficient in professional talent: and surely, therefore, the worst thing to do is to enlarge it. Not a man ought to be added to it until the whole system is changed and reformed. Then the Commission makes no suggestion about placing the civilian element in a position of solidarity and self-government with regard to medical work. It recommends that in military hospitals there should always be an admixture of Royal Army Medical Corps officers with civilian doctors. Even according to the Commission's own Report that view is altogether wrong. The Report protests against the militarism in military hospitals, and calls attention to the friction which existed between the civilian doctors and the officers of the Royal Army Medical Corps when they were mixed with one another.

This recommendation is one of the evidences that the Commission were entirely in the hands of the Department into the defects of which they were inquiring. We have had plenty of examples in this war of what ought to be, and can be, done with civilian aid. Take all the private hospitals; take the splendid Yeomanry Hospital with an entire civilian staff, and only one Royal Army Medical Corps officer in it.

That is a model which might be imitated by the Government. The advantage would be that, instead of maintaining an inflated Regular Army Medical Corps as a permanent tax upon the country, you could employ the civilian element for the period you want it, and get rid of it when no longer required. This seems to me one of the most fatal flaws in the recommendations of the Commission. I am afraid that the subject of reform is far too difficult and complicated for me to go into now. I have only given two instances, which I think are leading instances, to illustrate the point I have made, that the same influences which have impaired the inquiry have vitiated the suggestions for improvement.

In conclusion, I wish to say one word for myself. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, it was not within the range of human possibility for a man who saw the things which I saw; and I am far from exaggerating them; to remain silent under the circumstances. Moreover, I saw the causes which led to these disastrous results, and how easily they might have been remedied on the spot. My one regret; and I say this by way of apology, perhaps, for what some who walk delicately may have thought errors of method and manner; is that my voice was not more powerful and my hand more practised and capable. Having seen these things, and knowing that they might have been remedied, I should have been, in my opinion, a coward if I had not brought them forward. I had no other means of making them known except those which I adopted in the interests of reform; and I have much evidence from many quarters to show that my action has not been in vain. The disclosure of these evils, and the fact that the Army knew that the force of public opinion had been brought to bear in favour of reform, created a new hope and restored confidence in the minds of our soldiers. I trust that reform, although the road may be somewhat difficult, is really in sight; and I appeal to His Majesty's Government to look at this question, not by the light of the inquiry; the partial inquiry; which has been held, but in a broader and more comprehensive way, by means of a more practical and less interested Committee, and one which will not be affected by the influences which are so apparent in this Report.

\*MR. JOSEPH WALTON (Yorkshire, W.R., Barnsley): Mr. Speaker, knowing as I do that there are several Members who still desire to speak on the main question, I do not propose to move the Amendment standing in my name; but I propose to take this opportunity of asking for information from His Majesty's Government on several points in regard to the Chinese situation. I desire, Sir, to pay my tribute to the valour and efficiency shown by the native soldiers of our Indian Empire, by our naval forces, and by the Chinese recruits who have been drilled by British officers at Woi-hai-wei in the operations in China. His Majesty's Government are to be congratulated on having so far preserved the Concert of the Powers as to settle certain bases of negotiations for the conclusion of peace

with the Chinese Government. But there seems to be a need for a distinct statement of the policy of His Majesty's Government in regard to the main conditions which they intend to seek in connection with that settlement. We have had the statement made in this House many times that the policy of His Majesty's Government is the policy of the open door in China; but I desire to ask how far this announced policy of His Majesty's Government has been successfully carried out. Under the Anglo-Russian Agreement we conceded to Russia preferential rights north of the Great Wall of China. We conceded to Germany similar preferential rights in the great province of Shantung; and at that time it was stated that Great Britain possessed a sphere of interest in the Yang-tsze Valley. But though an English and a German syndicate came to an arrangement that certain districts in China should be regarded as their respective spheres of operations, this arrangement being approved of by both the British and the German Governments, yet when we come to consider the Anglo-German Agreement it would appear to nullify the previous agreements and understandings. The Anglo-German Agreement was concluded for the purpose, we are told, of maintaining on the part of the two Governments their interests in China and their rights under existing treaties; but when we come to interpret that Agreement by the language used by Count von Bismarck, we find that it does not confer equal rights and privileges, because Count von Bismarck states that: "It is our desire, and it is our intention to stick to the basis of the treaty of March 6, 1898, and not to go beyond this treaty."

