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HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Tuesday, 2nd April, 1901.

The House, met at Two of the clock.

PRIVATE BILL BUSINESS.

GRAVESEND GAS BILL;NEATH HARBOUR BILL.

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

PRIVATE BILLS.

Ordered, That Standing Orders 39, 129, and 230 be suspended, and that the time for depositing Petitions and Memorials against Private Bills, or against any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, and for depositing duplicates of any Documents relating to any Bill to confirm any Provisional Order or Provisional Certificate, be extended to the first day on which the House shall sit after the Recess.:(The Chairman of Ways and Means.)

NEW STANDING ORDER (PETITIONS AGAINST RIVER CONSERVANCY BILLS).

\*THE CHAIRMAN OF WAYS AND MEANS (Mr. J. W. LOWTHER, Cumberland, Penrith) said he had to ask the House to amend the Standing Orders on a point which was very strongly brought under the notice of hon. Members in connection with the Wolverhampton Water Bill,&#x2020; notably by the speech of the hon. Member for North Shropshire. The effect of the proposed new Standing Order would be that any landowner or conservancy body charged with the maintenance of the channel of a river, and with the duty of seeing that water continued to flow down a particular course, would be entitled, on obtaining the consent of the Court of Referees, to put in an appearance against any Bill that proposed to interfere with any underground water, as was the case in the Wolverhampton Bill. In that scheme the Corporation proposed to sink a number of deep wells, the result of which it was alleged would have been to have taken water from a very large district. None of the occupiers of that &#x2020; See preceding volume of Debates, p. 1280.

district would under the rules of the House have been able to appear against the Bill. It seemed to him that that was unjust, and therefore, with the consent of the members of the Court of Referees, he had drafted this Standing Order. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the following be a new Standing Order to follow Standing Order 134C.;

134D. Ordered, Where any owner, lessee, or occupier, or where any conservancy or other authority charged with the control of river or other waters, petitions against a Bill alleging that under its provisions any water or water supply of which they may legally avail themselves will be diminished or injuriously affected, it shall be competent to the Referees on Private Bills, if they think fit, to admit the petitioners to be heard against the Bill or any part thereof.:(The Chairman of Ways and Means.)

MR. LLOYD-GEORGE (Carnarvon Boroughs) said he agreed that the Amendment was a desirable one, but he would like to know, if a town like Wolverhampton proposed to take water from a whole county, whether the county council, acting in the interests of the inhabitants, would be allowed to petition against the Bill,

which affected their water-shed area.

\*MR. J. W. LOWTHER: They have an absolute power already to appear without going before the Court of Referees.

MR. BROADHURST (Leicestershire): And would district councils have like powers?

\*MR. J. W. LOWTHER: I am not quite certain; I rather think they have already.

\*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said that as Chairman of the Canal Association he supported the new Standing Order, because he believed it would greatly assist in safeguarding our water communications.

Question put and agreed to.

Ordered, That the said Order be a Standing Order of the House.

DRAINAGE AND IMPROVEMENT OF LANDS (IRELAND) PROVISIONAL ORDER BILL.

Read a second time, and committed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2).

Bill to confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Bilston, Buxton, Leicester (two), Milton-next-Sittingbourne, Neath, and Newton-in-Mackerfield, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Grant Lawson and Mr. Long.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROVISIONAL ORDERS (No. 2) BILL.

"To confirm certain Provisional Orders of the Local Government Board relating to Bilston, Buxton, Leicester (two), Milton-next-Sittingbourne, Neath, and Newton-in-Mackerfield," presented accordingly, and read the first time; to be referred to the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills, and to be printed. [Bill 140.]

LEATHERHEAD GAS BILL.

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

GAS UNDERTAKINGS.

Return ordered, "relating to all authorised Gas Undertakings in the United Kingdom, other than those of Local Authorities, for the year ended the 31st day of December 1900 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 143, of Session 1900.);"(Mr. Gerald Balfour.)

GAS UNDERTAKINGS (LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Return ordered, "relating to all author bed Gas Undertakings in the United Kingdom belonging to Local Authorities for the year ended the 25th day of March. 1901 (in continuation of Parliamentary Paper, No. 144, of Session 1900).";(Mr. Gerald Balfour.)

ELECTRIC LIGHTING PROVISIONAL ORDERS.

Copies ordered, "of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 2 Bill):"

"Of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 3) Bill:"

"Of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 4) Bill:"

"And, of Memorandum stating the nature of the Proposals contained in the Provisional Orders included in the Electric Lighting Provisional Orders (No. 5)

Bill.";(Mr. Gerald Balfour.)

#### DUBLIN CORPORATION BILL.

Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Dublin Corporation Bill, with respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.:(Mr. Wyndham.)

#### ELECTRIC LIGHTING (LONDON) BILL.

Ordered, That the Examiners of Petitions for Private Bills do examine the Electric Lighting (London) Bill, with, respect to compliance with the Standing Orders relative to Private Bills.:(Mr. Gerald Balfour.)

#### PETITIONS.

#### AGRICULTURAL RATES ACT, 1890.

Petitions from Woolwich, in favour of extension if re-enacted; to lie upon the Table.

#### COAL MIXES (EMPLOYMENT) BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Seymour; Beighton; Waterloo Main; Dunnikier; Dysart; Oldham; Dennyloanhead; Banknock; Wharnccliffe Silkstone; Hoyland Silkstone; Wath Main; Batley; Denby Grange; Wakefield Manor; Foxholes; Whitwood Mere; Netherton; Good Hope; Bowers (No. 3); Newland; Hightown; Clifton; Blackrod; Cadely Main; Roundwood; Heanor; Old Thornccliffe (No. 2); Loscoe; and Woolley Moor Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

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

Petitions in favour, from Aberdeen and Dundee; to lie upon the Table.

#### ELEMENTARY EDUCATION (HIGHER GRADE AND EVENING CONTINUATION SCHOOLS).

Petitions for alteration of Law, from Holy well; Clayton; Heekmondwike; and Barrow-in-Furness; to lie upon the Table.

#### LOCAL AUTHORITIES OFFICERS' SUPERANNUATION BILL.

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

#### MINES (EIGHT HOURS) BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Beighton; Clifton; Seymour; Dunnikier; Dysart; Dennyloanhead; Banknock; Wharnccliffe Silkstone; Wath Main; Batley (No. 1); Chickenley Heath; Soothill Wood; Newland; Bowers (No. 3); Good Hope; Netherton; Whitwood Mere; Foxholes; Denby Grange; East Cannock (Nos. 1, 2, and 3,); Cannock Old Coppice; Wyrley; Hightown Liversedge Loscoe; Cannock Chase (two); Great Britain; Leacroft; Cannock Chase (Nos. 2, 3, and 5); West Cannock; Brereton; Blackrod; Cadeby Main; Roundwood; Heanor; Kiveton Park; and Woolley Moor Collieries; to lie upon the Table.

#### SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN BILL.

Petitions in favour, from St. Helens (two); Chichester; Sutton; Portsmouth; Bourne; Haslingden; Coedpoeth (three); Rhosymedre; Milborne Port; Chatham (four); Manchester (four); Hardwick; Cornal Wood; Mountain Ash; Billingham (two); Nottingham; New Brompton; Kilmarnock; Dundee; Cefn Coed; and Poplar; to lie upon the Table.

#### SALE OF INTOXICATING LIQUORS TO CHILDREN (SCOTLAND) BILL.

Petitions in favour, from Birsay and Harray; Aberdeen; Lintrathen; Hawick; Stewarton; Burntisland; Dysart; Gallatown; Kirkcaldy; Dunblane and Lecroft;

Crieff; and Edinburgh; to lie upon the Table.

RETURNS, REPORTS, ETC.

TRAWL VESSELS (PROSECUTIONS).

Return [presented 22nd March] to be printed. [No. 116.]

AGRICULTURAL RATES ACT, 1896.

Return presented, relative thereto [Ordered 7th March; Mr. Henry Hobhouse]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 117.]

POLICE (SCOTLAND).

Copy presented, of Forty-third Annual Report of His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary for Scotland, being for the year ended 31st December, 1900 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

UNIVERSITIES (SCOTLAND) ACT, 1889, (ORDNANCE).

Copy presented, of University Court Ordinance No. V. (Glasgow, No. 1) (Regulations for Degrees in Science in Agriculture) [by Act]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 118.]

TRADE (FOREIGN COUNTRIES AND BRITISH POSSESSIONS).

Copy presented, of Annual Statement of the Trade of the United Kingdom with Foreign Countries and British Possessions for 1900 [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

COAL EXPORTS, ETC.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 18th February; Mr. D. A. Thomas]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 119.]

RAILWAY, ETC., BILLS.

Return presented, relative thereto [ordered 1st April; Mr. Gerald Balfour]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 120.]

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

Thames Conservancy.; General Report and Accounts of the Conservators for 1900 [by Act]; to be printed. [No. 121.]

QUESTIONS.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR; INQUIRY INTO CONDUCT AND OPERATIONS.

MR. ALFRED DAVIES (Carmarthen Boroughs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury if he can state to the House what is the reference to the Committee or other body for inquiring into the conduct of the war, and the date or probable date that the inquiry will take place.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR, Manchester, E.): I think the hon. Gentleman put exactly the same question a week ago. I have nothing to add to the answer I then gave.

MR. ALFRED DAVIES: Will the right hon. Gentleman answer the question with reference to reference? I said nothing as to that in my previous question.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: It would be most irregular to answer a question as to the terms of the reference until the time for the appointment of the Committee is approaching.

REINFORCEMENTS DESPATCHED SINCE 1ST JANUARY.

SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can give the numbers of drafts and reinforcements landed in South Africa since the 1st January.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The numbers landed in South Africa since 1st January are 1,052 officers and 20,306 non-commissioned officers and men; 720 officers and 21,580 men are still at sea.

REPORTED DEMAND BY LORD KITCHENER FOR FURTHER REINFORCEMENTS.

MR. SCHWANN (Manchester, N.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government has received from Lord Kitchener a demand for 30,000 more men, as well as regular monthly drafts.

MR. BRODRICK: No, Sir.

MR. SCHWANN: Am I to understand that Lord Kitchener does not agree with the statement of

The Times correspondent;

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order&#x0021;

PEACE NEGOTIATIONS WITH GENERAL BOTHA.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.): I beg to ask whether instructions were sent to Lord Kitchener by the Government to

guide him in the negotiations with General Botha prior to the interview at Middelburg, and whether they could be laid on the Table of the House.

MR. BRODRICK: I answered this question categorically yesterday.&#x2020; The Government gave no definite instructions to Lord Kitchener before meeting General Botha, for the best of all reasons, that General Botha proposed to meet Lord Kitchener, and the Government were not in a position to know any of the proposals which General Botha might make. It was obviously impossible in these circumstances to instruct Lord Kitchener.

ALLEGED BRITISH RECRUITING IN GERMANY AND ITALY.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN (Cork): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether he can state the number of the recent reinforcements sent to South Africa which were recruited on the Continent of Europe; whether the recruiting for the British Army in South Africa is still going on in Germany and Italy; and whether his attention has been called to the statement in the Frankischer Kurier newspaper, of Nuremberg, 14th March, respecting the recruiting by English agents in Germany and Southern Italy for the English Army in South Africa.

MR. BRODRICK: The hon. Member drew my attention to an article in the newspaper mentioned. There is no foundation whatever for the statement made.

EAST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT;FIELD ALLOWANCES.

MR. HERMON-HODGE (Oxon, Henley): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether field allowance has yet been granted to officers and men of the East Yorkshire Regiment serving with the

8th Division; and, if not, can he state on what grounds it has been withheld.

MR. BRODRICK: This question arises, I think, from a statement made in this House by the hon. Member for Tonbridge on the authority of a paragraph in The Times. I am glad to have opportunity of contradicting the statement.

&#x2020; See page 333.

Men are never granted field allowance, I but I have myself seen the receipts of the various officers for the allowances in question.

ARMY REFORM;THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS.

MR. PIRIE: May I ask whether the House will be enabled to discuss any matter of detail on the resolution dealing with Army reform in the same way as it would be able to discuss the statement of the Secretary for War?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The understanding was that time should be given outside the Estimates for discussing fully the general principles of my right hon. friend's scheme. That will be adequately carried out by the resolution put on the Paper.

INSPECTOR GENERAL OF RECRUITING'S REPORT.

\*SIR CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Annual Report of the Inspector General of Recruiting has been submitted to the Secretary of State, and when it will be circulated.

MR. BRODRICK: The Report has not yet been submitted; I, however, hope to receive it shortly.

\*SIR CHARLES DILKE: Will it be circulated before the debate on the Army Reorganisation resolution?

MR. BRODRICK: I hope so.

VOLUNTEER ARTILLERY ARMAMENTS.

MR. HOLLAND (Yorkshire, W. R. Rotherham): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War if he is aware that in the Tokio Museum of Arms there is now on view an Armstrong R.B.L. gun as a curiosity in the way of ancient and obsolete weapons, and whether, seeing that this is the gun with which our Volunteer artillery in many districts is at present armed, he will say when it will be replaced by a more modern weapon.

MR. BRODRICK: I have no information relating to this museum. As I have told the House on several occasions the Volunteer artillery will be rearmed with more modern guns.

ATTESTATION OF RECRUITS; AGE REGULATIONS.

MR. PIRIE: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether, seeing that the oath of allegiance is the only oath taken by the recruit on attestation, and in view of the fact that it has nothing to do with the question of his age, if he can explain what is the oath taken by the recruit which is held by the authorities as sufficient for reckoning his true age for Army service; and can he state what are the obstacles which prevent a system being adopted which would ensure punishment on conviction for any false statement as to age on the part of the recruit.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE WAR OFFICE (Lord STANLEY, Lancashire, Westthoughton): On attestation the recruit signs a solemn declaration that the answers he has made to the various questions put are true. This declaration is signed also by a witness. As a man's actual age is held not to be a matter within his personal knowledge, it is not considered possible to take proceedings against him for a false answer.

MR. PIRIE: But the noble Lord in a former answer said the age given by a recruit on oath was held to be the true age for army purposes.

LORD STANLEY: I unfortunately used the word "oath" instead of "solemn declaration."

MR. PIRIE: Is the noble Lord aware that while a recruit may be punished for false answers, the question of age is not one of them?

[No answer was given.]

CAVALRY COMMISSIONS;PHYSICAL QUALIFICATIONS.

MR. ABEL SMITH (Hertfordshire, Hertford): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether it is intended to adhere to the regulations at present in force with regard to the limits of weight and height of candidates for commissions in cavalry regiments, and whether special consideration can be given to candidates who have proved their fitness by service in the Militia or otherwise.

LORD STANLEY: The physical standards for the cavalry are under consideration.

PIMLICO ARMY CLOTHING DEPARTMENT;OVERTIME PAY.

CAPTAIN NORTON (Newington, W.): I beg to ask the Financial Secretary to the War Office if he can state whether the petition of the employees in the Royal Army Clothing Department, Pimlico, dealing with the question of the stoppage of extra pay for overtime, has been received and considered; and what decision, if any, has been arrived at.

LORD STANLEY: Petitions from the employees in the Royal Army Clothing Department have been received and are under consideration.

CHANGES IN THE KING'S REGULATIONS.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether before reaching Clause 4 in the Army (Annual) Bill in Committee, he will be prepared to state generally the nature of the proposed changes in the King's Regulations.

MR. BRODRICK: I have stated the general nature of these changes. I cannot undertake to give all the details.

CAPTAIN NORTON: I am under the impression that the right hon. Gentleman gave us no information on the point.

H.M.S. "THUNDERER";GUN DISABLEMENT.

SIR CHARLES DILKE: I beg to ask the Secretary to the Admiralty whether he can state what was the nature of the accident to the guns of H.M.S. "Thunderer," as revealed by the recent inquiry.

\*THE CIVIL LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY (Mr. PRETYMAN, Suffolk, Woodbridge): Whilst at target practice with half charges and Palliser shells, two of the 10-inch breech-loading guns in the "Thunderer" were temporarily disabled by a portion of the shells being jammed in the bore of the gun, and so preventing loading being carried out. The accident was caused through the projectiles slipping back into the chamber after being rammed home. The guns were in no way injured. Such an occurrence could not take place in action, when full charges and steel projectiles would be used, as the projectile could not slip back and the gas pressure would be much higher.

INDIAN IRRIGATION SCHEME.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS (Denbighshire, W.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether his attention has been directed to the reference made by Lord Curzon, in his speech at the Legislative Council on the 27th ult, to the necessity of initiating a positive advance in the irrigation system of the various provinces of India; and whether, in view of the importance of the question, he will lay upon the Table of the House the reports of the engineers by which the action of the Government of India in this respect will be guided.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INDIA (Lord G. HAMILTON, Middlesex, Baling): I have seen the report of Lord Curzon's speech, which repeats the views I have several times expressed upon the same subject. I will see if a Blue-book upon irrigation can be compiled, as it is very desirable that there should be a clearer idea in certain quarters of what can and cannot be done by the extension of irrigation schemes in India.

#### INDIAN FINANCE.

MR. NORMAN (Wolverhampton, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for India whether consideration has been given to the suggestion by the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure, expressed in paragraph 69 of its unanimous Report, in support of proposals previously made, that the Indian financial year might end on 31st December, in order that the Indian accounts may be laid before Parliament at an earlier date than is now practicable, and that discussion of Indian finance earlier in each session may be made possible; and what decision has been reached; and at what date it is expected that the current Financial Statement and Accounts placed before the Supreme Legislative Council at Calcutta on 20th March will be presented to Parliament.

LORD G. HAMILTON: (1) A suggestion that the Indian financial year should be altered so as to end on the 31st of December was made some time ago; but a Select Committee of this House, in their Report of 1873, condemned it as undesirable. I have communicated to the Government of India the similar suggestion of the Royal Commission, but I do not anticipate that it will be found practicable to adopt it. (2) Special instructions have been given for the early transmission of a sufficient number of copies of the Indian Financial Statement to meet the demand of Members, and I hope that they may arrive early in May.

#### CHINA; SIEGE OF TIENTSIN; HEROISM OF MR. JAMES WATTS.

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for War whether the Government have in any way acknowledged the service rendered by Mr. James Watts, a British subject, who, during the recent siege of Tientsin, rode from there to Taku, through a country swarming with Boxers, to convey information to Admiral Bruce as to the serious state of affairs then prevailing at Tientsin; and whether the German Government has decorated Mr. Watts.

\*THE UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Viscount CRANBORNE, Rochester): His Majesty's Government have expressed to Mr. Watts their high appreciation of the gallant and distinguished service rendered by him to the European community at Tientsin during the siege, but he is, unfortunately, not eligible by existing warrants for any British Order or medal. The German Emperor has signified his desire to confer a medal upon Mr. Watts.

#### MANCHURIA RUSSO; CHINESE AGREEMENT.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I beg to ask the Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether he can now give the House any definite information as to the Russo-Chinese Agreement regarding Manchuria, and especially as to whether His Majesty's Government is supporting the Chinese Government in their refusal to sign this Agreement.

\*VISCOUNT CRANBORNE: I am not able to add anything to that which I stated in



Thursday in regard to Manchuria &#x2020;

#### ROYAL PROCLAMATION AGAINST VICE AND IMMORALITY.

MR. H. D. GREENE (Shrewsbury): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he can say whether His Majesty has issued a proclamation against vice and immorality; and, if so, whether it will be distributed to clerks of the peace in time for it to be read at the approaching quarter sessions; and whether, having regard to the debate in this House in 1860, and to the Order in Council of June, 1884, dispensing with the reading of Her late Majesty's proclamation at assizes, he will consider the expediency of advising His Majesty's not to require a proclamation against vice and immorality to be read at courts of quarter sessions.

\*THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE HOME DEPARTMENT (Mr. RITCHIE, Croydon): No such proclamation has been issued.

#### FISHERY DISTURBANCES AT ST. IVES.

\*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his attention has been called to certain occurrences in the neighbourhood of St. Ives indicating a possible renewal of the regrettable disturbances in 1896; and whether he will take immediate action to warn the locality to abstain from unlawful acts, and make all necessary and complete arrangements to promptly enforce the law for the protection of the persons and property of British subjects pursuing their lawful calling in British waters.

\*MR. RITCHIE: I have heard nothing of this matter recently. The responsibility for preserving the peace rests with the local authorities, and I have no reason to doubt that they will take all proper steps for this purpose.

#### LEICESTER VACCINATION PROSECUTIONS.

\*SIR JOHN ROLLESTON (Leicester): I beg to ask the President of the Local &#x2020; See pages 178.

Government Board whether he is aware that, after an interval of sixteen years, a number of prosecutions under the Vaccination Acts are now taking place at Leicester; and whether, since the vaccination officer has received no instructions to prosecute from the board of guardians, this officer is acting under direct instructions from the Local Government Board; if so, will he say under what authority the Local Government Board gives such instructions, and if these instructions include proceedings against the parents of the 60,000 children who are liable to them; if so, whether he will give notification of his intention to the local authorities, in order that precautions may be taken to avoid any breach of the peace that might result from prosecutions on so large a scale.

THE SECRETARY TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOARD (Mr. GRANT LAWSON, Yorkshire, N.R. Thirsk): I am aware that steps are being taken with a view to enforcing the Vaccination Acts at Leicester. It is the duty of the vaccination officer to take all reasonable steps to put the Acts in force without any instructions from the guardians or the Local Government Board. The Board, through one of their inspectors, have reminded the vaccination officer of his duty in this matter, but they have given him no instructions as regards the particular cases referred to. I understand that the vaccination officer is only proceeding in a limited

number of instances, and that these are cases of recent default in complying with the law.

\*SIR JOHN ROLLESTON: May I ask whether the Local Government Board will give their inspector instructions to order the prosecutions to be taken more methodically, and to be directed against the mayor, magistrates, and town councillors, who are equally liable and who ought to know better instead of against;

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order&#x0021;

MR. GRANT LAWSON: I may answer the first part of the question, as it gives rather a wrong impression. The inspector does not make the selection of those who are to be prosecuted. That is done by the vaccination officer, whose duty it is to see that the law is enforced, and therefore the inspector cannot be "more methodical" in his selection.

ENGINE EXPLOSION ON LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE RAILWAY.

\*MR. BELL (Derby): I beg to ask the President of the Board of Trade whether he is now prepared to state the effect of the Board of Trade Inspector's Report on the explosion, on 11th March last, of engine 676 on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, whereby two men lost their lives; whether he is aware that a sister engine. No.

395, since tested, has revealed weakness of the same character as led to the fatal explosion above referred to, and that the test to which engine 676 was put was 220 lbs. only, and a working pressure of 175 lbs.; and whether, seeing that forty engines of the same make are in use on this railway, he will, in the interest of the public safety, order a special inspection of the boilers of these engines.

MR. GRANT LAWSON: No, Sir: my right hon. friend has not yet received the inspecting officer's report. If the Board of Trade are advised that the type of engine in question is open to the criticisms made by the hon. Member the Board will communicate with the company on the subject.

NOTTINGHAM LACE MARKET TELEGRAPHIC FACILITIES.

MR. BOND (Nottingham, E.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether the Postmaster General is now prepared to grant greater facilities to the business quarter of Nottingham known as the Lace Market, either by making the office in Stoney Street, called the Carlton Street Office, into a telegraph office, or in some other way: and whether he is aware that loss and inconvenience are being occasioned to business men by the withholding of the accommodation desired.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY (Mr. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN, Worcestershire, E.

): The question of opening a telegraph office near the Lace Market at Nottingham has been carefully considered by the Postmaster

General, and he takes the same view as his predecessor, namely, that the distance from the head office is not sufficient to justify the provision of the proposed additional accommodation, He is not aware that loss or inconvenience is caused by the present arrangement, and he would point out that every telegram

handed in at such an office as the hon. Member suggests would be subject to an additional transmission and encounter an additional risk of error and delay.