This is a secret treaty between Germany and the Chinese Government, securing for Germany preferential rights in the great province of Shantung. Then, with regard to the Anglo-Russian Agreement, whilst that gave preferential rights north of the Great Wall of China to Russia, it also secured for us similar preferential rights in the Yang-tsze basin. The German understanding secured us equal preferential rights in the Yang-tsze basin to those we accorded to the German syndicate in the province of Shantung. The Anglo-German Agreement confirms the preferential rights in favour of Russia which we accorded to her in the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and also the preferential rights which we accorded to Germany under the Anglo-German understanding. On the other hand, under that agreement we give up any preferential right in the Yang-tsze basin, and admit Russia and Germany and all other Powers who gave their assent to that Agreement to equal rights and privileges with ourselves. Therefore this Anglo-German Agreement appears to give everything away to the nations competing with this country for the trade of China and to gain no quid pro quo in return. It appears to me that, to that extent, His Majesty's Government have not succeeded in maintaining an equal opportunity for British subjects to trade throughout the whole of China and to enter upon economic industrial enterprises. What is the policy of His Majesty's Government at the present moment? In the Anglo-German Agreement we are told that;

"It is a matter of joint and permanent international interest that the ports on the rivers and littoral of China should remain free and open to trade, and to every legitimate form of economic activity for all countries without distinction; and the two Governments

agree, on their part, to uphold the same for all Chinese territory as far as they can exercise influence."

The Agreement goes on to say;

"The Imperial German Government and Her Britannic Majesty's Government will not, on their part, make use of the present complication to obtain for themselves any territorial advantages in Chinese dominions, and will direct their policy towards maintaining undiminished the territorial condition of the Chinese Empire."

That declaration is eminently satisfactory. The United States, Japan, Austria, and Italy have unreservedly given their adhesion to the principles contained in this Agreement; namely, the maintenance of the territorial integrity of China and the open door for trade throughout the Chinese Empire. It is also understood that France concurs. Russia gave her assent with certain reservations, but re-asserted at the same time that she was the first to lay down the maintenance of the integrity of the Chinese Empire as a fundamental principle of her policy in China. The bases of negotiations for a settlement of the Chinese crisis have been agreed upon, but that is a small step towards the final settlement of the situation. I had a letter two or three days ago from one of the best informed men in Peking, in which he says;

"We are in a pretty mess out here. Imagine ten representatives of ten different Powers attempting to negotiate a settlement with China, the Government of each of the ten representatives having a telegraph wire, and seeking, by means of that telegraph wire, to control the whole of the negotiations from their respective capitals."

He points out what a prolongation of the settlement is bound to ensue from a condition of things like this.

I am bound to say that I regret that His Majesty's Government, though pressed by important chambers of commerce and by associations, like the China Association, interested in upholding our trade in the Far East, have not seen their way to send a special mission to China, headed by a diplomatist of the first rank as a plenipotentiary, so as to expedite, so far as we are concerned, the conclusion of a peace with China. My sympathies in this matter are entirely with the Chinese. My policy

would be to preserve China for the Chinese, and to claim an equal opportunity to trade there for all nations. I consider that the rising of the Chinese was a patriotic rising. Their territory had been seized in the most aggressive manner by foreign Powers, and it was only natural; whether you term them Boxers or whatever you term them; that patriotic Chinamen should make an effort to expel the intruder. In connection with that effort they certainly were guilty of offences against the known laws and rules of civilisation in attacking the foreign representatives in the Legations at Peking; but when they are face to face with the question of settling this Chinese crisis, I say that it is hypocrisy on the part of the so-called representatives of Western civilisation and Christianity to make demands for the decapitation of Chinese princes, generals, and high officials. Information which I possess convinces me that the Russians in Manchuria have been guilty of wholesale massacres of Chinese; men,



women, and children; and that some of the Allied troops on their way to Peking looted and massacred, and devastated the country. I say that in view of these facts it ill becomes the representatives of those Western Powers to be demanding human heads at the present moment in Peking, and delaying a settlement of this important question. At the present moment the way is blocked by the question as to which of the Chinese princes, generals, and high officials are to be decapitated and who are to escape. A report appears in the newspapers to-day in which we are told that when the Chinese Government reminded the representatives of the foreign Powers that all they promised to do was to punish those guilty of attacks upon foreigners according to their guilt, the representatives of the foreign Powers replied that the smallest punishment must be decapitation, but that if they wished to inflict a severer punishment on some of the guilty, they would suggest that they should quarter them. I hope there is no foundation for that statement, and I hope also that the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will be able to tell us to-night that, so far as the representatives of the British Government are concerned, they will be no parties to putting a condition of such a disgraceful and inhuman character to the Chinese people.