#### TELEPHONIC ARRANGEMENTS IN THE EASTERN COUNTIES.

SIR HARRY BULLARD (Norwich): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that at the present time there are delays in telephoning to Norwich and the Eastern Counties; and whether he will consider the question of giving increased trunk line communication to those places.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: New direct lines from Norwich, Ipswich, and Cambridge to London and between Norwich and Yarmouth were brought into use in the latter part of last year, and there is no considerable delay at present in messages to and from the Eastern Counties under normal circumstances, though there have been frequent interruptions owing to storms during the last three months. The Postmaster General has under consideration the provision of additional direct lines from London to Ware, Chelmsford, Cambridge, and Norwich, with a view to the improvement of communication, not only with those places, but also with other places with which they are in communication.

#### HYDESCHOOL BOARD PROSECUTIONS.

MR. ASHTON (Bedfordshire, Luton): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether his attention has been called to the cases of F. Samuels, who was fined, and F. Dawson, who was sent to prison, last December, for not sending their children to school at Hyde, Cheshire; whether he is aware that these men had applied for and been refused free places at George Street School, Hyde, near which they lived: that they had been referred by the School Attendance Committee for free places to the Roman Catholic School; and that the Board of Education had admitted that that school is not within a reasonable distance; whether he is aware that since the date of those occurrences about one hundred free places have been offered in the borough, whereas there are 1,000 applications for free places: and whether the Board of Education will take steps to enforce the provision of sufficient free places according to law.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir J. GORST, Cambridge University): The answer to paragraph 1 is in the affirmative, but the persons named were cautioned several times by the Attendance Committee before they were summoned. The answer to paragraph 2 is also in the affirmative, except to the last sentence, which is in the negative. In reply to paragraph 3, there are before the Board of Education 368 applications for free places, not directly from the parents, but from the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. The answer to paragraph 4 is in the affirmative.

#### BOLTON PUPIL TEACHER CENTRAL CLASSES.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education, having regard to the fact that under date 20th September, 1899, the Board of Education sanctioned, under Paragraph XIV. (a), Science and Art Directory, a scheme for payment at evening rates towards the Bolton Pupil Teacher Central (Masses, whether he can explain why such payment has nevertheless been refused for subjects other than chemistry.

SIR J. GORST: I am informed that the payment has not been refused for subjects other than chemistry, as stated in the question, but I will make further inquiry into the matter.

#### EVENING CONTINUATION SCHOOLS IN LONDON.

MR. THORNTON (Clapham): I beg to ask the Vice-President of the Committee of Council on Education whether, owing to the decision in the appeal upon *Hamilton v. Cockerton*, he will take steps to preserve the privileges of students in the Evening Continuation Schools of the London School Board pending the final decision of the House of Lords.

SIR J. GORST: The Board of Education have no power to authorise an illegal appropriation of rates, but so far as their own action is concerned they will, as I have several times already stated, continue to pay grants to evening schools as heretofore, pending the final decision of the House of Lords.

MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): Will the right hon. Gentleman amend the Evening Continuation Schools Code so as to legalise the instruction given in them?

SIR J. GORST: I must ask for notice of that.

#### PORT GLASGOW PUBLIC BATHS; SUNDAY CLOSING.

MR. J. F. X. O'BRIEN: I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he is aware that Port Glasgow Town Council has decided to close the public baths on all Sundays throughout the year, and whether, in the interests of public health, and particularly in view of the prevalence of small-pox in the West of Scotland, he will recommend the Port Glasgow Local Authority to cause the baths to be opened for a reasonable time every Sunday morning.

\*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A. GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire) I am informed by the Local Government Board for Scotland that there has not been a single case of small-pox in Port Glasgow. If there had been any outbreak there or in the immediate vicinity, there would have been good reason for closing the baths in the interests of public health, not on Sundays only, but throughout the week also. But the Board are informed that the resolution to close the baths on Sundays was with the view to keep down Sunday labour, and because the Town Council considered that the Sunday use of the baths did not warrant their being kept open. The matter, however, is to be reconsidered.

#### SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY CLASS FEES.

MR. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs): I beg to ask the Lord Advocate whether he can state, when the Return of the Class Fees payable in the Universities of Scotland may be expected to be issued.

\*MR. A. GRAHAM MURRAY: The Return referred to by the hon. and learned Member is now in the hands of the Parliamentary printer, and will be issued as soon as possible.

#### CLIFDEN BAY FISHERIES.

MR. O'MALLEY (Galway, Connemara): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether, in view of the importance to the proper development of the fishing industry in Connemara it is that a pier or harbour should be constructed in Clifden Bay, which is in close proximity to the railway terminus, he will urge upon the Congested Districts Board and the Irish Board of Works the desirability of constructing such pier or harbour as soon as possible;

and whether he is aware of the representations that have frequently been made upon this matter to his predecessors in office.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY FOR IRELAND (Mr. WYNDHAM, Dover): The question of the construction of a pier near Clifden is engaging the attention of the Congested Districts Board.

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF IRELAND.

MR. POLAND (Kerry, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he has observed that the annual attendance of readers in the British Museum Library of Printed Books in 1899 was 188,000, or only 34,000 more than in the National Library of Ireland, where the annual attendance of readers in the same year was 154,078, and will he explain why 26 assistant librarians and 50 attendants are employed in the former, as compared with 2 assistant librarians and 12 attendants in the latter: whether, in view of the fact that the National Library is the only State-supported public library in Ireland, and that the existing staff is quite unable to cope with the annually increasing attendance of readers, the necessary work of cataloguing and other demands, the number of assistant librarians and attendants will be increased in accordance with there commendations of the Trustees; and whether he is aware that the National Library is the only institution where Irish inventors are enabled to consult patent specifications, and that the trustees have been unable to accept a free gift of American patent specifications owing to lack of space.

MR. WYNDHAM: I have already stated that I cannot speak for the British Museum. No representations have been made by the trustees of the National Library of Ireland on the subject of an increased staff, since the control of the Library was transferred to the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction. The public have access to patent specifications at the Belfast public library, and a full set has also been presented to the Public Record Office in Dublin. The last query was answered by me on the 26th March.

IRISH COUNTY COURT JUDGES' SALARIES.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL (Mayo, S.): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether any, and, if so, what increase has been made in the salaries of County Court Judges in Ireland in connection with their services in the administration of the Irish Land Acts; whether he will give the names of land valuers in connection with the county courts in Ireland, the date of the appointment of each, their addresses and occupations before appointment, the annual salary paid to each, and the average amount allowed for hotel and travelling expenses when discharging their duties; and whether he will state the qualifications for the office, and on whose recommendation each valuer was selected, and to whom he is responsible.

MR. WYNDHAM: The reply to the first paragraph is in the negative. I have called for a Return containing particulars of the names, qualifications, and remuneration of the gentlemen employed as county court valuers during the past three years. Under Section 32 of the Land Law Act, 1887, county court valuers are nominated by the Irish Land Commission, and approved by the Lord Lieutenant.

See preceding volume, page 1374.

#### IRISH LAND COMMISSIONERS.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he will give the name of each Land Commissioner in Ireland, the date of his appointment to that office, the address and occupation of each before his appointment, the salary received during the first year the annual salary he is now receiving, together with the qualifications and the conditions of service and on whose recommendation each was selected; and whether he will state the amount of hotel and travelling expenses allowed to each per day in addition to his fixed salary; or, if there has been no daily allowance of expenses fixed, what is the average annual sum spent by each Land Commissioner.

MR. WYNDHAM: The hon. Member may not be aware that Returns have already been presented to Parliament, from time to time, exhibiting the names, qualifications, and remuneration of the Chief Land Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners. The numbers of the Returns are 177 of 1891; 107 and 117 of 1897; and 258 of 1900. Perhaps he would be good enough to refer to these Returns and let me know what further information he desires.

#### CLAREMORRIS UNION; OWEN COYNE'S HORDING.

MR. JOHN O'DONNELL: I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether he is aware that the holding of Owen Coyne. Redhill, Ballyhaunis, in the Claremorris Union, was divided in April. 1898, between himself and Pat Herbert after his applications to have the land revalued had been left unsettled for nearly three years; whether, in view of the dissatisfaction felt by Owen Coyne with the revaluation made by the revisor, he will cause a revaluation of the holding to be made, so that each tenant may bear his due share of the rates and other cesses levied on the basis of valuation: and whether Owen Coyne will be recouped by the revisor for the moneys paid for rates owing to the alleged delay of that official for his revaluation of the audit.

MR. WYNDHAM: The question of the necessity for a further valuation in this case should be brought before the Commissioner of Valuation by the local rating authorities. The answer to the last paragraph is "No."

#### IRISH INSPECTORSHIP OF FISHERIES.

MR. PATRICK O'BRIEN (Kilkenny): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether a vacancy has been or is about to be created for the position of Inspector of Fisheries in Ireland; and, if so, whether he will see that no one having a direct pecuniary interest in the fisheries of Ireland shall be appointed.

MR. WYNDHAM: I have reason to believe that there will be a vacancy. The consideration urged in the latter part of the question is one which would obviously be taken into account when a selection is made from candidates for such a post.

#### MONAGHAN QUARTER SESSIONS; SPIRIT LICENCE TO MR. LESLIE.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): I beg to ask Mr. Attorney General for Ireland, in reference to the proceedings at Monaghan quarter sessions on the 26th ultimo, in connection with the granting of a licence to Mr. Leslie, agent of the Earl of

Dartrey, whether he is aware that of the forty magistrates present many came from a distance and from districts other than the petty sessions district of Monaghan; and whether, in view of the fact that the October quarter sessions is the ordinary licensing sessions in Ireland, by what authority these magistrates attended and adjudicated at a sessions court other than the court of the district to which they were appointed by the Lord Chan.

AN HON. MEMBER: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that a number of what are known as "Morley magistrates" were imported and voted against the licence?

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL FOR IRELAND (Mr. ATKINSON, Londonderry, N. ): The hon. Member is confounding quarter sessions with petty sessions. It is only in reference to the latter that ordinary justices are required by the Lord Chancellor to indicate the petty sessions district in which they will elect to serve. In this instance all the

justices present were justices entitled to serve in the petty sessions districts comprised in the quarter sessions division for which the sessions were then held. There was, therefore, nothing irregular or improper in the constitution of the Court, so far as I am aware.

MR. FLYNN: I am not concerned with the "Morley" magistrates. I want to know if it is proper for magistrates to act in divisions outside their own, except at the annual licensing sessions in October?

MR. ATKINSON: Justices are appointed for a county, but for the convenience of public business the Lord Chancellor asked them to act in a particular petty sessional district.

MR. FLYNN: Is it not a fact that one of these magistrates came all the way from Aldershot to vote for this licence?

[No answer was returned.]

TRAINED NURSES IN ARMAGH WORKHOUSE.

MR. LONSDALE (Armagh, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with regard to the appointment by the Local Government Board of Ireland of a trained nurse in the Armagh Workhouse instead of a probationer assistant nurse, in opposition to the wishes of the local authorities, will he explain why the Local Government Board have not adopted the course offered by them and agreed to by the guardians, of having the legality of the action of the Board, in appointing the nurse contrary to the wishes of the guardians, and the liability of the guardians to pay the wages of the nurse appointed under

such circumstances, tested in the superior courts by means of a case stated; and why, instead of adopting that course, a few weeks afterwards; namely, on 4th February, 1901; the Local Government Board issued a General Order by which the previously existing power which boards of guardians possessed of appointing, with the consent and approval of the Local Government Board, such and so many assistants as boards of guardians should deem, necessary, has been taken away, and by which boards of guardians are now compelled, without regard to their own opinion, to appoint such and so many qualified assistants as the Local Government Board alone shall from time to time think necessary; and, has the word "qualified" in that Order been given any definition save the words

"such qualifications as the Local Government Board shall think necessary."

MR. WYNDHAM: The Local Government Board made their General Order of the 4th February, 1901, because an objection had been raised by the Armagh guardians to the Board's Nursing Order of 1895. Similar but not identical questions arose in other unions. The Board therefore decided upon making a General Order dealing with the whole subject of the appointment of assistant nurses and attendants, and they were advised that this was the best means of avoiding litigation when irreconcilable differences of opinion on the sufficiency of the nursing staff existed between the Local Government Board and boards of guardians. As this course involved the repeal of the previous Order referred to by the guardians, it was not necessary to test its validity in a court of law. The word "qualified" is correctly interpreted in the question.