Another matter in connection with the settlement is the question of an indemnity. Now, I would venture to suggest to His Majesty's Government, having regard to the enormous commercial interests we have in China; the Government told us not long ago that out of a total foreign trade with China, of 70 millions the British Empire had no less than 43 millions sterling, or more than all the rest of the world put together; that rather than seek a huge indemnity in money from the Chinese Government and people it would be more to the interests of the British Empire, especially commercially considered, if we sought to have reparation in increased facilities-for trade. China is not an uncivilised empire. It had a civilisation of its own while European peoples were still in a barbarous condition. Even when there was an uprising to expel foreigners from the North of China, and when the Imperial Government of China was practically defunct, it is a fact that the government of the country throughout the greater part of the Chinese Empire went on just the same, under excellent provincial governments, which have a large measure of Home Rule, and which are guided by patriotic and enlightened statesmen, such as the Viceroys of the Yang-tsze Valley, who rule over a population of 118 millions. Then, as regards the south of China, I had a letter from one of the best informed men in Canton, who informed me that during the last six months matters have been quieter in the midst of this crisis than when I was there eighteen months ago. That being so, I hope His Majesty's Government will use their influence to try and set up a better government in China, which should include the Viceroys of the Yang-tsze region, Prince Ching, and other-enlightened Chinamen. If the Reform party in China were so afforded protection that they could show themselves, it would be found that they are not an inconsiderable body. If we are to have China open to trade; and the increased possibilities in that direction are almost unlimited; it must be by first setting up a more enlightened and better government in that country.

Now, it is perfectly certain that in connection with the settlement of the

Chinese crisis there will have to be a revision of the commercial treaties of foreign nations with China. The import duty to-day is nominally 5 per cent.; on some goods it amounts to more than 5 per cent., on others to less; but it averages distinctly under 5 per cent. I would suggest that it would be to the advantage of this country and to other European nations to give China fresh commercial treaties with an ad valorem duty of 10 per cent., which should, however, cover the likin duty of 2½ per cent. now charged. Under the new agreements which will be made in connection with the settlement of the Chinese crisis, I believe it would be perfectly practicable to rearrange the commercial treaties so that there should be only one import duty of 10 per cent., that the likin duty should be abolished, and that the new import duty should cover goods to whatever part of the Empire they might be sent. Part of the increased revenue should be allocated to provincial treasuries, because they need money for the more adequate payment of their officials, in order to give them less excuse for appropriating money passing through their hands, and also for expenditure on naval and military forces. Then, again, in connection with the settlement, we should insist on the complete opening up of the inland waterways to foreign trade. We had it announced in this House with a great flourish of trumpets that an agreement had been come to under which British ships could take British goods to every riverside town in China. In connection with the new settlement we should seek not only to have that object made complete and effective, but also that money should be expended by international conservancy boards for the removal of obstructions to navigation in the great commercial waterways of China, such as the Yang-tsze River, the West River, and other rivers. In that way we should confer great benefit on the people of China and also on the foreign nations trading with China.

With regard to railways, I venture to suggest that the foreign Powers ought, in connection with the settlement they are seeking to effect, to give a distinct understanding to the Chinese

Government that though railways built with foreign capital ought to remain under the control of those finding the money until the principal and interest are paid, yet that on certain stipulated conditions the Chinese Government should be able to take over any or all of these railways when they find themselves in a position to do so. What is the position with regard to railways in China? The only nation, so far as I can gather, which is standing still in regard to railway enterprise in China is the British nation; the nation which first opened up China to trade, and fought more than one great war to keep it open, and which up to now has had more trade with the Chinese Empire than all other nations put together. We are told that British subjects have obtained railway concessions amounting to 2,800 miles. What are the facts? At the present moment the Russians, Germans, Belgians, and French are all busily engaged in constructing railways in China. They are taking possession of the country in a military sense by railways, whereas British subjects, who have an enormous amount of concessions, are not at the present moment engaged in the construction of one single line in the whole of the Chinese Empire. Moreover, the foreign concessionaires are drawing their railway material from their respective