#### CAPPAWHITE POLICE AND AUCTION NOTICES.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN (Tipperary, Mid): I beg to ask the Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland whether on Sunday, 3rd March, head constable Fitzgibbon, R.I.C., Cappawhite, county Tipperary, ordered the constables under him, as the people were coming out from divine service in the Roman Catholic church of Cappawhite, to tear down the notices of the auction of the estate of Hugh Bradshaw Weldon, which had been ordered to be sold by Mr. Justice Ross; and whether, in consequence of the head constable's action, the auction was not held.

MR. WYNDHAM: The head constable acted under an instruction in the Constabulary Manual directing the removal of placards calculated to attract crowds so as to cause obstruction to the public streets or thoroughfares. I do not consider that this instruction can be fairly held to apply to the case of so small a village, where crowds are not likely to

assemble in such numbers as to cause inconvenience, and I have so informed the inspector General. Many other placards to a like effect were displayed in the village, and two immediately opposite to the one that was removed.

MR. KENDAL O'BRIEN: Will the right hon. Gentleman give instructions to the inspector to use more discretion?

MR. WYNDHAM: That has been done.

MR. FLAVIN (Kerry, N.): Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the police have on several occasions pulled down placards announcing meetings of the United Irish League?

[No answer was given.]

#### ARMAGH RURAL POSTMEN.

MR. JOHN CAMPBELL (Armagh, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary to the Treasury, as representing the Postmaster General, whether he is aware that, in consequence of the establishment some two years ago of the house-to-house delivery in the Armagh rural postal district, the labours of two of the country postmen were increased; that both these men petitioned for a revision of their walks; that this petition was granted in the case of one of these men, and his walk curtailed some eight months ago, while in the case of the other man no survey of his walk has yet taken place, so that he is still obliged to travel one hour daily beyond the allotted period; what was the cause of the disparity in the



treatment of the two men; and whether, in the latter case, the man will be allowed extra remuneration for the extra labour performed.

MR. AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN: The Postmaster General will cause inquiry to be made at once into the circumstances of the case, and the hon. Member shall be informed of the result as soon as possible.

IRISH LAND PURCHASE;THE GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I beg to ask, without notice, which I trust is not required, whether the Government have any real intention this session to deal, as they said they intended to deal in the King's Speech, with the question of Irish land purchase; and if they have such an intention, when they propose to lay their proposals before the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: The general scheme of legislation announced in the Speech from the Throne must depend on the general progress of business, and it would be impossible to give specific pledges now.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: Has the right hon. Gentleman any serious intention of introducing legislation in accordance with the declaration in the King's Speech?

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: If I am to define that as asking what are the intentions of the Government, I may say I still hope to be able to carry out the programme of legislation indicated.

SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS;PROPOSED COMMITTEE.

MR. GORDON (Elgin and Nairn): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he has taken any steps to secure the appointment of a Committee to deal with the order in which Estimates should be taken on Supply days during the session; what will be the terms of reference to such a Committee; and in what manner it is proposed to constitute the Committee so as to make it representative of the various sections of opinion in the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I communicated the scheme which I have more than once sketched to the House to that quarter which is generally represented by the Opposition, but I am sorry to say that it found no favour. What I proposed was that there should be a Committee of seven Members, on which the Government and the official Opposition should each have one representative, and on which the Scottish, Irish, and Welsh Members should have one representative each drawn from the Opposition and two from private Members on this side of the House. On a party vote in the Committee the Government would be in a minority of one. The terms of reference which I proposed were:—"To report from time to time as to the order in which it is expedient to take the Votes in Committee of Supply." I think that scheme carried out the intention suggested, but as it has not met with favour in a most important quarter of the House it must stand over for the present. My offer is still firm, and as soon as it is accepted I will deal with it.

NEW EDUCATION BILL.

MR. HERBERT ROBERTS: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether he is in a position to state when the provisions of the Education Bill, promised in the King's Speech, will be submitted to the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I hope that the Bill will be introduced shortly.

REX V. COCKERTON.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell, N.) : I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury what action the Government proposes to take in connection with the dismissal by the Master of the Rolls and Lord Justices Collins and Romer of the appeal of the London School Board against the decision of the Court of King's Bench, shortly known as the Cockerton Judgment; and whether the London and other school boards may understand that, pending the passing into law of any proposals the Government may be prepared to make, the status quo ante will be maintained in respect of the practices now ruled to be illegal.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I understand that that question has already been answered by my right hon. friend the Vice-President of the Council.

DR. MACNAMARA: That question referred especially to evening school pupils over sixteen. My question deals with the question of higher instruction in day schools.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: Yes, Sir; but I take it the same general principle will apply to both.

THE NEW CODE; HIGHER ELEMENTARY MINUTE.

DR. MACNAMARA: I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, having regard to the proposed provisions of the Education Code for 1901, under which the attendances of any child of upwards of fifteen years of age will not be recognised in a higher elementary school, and to the proposed provisions of the Code, under which no scholar may remain in a higher elementary school beyond the close of the school year in which he or she is fifteen years of age, except such scholars as may be receiving instruction in a school at the time of its conversion into a higher elementary school, and are allowed to remain with the sanction of the Board of Education, whether he will arrange that these provisions shall not become operative until they have been discussed by the House.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: I can give no such pledge as the hon. Member desires.

DR. MACNAMARA: Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the liveliest dissatisfaction is expressed with respect to the proposal to turn children out at fifteen years of age?

\*MR. SPEAKER: Order, order; The hon. Member cannot proceed to argue the question.

PROPOSAL TO FILE ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS IN THE LIBRARY.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Burghs): I beg to ask the First Lord of the Treasury whether, having regard to the delay in the publication of the Hansard Report, he will cause copies of the answers to questions to be filed in the Library.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR: This question involves a principle which, as I have said more than once in answer to questions, is impossible of universal application. Supplementary questions and answers could not, of course, be printed beforehand, so that it would be impossible for a complete transcript of the proceedings at Question time to be put in the Library at once. I believe the Foreign Office and another Department already send their answers there.

NEW BILLS.

PUBLIC HEALTH.

Bill to amend the law relating to the qualification and tenure of office of

Medi-

cal Officers of Health, Inspectors of Nuisances, and Sanitary Inspectors, and to provide for superannuation allowances to such Officers and Inspectors, and for contribution towards such allowances by such Officers and Inspectors, and to make other relative provisions, ordered to be brought in by Sir Francis Powell, Sir Walter Foster, Mr. Talbot, Dr. Farquharson, Mr. Henry Hobhouse, Mr. Cripps, Mr. Heywood Johnstone, and Sir Michael Foster.

#### PUBLIC HEALTH BILL.

"To amend the Law relating to the qualification and tenure of office of Medical Officers of Health, Inspectors of Nuisances, and Sanitary Inspectors, and to provide for superannuation allowances to such Officers and Inspectors, and for contribution towards such allowances by such Officers and Inspectors, and to make other relative provisions," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Monday 22nd April, and to be printed. [Bill 141.]

#### PETROLEUM.

Bill to amend The Petroleum Act, 1879, ordered to be brought in by Mr. Ure, The Master of Elibank. Mr. Harold. Reckitt, Mr. John Burns, Mr. Compton Rickett. Mr. Cross. Mr. M'Killop, and Mr. Trevelyan.

#### PETROLEUM BILL.

"To amend The Petroleum Act, 1879," presented, and read the first time; to be read a second time upon Tuesday 23rd April, and to be printed.

[Bill 142.]

#### ADJOURNMENT OF THE HOUSE (EASTER).

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That this House at its rising this day do adjourn till Thursday 18th April." (Mr. A. J. Balfour.)

\*SIR CHARLES DILKE (Gloucestershire, Forest of Dean): I rise at the request of my hon. friends to move the Amendment which stands in their names on the Paper, namely, that the House should reassemble on Monday, the 15th inst. Of course, I know it is cheap heroism to propose anything in the nature of a suggestion for shortening the holidays, because we were aware that we are in a hopeless minority, and that the First Lord has absolute power to impose his own view and that of the majority upon the House. But there are one or two matters which I should like to lay before the House, because I believe them to be material to the issues we have to decide. For instance, on the Wednesday which, under the resolution of the Leader of the House, was to be the last day of the holidays, the first Order of the Day is a Bill with regard to the hours of young persons in mines, which I am convinced would lead, not only to a practical debate, but also to a practical issue, and would afford an example of the utility of discussions on private Members' Bills. The hon. Member for Derby, who has charge of the Bill, has every reason to believe that the Bill would lead to that practical result, and I can only say that it was intentionally put down for that particular day, because, from information which was available at the time, it was quite understood that the Easter holidays would have been completed by then. It therefore cannot be suggested that the position in which the Bill now stands is due to any act of carelessness on the part of its backers. From the late meeting of Parliament we all anticipated that the holidays would have been

less long than of recent years. Undoubtedly, until very lately, the House never took a longer vacation than from Good Friday until the following Monday week. It never took more, than that, without proportionately lessening the Whitsuntide recess. In the face of the great pressure of public business, and in the belief that the Easter holidays would be shorter, we thought that my hon. friend would have been able to bring on his Bill on April 17th. Now, the great pressure hitherto alleged to the House as the reason for entirely taking away from private Members Tuesdays and Wednesdays, is not likely to be relaxed after Easter; indeed it appears that it will be greater than in ordinary years. We have not only the whole programme of Government legislation still remaining, including the Irish Land Purchase Bill and the Factories and Workshops Bill, but after Easter we shall have three unusual demands on our time. We did not complete before 31st March the business which is usually taken in the first financial period of the Session, and have still the Army resolution to overtake. Then there is the business of the Civil List, which must be brought before the House. Again, through the great strain on the finances of the country we are likely to have a Budget which will make abnormal demands on the time of the House. This pressure on the second part of the Session will intensify that process of entirely destroying private Members' time which it appears the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House hopes to accomplish. We have been told that the Government do not propose to meet on the Monday because they would have but one day out of the three; two being given to private Members. It is not my business to protect the right hon. Gentleman's time, but the first day after Easter holidays is often the most useful of the whole Session to the Government. I have heard the right hon. Gentleman himself say that by putting down, on the first day after the Easter recess, Votes which are not controversial, the House got through, in a reasonable and businesslike fashion, a very large amount of business. I am not going to detain the House with reference to the motion which stands in my own name for the Tuesday, in regard to labour legislation. I never anticipated that it would take much time; but since it has been placed on the Paper the Government have introduced the Factories and Workshops Bill, and if they intend to give one day to the Second Reading of that Bill, and to pass it this session, they will have done the greater portion of what was expected of them in regard to labour legislation this session. The country undoubtedly expects an Amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Act. They have been leading up to that Amendment by their circulars to the county court judges, so that we need not expect the amending Bill until next year. There are other Bills which have been waiting for a long time to be brought forward, the Coal Mines Bill and the Bill in regard to metalliferous mines which has been ready since 1888 and which is urgently needed. I do not, however, rest my Amendment on my own Tuesday's resolution, for the pressing nature of the latter disappears with the promise of the Government to pass the Factories and Workshops Bill. But there remains the motion which stands on the Paper in the name of the hon. Member for Derby for the Second Reading of the Coal Mines (Employment) Bill; a Bill of real practical interest, and one which we had every reason to expect would have come

on as the first order of the day on Wednesday, 17th April. I never like to use exaggerated language, and I never before to day have, in any way, joined in accusing the First Lord of the Treasury of desiring to diminish the importance of the House of Commons; but I confess that the incidental effect of the constant pressure on the House, the constant demand to put all power in the hands of the Government in consequence of that pressure, must be to diminish the importance of the House of Commons in the Constitution. I read a humorous sketch the other day of how the House of Commons became a cycling school. As we never abolish institutions in this country, the House of Commons was, in the skit, not abolished, but only remained in the form of the Terrace, with its usual attractions, while the seats of this Chamber were removed, and the floor turned into a cycling school. I do not say that we are travelling very fast in that direction; but I do begin to see a decrease in the natural functions of the House of Commons in the Constitution caused by the constant demands and pressure on unofficial Members to give up all part in its deliberations. As a protest against that course I shall press my Amendment to a division.

\*SIR WALTER FOSTER (Derbyshire, Ilkeston): I beg to second the Amendment, and I hope the Government will give serious consideration to the arguments raised by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Forest of Dean. I feel considerable interest in the Coal Mines

(Employment) Bill, as my name is on the back of it. I remember being consulted at the time when the Bill was placed upon the Paper, it having got a good place in the ballot, as to whether it should be put down for April 17th or on a later day. After discussion, it was understood that the House would be in session on 17th April, on account of the pressure of public business and the few opportunities private Members have had up to the present time for debating important subjects or Bills which they wished to bring forward. The promoters of this Bill were consequently justified in putting the Bill down for the 17th April. I do feel that, in spite of the arduous duties that have fallen on the officials of the House as well as upon ourselves, we might do with two or three days less holiday, and if we met on the 15th instead of the 18th April we should have not only sufficient leisure to recruit our energies, but to carefully consider subjects of deep interest to private Members. Monday would be a useful day for Supply and other Government business; Tuesday might be taken up with the resolution of the right hon. Member for the Forest of Dean; and then on Wednesday there would have been this Bill which relates to the employment of young persons in coal mines. I would urge upon the Government to earnestly consider the appeal we make in the interest of tens of thousands of the industrial classes of this country, as well as in the interest of the physical and moral development of generations of the workers to come, to give us an opportunity of discussing this Bill on Second Reading. I beg to second the Amendment.

Amendment proposed, to leave out the words "Thursday, 18th," in order to add the words "Monday, 15th.";(Sir Charles Dilke.)

Question proposed. "That the words 'Thursday, 18th,' stand part of the Question."

MR. STUART WORTLEY (Sheffield, Hallam) said that in the ordinary course if the Amendment had been such as had been put to the House on other occasions he should have advocated the Government resisting to the utmost in their power the Amendment of the right hon. Baronet the member for the Forest of Dean, because it was idle to say that the Bill was not put down for the 17th April without some inquiries being made. He drew attention to the fact because he thought the House ought to watch very closely the practice, which had a tendency to grow, of hon. Members putting down Bills in which they were interested on days when there was not much chance

of their coming on, and then making claim for a further day. He thought such claims ought to be strenuously resisted. The present case was, however, different. He did not know what course the Government were going to take with regard to the motion, but what he felt was that if the holidays of the House as a whole were going to be shortened in the interest of particular Members interested in particular groups of Bills, the country as a whole ought to get some value for the concession in the shape of a guarantee that progress would be made with Government business on the Monday.

MR. JAMES LOWTHER (Kent, Thanet) said that such a suggestion was simply huckstering. The right hon. Gentleman suggested that hon. Members were to restrain themselves from urging their views on Government business in order that certain Bills should be given a preference. He hoped the Government would resist any such bargain. He did not blame the right hon. Baronet the Member for the Forest of Dean for attempting to make a bargain for a measure in which he took a personal interest. The proposal that the House should meet on the 18th of April had met with general approval, and although the hon. Gentlemen who would speak a few words in support of the measure of the right hon. baronet, and would be eulogised in the local press, were willing to give up their leisure in order to pass the Bill, it should not be allowed to go forth that the Government had entered into such an arrangement.

MR. HERBERT LEWIS (Flint Boroughs) joined in the appeal that had been made to the Government by the right hon. the Member for Forest of Dean. The length of the Easter holidays was unprecedented, at any rate except so far as the last three or four years were concerned, and the precedents of the last few years should not be taken into consideration, because during that period the Opposition had not been up to what might be termed normal strength, whilst the Government had an enormous majority. He hoped the right hon. Gentleman the Leader of the House would not follow the bad

precedents of the last three or four years. There had been late sittings, and large and repeated doses of closure, which ought not to be given in too great doses without great pressure of business of the State, and then the House was told that the Easter recess was to be sixteen days. When an appeal was made to the right hon. Gentleman to reduce the recess to thirteen days he said he would only gain one day. The right hon. Gentleman seemed to have forgotten that there were such creatures as private Members, who however humble, were still Members of the House. What would be gained by sitting on these extra days? In the first place, on the 17th there was the Coal Mines Employment Bill, a Bill in which

three-quarters of a million workers of the country took a deep interest. The second motion down for Tuesday, 16th of April, dealt with the disestablishment of the Church in Wales. That was a matter which above all others interested the people of Wales; it was in fact the question upon which the last six General Elections had been fought in the Principality.

\*COLONEL BLUNDELL (Lancashire, Ince) said he hoped that the Employment in Mines Bill would not be brought forward until it would be possible to get a fair expression of opinion on the subject. A few days ago the question of an eight hours day for miners came before the House suddenly on a Wednesday afternoon, and the subject was not sufficiently discussed.

MR. SYDNEY BUXTON (Tower Hamlets, Poplar) said he wished to say one or two words with reference to what fell from the right hon. Member for the Hallam Division.

The Employment in Mines Bill was one to which there was no real opposition in principle. The promoters of the Bill having obtained a favourable position, had been taken by surprise on finding that there was to be an undue prolongation of the Easter holidays. The right hon. Member for the Hallam Division has suggested that if the Government were able to assent to the proposal now made to them they would expect some quid Pro quo in regard to Government business.

None of them were able to make any definite bargain with reference to the matter. If the Government were able to see their way now, as a matter of course, to meet the views of hon. Members on the Opposition side of the House, and of others on their own side who were interested in the Bill, he believed there would be a general disposition to assist the Government in regard to the proposals they meant to make if the proposals were not of a very contentious character. There had been up to Easter very excessive pressure on the time of the House, and it seemed to some Members, in view of that fact, that they should not have an extended holiday. The business of the House ought not to have been so arranged that they would have undue pressure at one time and too long holidays at another. This particular Bill was one which many Members believed would settle a most difficult question with reference to labour in mines, and looking to the fact that they did not desire to have undue pressure on the House, he hoped the right hon. Gentleman would see his way even now to agree to the motion of the right hon. Baronet the Member for Forest of Dean.

THE FIRST LORD OF THE TREASURY (Mr. A. J. BALFOUR. Manchester, E.): If I were to accede to the appeals made to me I can hardly picture to myself the dismay which would be displayed on both sides of the House. There would be much weeping and gnashing of teeth. [Cries of "No, no."] Well, I rather think so. But the majority of the House, I mean quite irrespective of party, need be under no alarm. I do not think it would be possible for the Government to accede to the proposition advanced, I must say with extreme moderation, by the right hon. Baronet the Member for Forest of Dean. It is not that I am a purist of the school of my right hon. friend the Member for the Isle of Thanet. I have not that Spartan virtue which would prevent me under any circumstances from making a bargain in regard to the progress of Government business with gentlemen on the other side of the House who have the power and occasionally the will to assist the Government; but, after all, whatever

arrangements we come to, no business of a controversial character or of even first-rate importance could be thought of on the first Monday after the Easter holidays. The practice and convenience of the House are against it, and there would be a universal protest from all sides of the House were we to take any controversial business, or even small measures which excite any great feeling on the other side. The truth is, hon. Gentlemen opposite who have spoken have oscillated between two different lines of argument in dealing with this question. Their real motive is to have certain discussions upon private Members' resolutions or Bills, which I am sure would be of an interesting character; but the argument they advance is that if the House does not meet until Thursday, the 18th instant, there will be a congestion of public business after Easter as there has been before Easter. The congestion before Easter was due to the exigencies of Supply, that is to say, hon. Members insisted upon their right to discuss the Estimates at great length, and that produced, as it must produce, a congestion of business; and the result is that not only has the Government not been able to have a first-class discussion upon any stage of the larger Bills of the session, but the House has been obliged to sit up night after night to very inordinate hours, to the great fatigue of the officers of the House and of those hon. Members who supported the Government in carrying through the work necessary for the country. I do not know whether the hon. Members who appeal to me were among those who sat up and helped the Government to get through the Estimates. The officers of the House had to do so, and I must say that I do not think an Easter holiday was ever better earned than the not unduly prolonged Easter holiday which we have appointed for the present year. And supposing we were to curtail the holidays as suggested, we would do very little in the way of diminishing congestion of business, inasmuch as the Government would have but one day out of the three. In other words, we should curtail these well-earned holidays by three days; but so far as congestion is concerned, we should only diminish it by one day, and although there might be a great deal of business got through on that occasion, it would be business of a non-controversial kind, and not the kind that produces congestion at the end of the session. From that point of view the loss to the holidays would be great, but the gain in respect of the congestion of business would be small. I come now to the real motive. It is a perfectly legitimate motive on the part of hon. Members who have pressed us to meet on Monday instead of Thursday. Their motive is to have debates on certain industrial questions and the question of Disestablishment. The right hon. Baronet seemed almost to suggest that the industrial Bill in which he is interested was of such a character that it would pass practically sub silentio, or in the ordinary course. It must be borne in mind that there are too many private Bills before the Bill of the right hon. Baronet for it to be passed this session. As to the question of Welsh disestablishment, I do not think it is of very great importance whether that discussion comes on or not, because it is a subject which has formerly been before the House in the form of an abstract resolution, and in the form of a Government Bill brought forward by a responsible administration.



[An HON. MEMBER: Not in this Parliament.]

The right hon. Gentleman was, I think unintentionally, rather unfair in the observation which he made. He seemed to think that the interests of debate in this House were to be found in a great increase of time given to abstract discussions on Tuesday evenings, or the almost equally abstract discussions on Wednesdays after Easter. I do not deny that occasionally matters of very great importance may come up on those days, and that in the past we have had; and in the future I hope we shall have; debates in which both sides of the House take part, and of great interest to the House and the country. But my observations of the use to which Tuesdays have been put in the past does not lead me to believe that there is that burning desire in the House for these Tuesday discussions. I believe I am one of the most earnest upholders of these discussions, but private Members themselves, by their presence here at the critical hour of dinner time, do not seem to be very fond of sacrificing their leisure in order to carry on what is very often an aca-

demic debate. The truth is that if the interest in the debates in this House is in peril at the present time it is due, not to the arrangement of Government business, or to the taking of private Members' time to carry out the necessary work of the Government, but to the character of the debate which the House insists upon having in Committee of Supply. If hon. Members use the opportunity which they undoubtedly possess in Committee of Supply for the purpose of discussing small and frivolous points, it is impossible to interest the House. But perhaps I shall be travelling beyond the limits of the Amendment if I pursue that topic, upon which, however, I am very ready to dilate when the proper occasion comes. I venture to say that the House might now bring this part of our afternoon's debate to a conclusion. The reason I make that appeal is that complaint is constantly being brought against the Government that we do not give sufficient opportunities for raising important general issues. We had so arranged the time this afternoon that there was an opportunity, if this motion had not been started immediately after questions, of discussing until seven o'clock any topic which excites great interest. I am sorry that we have already spent an hour and a half of that time, and I hope the House will not stultify itself further by making an appeal to the Government to give time which hon. Members cannot be given for these abstract discussions, and in the very act of making that appeal fritter away the opportunity which they have. I venture to hope that the Amendment may now be divided upon.