countries, to the detriment of the British producer. I ask, have our British commercial men so lost their spirit of enterprise that has built up our great Empire, and has maintained its prosperity hitherto, that they are content to allow foreign nations to supply China with a system of railways, while they themselves are left out in the cold altogether? I hope railway concessionnaires will receive every support of a right and proper kind from His Majesty's Government, and that every encouragement will be given to commercial enterprises. What is the reason why British investors are holding back? Take the case of the Chinese Northern Railways. They were arranged to be built with British capital on certain terms and conditions, but His Majesty's Government allowed Russia to interfere, and the terms of the contract were altered. Without as much as saying

By your leave Russia has taken possession of the railway from Yang-tsun to Shan-hai-kwan and Niu-chwang, which was being controlled by British engineers and British officials. Now we learn that they have handed over that railway to the Germans, who will perhaps shortly hand it back to British control. We are also told that there is a stipulation that the Russians are to have two fifths of the whole rolling stock on the railway from Yang-tsun to Shan-hai-kwan, and also a lien on the railway from Shan-hai-kwan to Niu-chwang, for money expended on its repair, and for working the traffic on it. We are not told what is to be done with the railway to Niu-chwang, the net earnings of which are a part security for British bondholders. I hope the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs will be able to give us an assurance on this subject, because the loan, £2,300,000, was advanced by the British investing public on the distinct understanding that the Foreign Office had taken a note of the transaction, and that they would uphold the rights of British bondholders in connection with this railway. Therefore, a special responsibility rests on His Majesty's Government in respect to it. I do not say that His Majesty's Government have not fully carried out their responsibility. I should only be too glad to hear that that is so, and that it has been done successfully. If British investors are reassured that their just rights and interests are effectively upheld by His Majesty's Government in China, then I believe that money will be forthcoming, and that British merchants and manufacturers of railway material will take a share in supplying China with a system of railway.

There is another question. We were told that there was no sacrifice that His Majesty's Government would not make to uphold British interests and treaty rights in China. What has happened in Niu-chwang, the only treaty port in Manchuria? Russia, which had only 1 per cent, of the trade in Niu-chwang, actually appropriated the civil and military administration of that port. They took possession of the Custom House, although there was a staff there under Sir Robert Hart who were perfectly capable of dealing with the matter, and the Russians are actually receiving the Customs duties to-day. What I desire to know from the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs is how it came about that England, who presumes to have control of the sea, was unable to send even one single gunboat to Niu-chwang to uphold the treaty rights of British subjects there? The trade of British subjects with Niu-chwang is no less than three

millions sterling a year, and yet it is under the civil and military administration of Russia alone, an administration assumed without asking the consent of the Treaty Consuls in Niu-chwang. It may be said that this was done under the military exigencies of the moment. In that case I should like to know what undertaking His Majesty's Government have received that Russia will speedily evacuate Niu-chwang, that the collection of the Customs will be returned into the hands of the representatives of Sir Robert Hart, and that the administration of the port will be resumed by the Chinese Government. The question before us is whether His Majesty's Government will take full advantage of the opportunity now presented to them in connection with the settlement of the crisis in China to obtain those increased facilities for trade to which I have referred, and other facilities, in order that we as a nation may enjoy in the future our fair share of the trade with that great Empire. Now the doubtful element in the situation appears to me to be what is the policy of Russia. Russia appears to be the only Power that is going to gain any advantage whatever from the recent Chinese crisis. England, so far as I can see, has lost something and gained nothing. Russia, on the other hand, is in military occupation of the great and rich province of Manchuria, Germany is paramount in Shantung, while we have conceded equal rights to those nations in the Yang-tsze basin, which was formerly supposed to be our special sphere of influence, in which the British enjoyed special preferential rights. That is no longer so. The action of Russia seems to me to be the great difficulty in the way of a speedy and satisfactory settlement with China. I am not antagonistic to Russia at all. I am pro-British, of course, but I do not object to co-operation with Russia on fair and reasonable lines. But His Majesty's Government have lost opportunity after opportunity of co-operating with Russia. They lost an opportunity of securing a friendly understanding with Russia when they withdrew our ships in a humiliating fashion from Port Arthur. That golden opportunity has gone never to return. At the present moment we find that though Russia has massacred thousands of men, women, and children in Manchuria, yet the Russian Government is now posing as the friend of the Chinese Government, and I am afraid, encouraging them to oppose the demands that Europe is at present making on them. We have heard that the Chinese Ambassador recently paid a visit to Livadia, and was there received with special honour, that he had important interviews with Count Lamsdorff, no doubt with reference to the present situation in China. Now, I submit that for Russia to take this action in regard to the representative of China, at a time when China has given no reparation for the unparalleled and scandalous attack on the representatives of the Foreign Powers in Peking, means that Russia is seeking to curry favour with the Chinese Government behind the back of Europe, and at the expense of the other civilised Powers. There is no question that in connection with this Chinese settlement His Majesty's Government have a most difficult task in front of them, and I deeply regret that having 200,000 men locked up in South Africa has to a certain extent tied our hands; but I believe that a greater increase in trade can be obtained from one of the provinces of China than can be got from the whole of South Africa for generations, and therefore I submit the Chinese question is of enormous