MR. JOHN REDMOND (Waterford): I desire to explain why my friends and I intend to vote in favour of the Amendment. I candidly confess that it is not that we think that the devoting of Tuesday and Wednesday to private Members' business will materially advance the important subjects down for those days. I am very much inclined to agree with the Leader of the House that very little practical result would be likely to accrue from the discussion, but at the same time I should be very sorry to stand in the way of the consideration of those important matters affecting such

a large section of the people of Great Britain. The ground upon which we intend to vote for the curtailment of the holidays is clear and specific. The

Government are depriving themselves of one Government day. In the King's Speech the Government announced their intention of introducing a Bill dealing with the land purchase question in Ireland. The importance of that question has been admitted by every English politician who has spoken on the subject, no matter on which side of the House he sits. This afternoon I asked the Leader of the House whether he could give us some assurance that the Government really intended this session to fulfil the pledge in the King's Speech, and to introduce a Land Purchase Bill for Ireland. The answer I got was of such a character that I am sure everybody who heard it came to the definite conclusion that the Government had no hope whatever of being able to proceed seriously with such a Bill this session. The answer given supplied the reason. The Leader of the House said he could not speak of the programme of legislation until he saw how the business of the House progressed. That was but another way of intimating that he feared there would not be sufficient time at the disposal of the Government to deal with the question. If the question is really one of such far-reaching importance, as the Government themselves have admitted it to be, I say it is a serious scandal if the House of Commons decides to prolong the holidays and to cut out the one opportunity which perhaps remains to the Government to redeem the pledge. I admit there never was a holiday more thoroughly earned by the House than this Easter recess. The Leader of the House speaks of the exertions and labours of those Members who have remained night after night to support the Government, but I think probably he will admit that the labours of those Members who, in the discharge of what they considered to be their duty, have remained in the House to oppose the Government and Government business were quite as exhausting. But the holiday from to-day until Monday week would be ample, and quite as long as the House of Commons has been in the habit of indulging in at Easter, even in sessions when the House assembled at the usual time, and it must be remembered that the work of this session did not commence until about a fortnight later than usual. The Government admit that their work is in arrears, and that they are afraid they will be forced, for want of time, to throw over some of their most important business. Why, therefore, this year should be selected for an unusually long Easter holiday passes my comprehension. The House will probably admit that Irishmen are as fond of a holiday as any other people, but all I have to say to-day on behalf of Irish Members here is that, anxious as we are to get home to our own country and to enjoy a well-earned rest, at the same time we feel that this holiday is being unduly prolonged, and that we ought to press upon the Government to devote the extra day which with a light heart they are throwing away to the consideration of their Land Purchase Bill for Ireland.

MR. LEAMY (Kildare, N.): After the reply given by the right hon. Gentleman to my hon. friend the Member for Waterford to-day, the Nationalist Members will have to go and tell their constituents that, notwithstanding the promise in the King's Speech, the Government are trying to shirk their duty in regard to bringing in an Irish Land Purchase Bill this session. The fact is that Ireland has been in such a state of calm during the last few months that the Government have almost forgotten her existence. It is only when there is a fierce agitation

in Ireland that she is remembered by His Majesty's Government. I, however, promise the right hon. Gentleman that Nationalists will utilise this long recess to inform their people of the treatment of the Government, and to point out to them the old lesson that if they want Parliament to attend to them they must stir themselves. The House is told that there is no time for Irish business. For the last five years a little measure has been coming before the House. Why could not a day be given for passing the Catholic Disabilities Bill into law?

\*MR. SPEAKER intimated that the hon. Member must confine his remarks to the Amendment, and not refer to other matters on the Paper.

MR. LEAMY: Very well, Sir. I will conclude by again stating that the Irish Members will use the recess to tell their constituents that they have no right to place any faith or confidence in the promises of the Government.

DR. MACNAMARA (Camberwell) desired to call attention to the unfair treatment Members of the House had

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F

Fletcher, Sir Henry

Moon, Edward Robert Pacy

Allhusen, Augustus Hy. Eden

Flower, Ernest

Morgan, D. J. (Walthamstow)

Anson, Sir William Reynell

Godson, Sir Augustus Fred.

Morris, Hon. Martin Henry F.

Archdale, Edward Mervyn

Gordon, Hn. J. E. (Elgin & Nairn

Morrison, James Archibald

Arkwright, John Stanhope

Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon

Morton, A. H. A. (Deptford)

Atkinson Rt. Hon. John

Green, Walford D (Wednesbury

Murray, Rt. Hon. A. G. (Bute

Bagot, Capt. Josceline Fitz Roy

Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)

Murray, Chas. J. (Coventry)

Balfour-, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r

Greville, Hon. Ronald

Murray, Col. Wyndham (Bath

Balfour, Rt. Hn Gerald W (Leeds

Groves, James Grimble

Nicholson, William Graham

Bartley, George C. T.

Hain, Edward

Nicol, Donald Ninian

Bathurst, Hon. Allen Benjamin

Hamilton, Rt. Hn Lord G (Mid'x  
O'Neill, Hon. Robert Torrens  
Bignold, Arthur  
Hanbury, Rt. Hon. Robert Wm.  
Pilkington, Richard  
Bigwood, James  
Hare, Thomas Leigh  
Platt-Higgins, Frederick  
Bill, Charles  
Harris, Frederick Leverton  
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp  
Blundell, Colonel Henry  
Haslett, Sir James Horner  
Pretymann, Ernest George  
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-  
Hay, Hon. Claude George  
Purvis, Robert  
Boulnois, Edmund  
Heath, James (Staffords, N. W.  
Ratcliffe, R. F.  
Brodrick, Rt. Hon. St. John  
Hermon-Hodge, Robert Trotter  
Rentoul, James Alexander  
Brookfield, Colonel Montagu  
Higginbottom, S W.  
Richards, Henry Charles  
Brown, Alexander H. (Shropsh.  
Hoare, Edw Brodie (Hampstead  
Ridley, Hn. M. W. (Stalybridge  
Bull, William James  
Hope, J. F (Sheffield, Brightside  
Ritchie, Rt. Hon. Chas. T.  
Bullard, Sir Harry  
Hornby, Sir William Henry  
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.  
Carlile, William Walter  
Horner, Frederick William  
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye  
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.  
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry  
Round, James  
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lancs.)  
Howard, John (Kent, Faversham.  
Royds, Clement Molyneux  
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derbysh.  
Hozier, Hon. James Henry Cecil

Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-  
Cawley, Frederick  
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick  
Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)  
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)  
Kenyon, Hn. Geo T. (Denbigh  
Seely, Charles Hilton (Lincoln  
Chamberlain, Rt. Hon. J. (Birm.  
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop  
Skewes-Cox, Thomas  
Chamberlain, J Austen (Worc'r  
Knowles, Lees  
Smith, Abel H. (Hertford, East)  
Chapman, Edward  
Lawrence, William F.  
Smith, James Parker (Lanarks.  
Cochrane, Hon. Thos. H. A. E.  
Lawson, John Grant  
Spear, John Ward  
Cohen, Benjamin L.  
Lee, Arthur H (Hants, Fareham  
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)  
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse  
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage  
Stroyan, John  
Colomb, Sir John Chas. Ready  
Leighton, Stanley  
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier  
Colston, Chas. Edw. H. Athole  
Leveson-Gower, Frederick N. S.  
Talbot, Lord E. (Chichester)  
Cook, Sir Frederick Lucas  
Llewellyn, Evan Henry  
Thornton, Percy M.  
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)  
Lonsdale, John Brownlee  
Valentia, Viscount  
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge  
Lowe, Francis William  
Vincent, Col. Sir C E H (Sheffield  
Cranborne, Viscount  
Lowther, Rt. Hon. Jas. (Kent)  
Warde, Col. C. E.  
Cubitt, Hon. Henry  
Loyd, Archie Kirkman  
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C. E. (Ta'nt'n

Dalrymple, Sir Charles  
Lucas, Reginald J. (Portsm'th  
Whitmore, Charles Algernon  
Dickinson, Robert Edmond  
Macdona, John Cumming  
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)  
Dickson, Charles Scott  
MacIver, David (Liverpool)  
Willox, Sir John Archibald  
Dimsdale, Sir Joseph Cockfield  
Maconochie, A. W.  
Wilson, John (Glasgow)  
Dorington, Sir John Edward  
M'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool)  
Wilson-Todd, Wm. H. (Yorks.)  
Douglas, Rt. Hn. A. Akers-  
Malcolm, Ian  
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-  
Duke, Henry Edward  
Manners, Lord Cecil  
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George  
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edward  
Maple, Sir John Blundell  
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong  
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst  
Middlemore, John T.  
Young, Commander (Berks, E.)  
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne  
Molesworth, Sir Lewis  
TELLERS FOR THE AYES; Mr. Anstruther and Mr. Hayes Fisher.  
Fitz Gerald, Sir Robert Penrose-  
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)  
Fitzroy, Hon. Edward Algernon  
Montagu, Hon. J. S. (Hants.)  
NOES.  
Abraham, Wm. (Cork, N. E.)  
Asquith, Rt. Hon. Herbert H.  
Bell, Richard  
Allen, Chas. P. (Glouc., Stroud  
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)  
Boland, John  
Ashton, Thomas Gair  
Beaumont, Wentworth C. B.  
Broadhurst, Henry  
received in respect of the Education Code' but;

\*MR. SPEAKER ruled that that question could not be raised on the Amendment under

discussion.

Question put.

The House divided:;Aves, 156; Noes, 88. (Division List No. 122.)

Bryce, Rt. Hon. James

Horniman, Frederick John

Reddy, M.

Burke, E. Haviland-

Jones, William (Carnarvonsh.

Redmond, John E. (Waterford)

Buxton, Sydney Charles

Joyce, Michael

Redmond, William (Clare)

Caine, William Sproston

Layland-Barratt, Francis

Rigg, Richard

Caldwell, James

Leamy, Edmund

Roe, Sir Thomas

Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)

Levy, Maurice

Shaw, Thomas (Hawick, B.)

Condon, Thomas Joseph

Lloyd-George, David

Shipman, Dr. John G.

Cullinan, J.

Lundon, W.

Sinclair, Capt John (Forfarshire

Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)

Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.

Smith, Samuel (Flint)

Delany, William

Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe

Soames, Arthur Wellesley

Dilke, Rt. Hon. Sir Charles

Markham, Arthur Basil

Spencer, Rt. Hn C R (Northants

Dogan, P. C.

Mooney, John J.

Strachey, Edward

Duffy, William J.

Morley, Rt. Hn. J. (Montrose)

Sullivan, Donal

Dunn, Sir William

Murphy, J.

Thomas, A. (Glamorgan, E.)

Emmott, Alfred

Nannetti, Joseph P.  
Thomas, Davis Alfred (Merth'r)  
Efrench, Peter  
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)  
Trevelyan, Charles Philips  
Flavin, Michael Joseph  
Norman, Henry  
Ure, Alexander  
Flynn, James Christopher  
Norton, Capt. Cecil William  
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.  
Foster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)  
O'Brien, James F. X. (Cork)  
White, Patrick (Meath, North)  
Gilhooly, James  
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipper'ry Mid)  
Whiteley, George (York, W. R.)  
Gladstone, Rt. Hon. Herbert J.  
O'Brien, Patrick (Kilkenny)  
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer  
Goddard, Daniel Ford  
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.)  
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)  
Grant, Corrie  
O'Dowd, John  
Yoxall, James Henry  
Harwood, George  
O'Kelly, James (Roscommon, N)  
Hayden, John Patrick  
O'Malley, William  
TELLERS FOR THE NOES; Mr. Herbert Lewis and Mr. Jacoby.  
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Charles Seale-  
Pirie, Duncan V.  
Hobhouse, C. E. H. (Bristol, E.)  
Power, Patrick Joseph  
Holland, William Henry  
Rea, Russell  
Main Question again proposed.

SOUTH AFRICAN WAR; CONDUCT OF WAR; TERMS OF SETTLEMENT.

MR. THOMAS SHAW (Hawick Burghs): Parliament is about to separate, and that at a time when the public mind has probably never been so filled with unrest, anxiety, and alarm. The outlook is serious, and the problems in South Africa, both of a political and racial character, are grave. I venture to lay before the House certain views which I do not think have yet been debated on the lines on which I propose to submit them, and I hope to do so, by the indulgence of the House, with perfect frankness and with as much brevity as I can command. The



extreme moderation of the declaration of the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary in the House of Commons on 8th December occasioned a feeling of hopefulness in the public mind. But the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the other night was so relentless in tone that I think the heart of every lover of peace throughout the country must have been made sick. Moreover, the proclamations of Lord Roberts, which, in my opinion, exasperated instead of pacifying the Boers, and the consequent failure of the peace negotiations, are both consistent with the attitude expressed in the speech of the Colonial Secretary.

I will deal first with the proclamations though not, of course, with them in their entirety; but there are one or two points in regard to them which I think ought to be brought before the notice of the country. With reference to these proclamations, which, in my opinion, have prolonged instead of abbreviating the devastating struggle in South Africa, it is surely, to begin with, common ground, and of the highest importance, that no violence should be done under the hand of the official representative of this country to our best military traditions or to the practice of civilised nations. I have studied and restudied these proclamations, and I have come to the sorrowful conclusion that, besides not effecting their object, they did do violence both to our military traditions and to the practice of civilised nations. They are tainted absolutely with illegality. There are two instances that I desire to bring before the House.

These two instances arose out of the first proclamation issued by Lord Roberts; that terrible proclamation of the 19th June, 1900, which, in my judgment, has done more than any other single document could have done to protract this unhappy quarrel in South Africa. The part of that proclamation to which I particularly desire the attention of the House is that which ordered the placing of the principal resi-

dents of a district where a railway line or telegraph wire had been out, on the trains passing through that district. It says;

"As a further precautionary measure the Military Director has been authorised to order that one or more residents selected by him from each district shall from time to time personally accompany the trains while passing through the district."

I could hardly believe my eyes when I read that proclamation, issued under the authority of a civilised power. There has been no instance during the last half century of this practice known to international lawyers except one. I am citing from a leading authority on international law; Mr. Hall's work. The historical instance he gives is as follows;

"In 1870 the Germans ordered that, railways having been frequently damaged, the trains shall be accompanied by well known and respected persons inhabiting the town or other localities in the neighbourhood of the lines. These persons shall be placed upon the engine, so that it may be understood that in every accident caused by the hostility of the inhabitants their compatriots will be the first to suffer. The competent civil and military authorities, together with the railway companies and the etappen commandants, will organise a service of hostages to accompany the trains."

What says this authority on international law on the subject? He says::  
"This order was universally and justly reprobated on the ground that it violated the principle which denies to a belligerent any further power than that of keeping his hostage in confinement, and it is for Governments to consider whether it is worth while to retain a right which can only be made effective by means of an illegal brutality which existing opinion refuses to condone."  
That is the language of an acknowledged authority with regard to the law of civilised nations. It is stronger than any language that I should have used on my own motion. This may have come to the view of Lord Roberts, or some strong and sensible legal advice may have been communicated to him, because in five weeks after that proclamation was issued, namely, on the 27th July, it was ordered to be withdrawn. That confirms the view of its essential illegality, but unhappily it must have done much to uproot in the minds of the people so treated the notion that we were determined to keep within the lines of civilised warfare. The thing had been done; how could we undo the powerful effect it had on the minds of the inhabitants so dealt with or so threatened? I will now refer to another thing which may be said to have moved the heart of civilised mankind, namely, the proclamation with regard to the burning and devastation of farms,;"the houses and farms in the vicinity."  
Observe the language of this same proclamation, which is not in accordance with the language used in this House on the 8th December by the Colonial Secretary. I grant that a more humane construction has been put upon it, but we must look at it as we find it. "The houses and farms in the vicinity where damage is done will be destroyed and the residents dealt with under martial law." What were the reasons for that destruction? Only one is given. The allegation might have been the complicity of the persons inhabiting these houses. The actual reason is the vicinity of the place to where the damage is done. The latter is the reason given, and, this being so, in my judgment a violation of the law of civilised nations and the laws of war has been distinctly perpetrated. The only excuse according to international law for the destruction of property is when that property is at the time being used for belligerent purposes, direct or indirect. Now that was not the excuse, and not the order that was given. Officers and soldiers were not instructed by this proclamation to destroy property used for belligerent purposes. They were not instructed to destroy property defended by a hostile armed force, but they were instructed to destroy property on one ground and one ground only, namely, its vicinity to the place where an outrage was committed, with which the inhabitants might be totally unconnected. That is doing the very thing against which every development of an International Code regulating the practices of war has protested. It is involving the innocent with the guilty, and does violence to a law acknowledged all over the civilised world. Why was that done? Why was property destroyed on account of its vicinity to certain outrages on the railway line? I think the reasons were disclosed in a certain fatal document issued by Lord Roberts.  
I wish to call the attention of the House to this, because I am dealing with the matter on legal grounds, and I am submitting to the House that the proclamations I am endeavouring to analyse violated not only military tradition, but the

acknowledged law of civilised nations. Lord Roberts wrote to General Botha on September 2nd as follows: "I need not tell you how repugnant these measures are to me." I believe him. Lord Roberts is not the man of whom anything else could be said. These measures were repugnant to him, as I hope they were to every British officer and every British soldier. Then Lord Roberts adds, "but I am obliged to resort to the same." Why? "By the evidently firm resolve on the part of yourself and the burghers to continue the war." I must refer to that reason as an extraordinary departure from the rules of civilised warfare. It simply means saying to the enemy, "You are more numerous than we expected, you are a foe more tenacious and more resolute, you are more difficult to defeat, and for that reason we shall employ against you measures which are repugnant to our better nature." I say that is a repudiation and condemnation of the policy adopted by these proclamations. Until this war we were in the vanguard of civilised nations with regard to the rules of warfare. The communication made by Sir John Ardagh on the occasion of The Hague Convention reflected the highest credit both on him and the country he represented. What did that Convention show? That we had the highest regard for the property of an invaded country, and that we were determined to protect private property. This is the law as laid down by The Hague Convention. "It is forbidden to attack or bombard undefended towns, villages, dwellings, or buildings." It may be said that the Transvaal was not a party to The Hague Convention, but in that respect The Hague Convention made no advance whatever on the rules which had been laid down by the Conference of Brussels and the Convention of Geneva. I am now going to cite to the House what is known as the Military Red-book, the Manual of Military Law, which is published every year by the Government. I have taken the edition of 1899 because this war started in that year.

The following rules are contained in that excellent manual:

"As the object of war is confined to disabling the enemy, the infliction of any injuries-beyond that which is required to produce disability is needless cruelty."

That is one of our own rules. Why has it been departed from? Then, again, the following general principle is laid down in the Manual of Military Law:

"The general principle is that in the mode of carrying on war no greater harm shall be done to the enemy than necessity requires for the purpose of bringing him to terms. This principle excludes gratuitous barbarities, and every description of cruelty and insult which serves only to exasperate the sufferings or to increase the hatred of the enemy, without weakening his strength or tending to procure his submission."

By that test let this thing be tried. Is there any man who in his heart will not acknowledge that these proclamations have tended towards what it should be the rule of military policy to avoid, namely, the exasperation of the feelings of the people with whom we are contending? I hope the House will pardon me if I enter into detail on this matter. I do not know whether the House will agree with my conclusions or not, but I know it will not resent my citing our own acknowledged standards on a subject of so stupendous importance. The Military Red-book, to which I have referred, dealing with the property of the enemy,

states;

"The general principles of the customs of war applicable to the enemy's property are shortly these. The object of war is compensation for an injury. To attain this object it is lawful to take from the enemy everything, that conduces to his means of resistance, but it is unlawful to do his property any intentional injury which does not tend to bring the war to an end."

I maintain that I have made my point. These things have not tended to bring the war to an end. In the month of November two striking events occurred. One was that on the 16th there appeared an eloquent, touching, and powerful letter in The Times from the pen of the right hon. the Member for Montrose Burghs. The public mind was then roused to the gravity of the issue to an extent to which it had never formerly reached, although for months the process had been going on. I do not say for a moment that there was a causal connection between the publication of that letter and the despatch of Lord Roberts's, but two days later, on the 18th of November, there came a despatch from Lord Roberts in which he said there appeared to be some "misunderstanding" with reference to the burning of farms. That despatch is consolatory in one sense, but not in another. With whom was the misunderstanding? And what happened during the currency of this misunderstanding for five awful months? We know that the territory of the Republics was laid waste, and that the extent of the devastation is not even now known to the Secretary of State for War. Let me read the text of Lord Roberts's Order to his troops::

"As there appears to be some misunderstanding with reference to the burning of farms and the breaking of dams the Commander-in-Chief wishes the following to be the line on which the general officers commanding are to act. No farm is to be burned except for an act of treachery";

Why was not that said at the beginning?;

"or when troops have been fired on from premises";

Why was not that said at the beginning?;

"or as punishment for breaking telegraph or railway lines, or when they have been used as bases of operation for raiding, and then only with the direct consent of the general officer commanding, which is to be given in writing. The mere fact of a burgher being absent on commando is on no account to be taken as a reason for the burning of his house."

Why was not all this said at the beginning? Will any man in his senses say that that letter was not addressed to people who had misunderstood the Commander-in-Chief's orders, and had committed these acts which he, months after the events, was telling them were not within the scope of their duty? I decline to believe that the British soldier loves this work. It has been productive of untold misery, and I can use no language descriptive of it stronger than that employed by Lord Roberts himself in his despatch of 14th December: "They are ruinous to the country, and entail endless suffering on the burghers and their families." I agree that the results of the proclamations were ruinous, and entailed endless suffering on the burghers and their families. But why was the real intention of these proclamations only explained five months after they were issued and when havoc and destruction had

largely done their work? Will any man pretend that these instances; even single instances of ruinous destruction will not be imprinted on the mind and memory of the Dutch race as a whole? I say that these practices carried out under these orders, and for which these orders were the legal or quasi-legal authority, were contrary to the law of nations and the laws of war, as well as (what we recognise in our hearts) hateful in the sight of God and man.

Mr. Speaker, do not let us think for a moment that we can appeal to history in declaring that the necessities of war recommend or justify these practices. They take us back to another scene. Their policy is the policy of Lord Cornwallis at the time when Washington was in the severest straits, and when he was struggling against a certain apathy which was creeping over the hearts of the American nation. What was it that made Washington's troops swell in numbers, and drew men from every State in America to his flag? It was this, that Lord Cornwallis pursued the policy of devastation and burning of homesteads to such a degree that Washington, whose forces were well-nigh decimated, found himself again in possession of a large army. It is so all over the world. Men of the same race will not be treated contrary to every rule that should prevail among civilised mankind without solidarity of feeling, conscience, and sympathy being quickly realised among the race as a whole. It is said that we want to extinguish a nationality. I fear that these practices have gone far to create a nationality. Then Lord Roberts was entirely mistaken; I agree that it was an honest mistake; as to the effect that was going to be produced by his proclamations. This matter has, in a certain sense, a sadly humorous aspect. I would point out to the House that in his proclamation to the Dutch population on 14th September Lord Roberts said;

"If any former doubts remain in the minds of the burghers as to Her Britannic Majesty's intention they should be dispelled by the permanent manner in which the country is being occupied by Her Majesty's forces."

Think of this permanent manner of occupation; Nine months after an attenuated line of communications had been made to Pretoria, and after these territories had been annexed on paper, we have the Boer forces a thousand miles to the south-east and seven hundred miles to the south, and the towns of Cape Town and Port Elizabeth in unrest and alarm as to the people supposed to have been annexed months before. So much for the permanent manner of occupation. But this brings me to say that there is something far deeper under these proclamations, and that is the cardinal blunder with regard to the launching of them. An annexation which is not effective in fact is inoperative in law. Military occupation is the subject of many dicta in treatises on international law. I will refer first to that of Mr. Hall, and this is how he speaks of the matter;

"Rights which are founded upon mere force reach their natural limit at the point where force ceases to be efficient. They disappear with it; they reappear with it; and in the interval they are non-existent. If, moreover, neither the legitimate Sovereign of a territory nor an invader holds a territory as against another by the actual presence of force, so that in this respect they are equal, the presumption must be that the authority of the legitimate owner continues to

the exclusion of such rights as the invader acquires by force. As a matter of fact, except in a few cases which stand aside from the common instances of extension of the rights of occupation over a district, of which part only has been touched by the occupying troops, the enforcement of those rights through a time when no troops are within such distance as to exercise actual control, and still more the employment of inadequate forces, constitute a system of terrorism, not of annexation, grounded upon no principle, and only capable of being maintained because an occupying army does not scruple to threaten and to inflict penalties which no Government can impose upon its own subjects."

I now go to the Manual of Military Law, which deals with military occupation in brief but emphatic language thus;

"An invader is said to be in military occupation of so much of a country as is wholly abandoned by the forces of the enemy."

Let the House apply these elementary rules to the South African case. What was it? It was the case of one slender line of communications to Pretoria, and the launching from Pretoria of a paper proclamation annexing a territory as large as France, The Military Manual continues;

"The occupation must be real, not nominal; a paper occupation is infinitely more objectionable in its character and effects than a paper blockade."