importance. I have supported His Majesty's Government in the prosecution of the war in South Africa, but I hold that we no longer possess those qualities of courage and enterprise that our forefathers had if we allow our difficulties in South Africa to hinder us from resolutely maintaining and upholding our just commercial treaty rights and interests in China.

\*MR. MOON (St. Pancras, N.): In the crisis at present existing in China it is difficult to formulate any clear or satisfactory policy. A communication, however, was recently published giving the views of two of the great Viceroy's to whom the hon. Member has just referred. They both regard the Boxers as riff-raff, who were set on to attack Christians and Europeans. There is some slight consolation in that view. There are some who hold the opinion that we ought to leave China severely alone. That is not the view of Her Majesty's Government. They have decided that China shall not be left alone, but that a certain line of policy should be adopted with regard to that country.

The point, however, to which I wish to direct attention is the question of Niu-chwang. Niu-chwang is one of the few treaty ports in the north. On the 27th July last-that treaty port was entered in an exceedingly high-handed way by Russia, and, as the hon. Member has said, the custom house was appropriated and the customs dues are now being collected by Russian officials. What I would ask the noble Lord to explain is; if it is not contrary to any point of public policy; how that fits in with the first Clause of the Anglo-German Agreement, ratified on the 16th October? The First Clause-says;

"It is a matter of joint and permanent international interest that the ports on the rivers and littoral of China should remain free and open to trade and to every other legitimate form of economic activity for the nationals of all countries without distinction; and the two Governments agree on their part to uphold the same for all Chinese territory as far as they can exercise influence."

An influential journal published on the Rhine, which is supposed to enjoy official advantages, has suggested that the phrase "as far as they can exercise influence" was intended to exclude Niu-chwang. Perhaps the noble Lord will be able to inform the House if there is any arrangement with Russia regarding the matter. I think possibly we may take comfort from the fact that so early a date has been fixed for handing back the Shan-hai-kwan railway to British management. That is perhaps an augury that His Majesty's Government may have made a no less satisfactory arrangement with regard to Niu-chwang.

\*The UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Viscount CRANBORNE, Rochester): I am afraid I shall have some little difficulty, in the very short time that remains before the adjournment, in dealing with the very varied topics laid before us most temperately by the hon. Gentleman opposite and my hon. friend. I think in many of his observations the hon. Gentleman opposite did not really fully realise what the avowed policy of our Government in China has always been. It has not been an aggressive policy, and, perhaps for that very reason, it has not been a very attractive policy. It would have been exceedingly easy at one time for the Government to have taken up a very different attitude which would, no doubt, have earned them;the Government of that day;cheers in

many quarters of the House. But they purposely and deliberately adopted a different policy; and they did so because they were conscious that an atmosphere of unrest in China was the most detrimental thing to British interests that could possibly be imagined. The spirit which actuated them has been continued down to the present day. I do not say that our policy was weak, but I say it was not aggressive. That policy found its most recent expression in the Anglo-German Agreement to which the hon. Gentleman opposite and my hon. friend have referred. I do not propose to trouble the House at any length with that Agreement, because it was my fortune to make observations on it last session; but I was astonished to find that the hon. Gentleman opposite did not appear to approve of the Anglo-German Agreement. I certainly had, perhaps erroneously, gathered the idea last December that that Agreement was greeted with approval in nearly every part of the House. As I stated at the time, it was not a very great step forward, but it was a very distinct step forward in the direction of the open door and in the direction of preserving the territorial integrity of China.

\*MR. JOSEPH WALTON: What I said was that, while it gave to other Powers the open door in the Yang-tsze region, it did not secure us the open door either in Manchuria or Shantung, and therefore to that extent the Government had failed to maintain the open door in China.

\*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I will read the article;

"It is a matter of joint and permanent international interest that the ports on the rivers and littoral of China should remain free and open to trade and to every other legitimate form of economic activity for the nationals of all countries without distinction, and the two Governments agree on their part to uphold the same for all Chinese territory as far as they can exercise influence."

It is clearly, as I stated last December, limited in scope; it is not complete, but it is perfectly plain; and I do not think it is necessary for us to refer to the speech of any foreign statesman, as the hon. Gentleman did, in order to explain what the plain meaning of the language in the article sufficiently shows.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: Is Manchuria open?

\*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: So far as we know, it is open. But it is quite clear that in one sense Manchuria is not open any more than many other parts of China, for during a time of trouble and temporary occupation of the territory it is perfectly clear the ordinary processes of commercial enterprise cannot be carried on. After all, we are agreed; and it is a great thing to mark what the House is agreed about; that the main and principal interest of England and China is a commercial interest; and it is that interest which the Government have perpetually borne in mind. When the crisis began in China an immediate duty took precedence of every other. It was necessary to vindicate in China the position of our country and to make it perfectly clear to the world and the Chinese that outrages committed against British subjects, and most of all against the sacred person of our envoy, should not remain unpunished. I observe on the part of the hon. Gentleman opposite a disposition to minimise the crimes of the Chinese. He apologised for them in several ways. He spoke of the attitude of the Powers

towards China as outrageous. I am not dealing with the question as to whether outrages have been committed by particular troops ;certainly not by our troops ;but he seemed to think that the general attitude of the Powers as manifested by the action of their diplomatic representatives towards the Chinese in the matter of

punishment was outrageous. I think that is a most astonishing attitude to take. My opinion is that the Powers have not been too severe, but that there has been an inclination in many quarters to be far too lenient. I cannot conceive any action of a constituted Government which is more reprehensible than the outrages, not unmixed with treachery, which were levelled not merely at the heads of private individuals under the protection of Great Britain, but against their diplomatic representatives, who by every code, civilised and uncivilised, are sacred, and by none more than the code the Chinese themselves possess. I have nothing to say except as regards the action of the British Government and the British troops. The British Government have a great cause of quarrel of the most serious kind against the Chinese; and I think we should have been lamentably wanting in our duty if we had not made it clear that the punishment to be meted out to the criminals in China should, so far as our opinion goes, be of an exemplary character. I admit it was not without a certain feeling of misgiving as to the success of our efforts to obtain exemplary punishment of these high-placed delinquents that we entered upon the negotiations, but I am certain the punishments we demanded were not excessive and that they ought to have been;and so far as our influence was concerned they were;consistently pressed upon the Chinese Government. But in pressing these punishments upon the Chinese Government we had to be clear that we should not commit ourselves in such a way as to lose control of our own conduct. It was suggested, for instance, that in order to enforce the wishes of Great Britain and the other members of the allied Powers upon the Chinese Government expeditions should be undertaken into the interior of China of a warlike character. That, I think, would have a most disastrous policy, and anything which bound us so irretrievably to insisting upon particular measures for securing punishment of that kind appeared to us to be objectionable. Still, we did require some kind of sanction, and we were fortunate enough to propose to the-Powers;by whom it was accepted;a form of language by which it was made clear to the Chinese that unless they conformed to the wishes of the Powers the latter would individually and collectively hold themselves free to remain in occupation of their territory, and in that way have some sanction for the demands made upon them. But, as I have said, the great interest of Great Britain in China is commercial. The hon. Gentleman opposite complained of the delay which had characterised the proceedings of the Powers in China. That delay is undoubtedly of a very serious kind.

It being midnight, the debate stood) adjourned.

Debate to be resumed upon Monday next.

Adjourned at one minute after Twelve of the clock till Monday next.

By virtue of an Order made this day, I do appoint John Bruce Nichols and John Cradock Morgan Nichols to print the Votes and Proceedings of this House.

WILLIAM COURT GULLY.  
Speaker.