Now, that is what has been done. We have annexed where we cannot rule. We have occupied on paper where our forces were not on the spot; and there was far more reason, at certain junctures of the war, for the Boer generals annexing the entire Cape Colony on the same theory than there has been for our annexing the entire Transvaal. But what has been the effect? It has been rather remarkable. If you annex on paper, you must maintain these paper rights. The result has been that the occupants of the territory so nominally annexed got into an impossible condition; they became rebels on paper, and having turned foreign subjects into rebels, you have placed the entire population in such a position that they must be either rebels to one Power or traitors to the other. I submit, as a proposition both in law and in common sense, that that is a policy which cannot be maintained. It is the policy of this annexation; this premature and paper annexation, with all its corollary of trouble and entanglement; which I protest against as contrary to acknowledged law. It is this position to which you drove the population, of being between the upper and the nether millstone, of being rebels to one Power or traitors to another, that impelled every hesitating man or boy to take up arms, and aroused the active intervention and help of those of the Dutch race beyond the bounds of the Republics. The total misconception of the rights of our antagonists and our rights as combatants runs deeply into the question, it has much to do with the existing discontent in South Africa and with frustrating our latest efforts towards a settlement, and it may cost us; I wish to put it in as mild language as possible; the loss of one of the fairest portions of His Majesty's dominions. It is this total misapprehension of the relative positions of the two parties to this contest that appears to have even tainted the negotiations with Botha. On the subject of amnesty, just think of how we have miscon-

ceived the situation; How different might have been our position if we

had recognised that these people had a right in law, which we were bound and entitled to maintain to this hour, to be treated on equal terms as active combatants; Do not let us make a mistake here. We have had examples in America in regard to amnesty. Horn and right hon. Gentlemen on the Front Bench talk as if we had had no experience in this country of the policy of amnesty. What happened in regard to Canada? We had a rebellion there, and a few of the leaders were transported to the Bermudas. The illegality of that was discovered, and those leaders were recalled, and practically one and all who had taken part in the rebellion were amnestied. Why should we make any distinction; why not give amnesty to all alike, whether loyalists or disloyalists? The fact is we have gone through all this before. We have had the same arguments. We have had the loyal English population in Canada declaiming against every effort to exercise a large and wise hearted forgiveness to those of the French race who had risen up in rebellion. And it was the same in regard to property. I am for amnesty all round; and I am in favour of rebuilding and complete restoration, and no higgling or huxtering about loans. If the early part of my observations are well-founded in law, observe the awful position in which we stand. In defiance of the laws of war and of the law of nations, certain property has been destroyed. Is it not our duty and interest to close up that claim and restore, with a generous hand, that which was illegally destroyed? To grant loans to rebuild what was destroyed by fire contrary to the laws of war and the laws of nations; How contemptible it looks. Let there be complete restoration; Hon. and right hon. Gentlemen need not be afraid in regard to any ill-feeling that may be caused by this complete restoration; this wiping out of the distinction between loyalists and rebels. Here is what Mr. Goldwin Smith says on the point in regard to the Canadian rebellion;

"The passions of the Civil War for a moment revived when an Act was passed awarding compensation to those whose property had suffered in the repression of the rebellion."

Just as now;

"This the Tories took to be payment of rebels. They dropped their loyalty, as Tories are apt to do when Liberals are in power, stoned the Governor General, Lord Elgin, who had assented to the Bill, and burned the Parliament House at Montreal. But Lord Elgin, calmly wise, and well sustained at home, restored peace."

Therefore, let us not be afraid of this; feeling of the English loyalists in South Africa. It is not a sign of despair at any point of these negotiations that they are hostile to any line of policy; it may, indeed, be a note of hope. Lord Elgin, calmly wise and well sustained at home, restored peace. That is what I want. I want peace restored in reference to a situation which is greater in extent and more fertile of possible disturbance than it ever was in the Canadian rebellion. I want peace restored on the lines which I have stated to the House, and which I think are recommended by a not inapt historical parallel. Then, in the situation of the moment, was there anything extreme asked for by Botha when he requested that there should be an advisory elective assembly to act alongside of the Executive Government? This demand was far within what was actually

granted in the Canadian case. We had these same questions and these same troubles raised in Canada before Lord Durham went out and brought home that Report which has rendered his name illustrious in English history. Lord Durham said;

"The great objection to any Government of an absolute kind is, that it is palpably of a temporary nature; that there is no reason to believe that its influence during the few years that it would be permitted to last, would leave the people at all more fit to manage themselves; that, on the contrary, being a mere temporary institution, it would be deficient in that stability which is the great requisite of Government in times of disorder. There is every reason to believe that a professedly irresponsible Government would be the weakest that could be devised."

What hon. Gentlemen opposite are apparently contending for is the weakest form of government for distracted South Africa that could possibly be devised. I want the strongest. I want a trust in these people who are of an alien race. There was the same complexity in Canada, but under wise and free civil government the reconciliation of the two races was gradually accomplished. There is, far more than the mere question of flags,

deep down this great root problem, how the Dutch and the English are to dwell in amity and concord in that portion of His Majesty's dominions. I want to see done in South Africa what was done in Canada. I want to have a full and free amnesty, and properties fully restored. I want Botha's elective assembly accepted, and that without delay. I cite in favour of all these things the precedent of Canada and the report of Lord Durham, which said that at the root of all such troubles is the question of the apparent impossibility of the fusion of the races. I

plead, finally, for a different spirit in which we, approach these matters. I wish to see a lull in this outbreak of national passion and national pride and a better spirit, more in accord with our highest ideas, both as a military and as a civilised Power. The cost of it all is in one sense a side issue, yet it staggers the mind. The Boers have, it is said, 20,000 men in the field, at an expense to us of one and a quarter millions sterling per week. Think what that means. It means that we are paying £3,200 per annum to quell each single Boer soldier, man and boy. But whatever the war cost, if you desire its effects to be lasting or to be for good or healing, it is necessary that these two races should be able to dwell together. Here is a problem vaster, subtler, more enduring than a passing wager of battle or bout of arms. We may wave flags till we are tired; we may cheer our gallant soldiers until the lungs give way; but within the heart of our people one great uneasiness grows and deepens; an uneasiness lest we, having forsaken the ways of mercy, have lost the path of honour. Unconditional surrender or nothing: this is not statesmanship, this is not policy: its failure is writ large in these negotiations, and it will fail again. I plead for what in my mind and heart I believe to be a more excellent way; a present and a fuller clemency, and a future and enduring peace.

\*MR. ARTHUR LEE (Hampshire, Fareham) said he should not have intervened in this debate but that he found his sense of historical accuracy somewhat outraged by what he might call the superficial and superheated treatment that this subject



had received from the hon. and learned Gentleman opposite. The country had been given to understand that our conduct of operations in South Africa was unprecedented. The word "unprecedented" had a very comforting and conclusive sound to those who had not studied history, or to those who, like the hon. and learned Gentleman who had just sat down, knew the history, but preferred to regard it either in the light of an inconvenient witness or as a partisan ally. The hon. and learned Gentleman claimed that our conduct of the operations in South Africa had violated the laws of nations; he stated that they were tainted with illegality, and said they had aroused the horror of all civilised nations.

MR. FLYNN (Cork, N.): Except Turkey.

\*MR. ARTHUR LEE said that so far from these operations being unprecedented, they were sanctioned by the highest authorities on international law. The hon. and learned Gentleman had quoted the example of Germany, and cited the opinion of Mr. Hall, an authority, no doubt, but not a conclusive authority, on the conduct of Germany in placing hostages on trains going through hostile parts of the country. If the House would allow him, he would tell them briefly what Germany actually did; he was not concerned with defending such operations, but simply referred to them to show that the present operations in South Africa were by no means unprecedented.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.): You will find any amount of precedents in Ireland.

\*MR. ARTHUR LEE: The Germans found in 1870 that the only way to preserve their lines of communications was by inflicting condign punishment upon the districts in which they were interfered with. That was shown by the instructions issued by the German generals. (The hon. Member then quoted passages from regulations and orders to show that the Germans adopted the same methods as had been made use of in South Africa.) The practice in the United States, he said, was the same. In order to deal with the lawless bands who made raids on small parties along the lines of communications, General Sheridan gave orders for the destruction of villages, the burning of barns and mills, and the seizure of stock.

MR. FLYNN: Nothing about farmhouses.

\*MR. ARTHUR LEE said he was not concerned with defending this policy. He merely wished to point out that these events were not unprecedented, but had occurred over and over again in the most recent history of the most civilised nations of the world. The hon. and learned Gentleman opposite was entirely wrong in the inference which he drew from the fact that the rules of war laid down that "undefended houses should not be attacked." That simply meant that undefended houses should not be shelled or fired upon, which was a very different thing to destroying houses from which attacks had proceeded, after the inhabitants, especially the women and children, had been removed, so that no loss of life could result. That was a point which the hon. and learned Gentleman had overlooked. Of course the British soldier did not love this work, but in times of war, as in times of peace, we had sometimes to perform duties which were repugnant to

our feelings, and it was not fair to infer that the British soldiers had been carrying out these matters with any other feelings than distaste. It had been said that this must bring ruin and desolation on many; and of course that was so, but war could not be carried on with kid gloves. No one regretted more than he the severe measures which had to be taken, but, as Lord Roberts had found it impossible to prevent these attacks on the lines of communications without having recourse to methods sanctioned by the highest authorities in war, the British soldier must pocket his feelings and carry on operations in the only way which would bring the war to an end. He would conclude by quoting one of the rules laid down for the government of the army of the United States in the field. He took the case of the United States because he believed it would be more agreeable to hon. Gentleman below the gangway opposite, who had many reasons to be grateful to that country. One of those rules declared that "the more vigorously war is pursued the better it is for humanity. Sharp wars are brief." All this outpouring of sentiment was doing nothing to hasten the end of the operations. We must work with a firm and unbending hand, so that both Dutch and English in South Africa might know that we meant business.

MR. PIRIE (Aberdeen, N.) said whatever were the views of hon. Members on this grave and sad subject; and he was aware that some were very deep and bitter; he thought that the speech which had been made by the hon. Gentleman the member for Hawick Burghs would have a vast influence in bringing home to the people and the country the sad state of affairs. Having regard to the gravity of the position he desired only to dwell upon the last chapter of the history of the war; the negotiations entered into between Lord Kitchener and General Botha. He saw in those negotiations the same failure on the part of the Government to realise the importance of the question, and to grasp the patent facts. He thought the attitude which the Government had taken up was an impossible one, and that the terms which they thought General Botha would accept were based on a misconception. He was surprised that Lord Kitchener was left without guidance in such negotiations, and the result was that the country found itself in a more hopeless situation than would otherwise have been the case so far as peace was concerned than if no negotiations had taken place. It seemed to him that the Government were content to "muddle on." The gravest fact of the situation was that the opinions and knowledge of men upon the spot were disregarded.

The speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Colonial Secretary on a previous occasion finding fault with the men who were conducting the negotiations was to his mind most impolitic; whatever might be their faults, the House would be unanimous in condemning the language which had been used by the right hon. Gentleman. It was lamentable to find that the prevailing character of the negotiations was that

the terms increased in severity according to the distance from the field of operations. The terms of Sir Alfred Milner and of Lord Kitchener, who knew the conditions and the country, were far more lenient than those offered by the right hon. Gentleman. It was most remarkable. Lord Kitchener, with a full knowledge of what was demanded, and the condition of the army, urged that the

transition stage should be as short as possible, and that the Crown Colony system should be practically non-existent. And hon. Members must remember that Crown Colony government to the Boers meant the revival and renewal of traditions to which they were most opposed, and which carried to them most bitter memories. Lord Kitchener gave sound advice, yet instead of taking it the Colonial Secretary substituted only vague promises. As to compensation for the burning of farms, after the statement of the hon. and learned Member, it was most surprising that the Government could not see the necessity for giving full and generous compensation. He held in his hand the testimony of the hon. and gallant Member for South Glamorgan; who, unfortunately, was unable to be present on account of ill health; which, to his mind, conclusively showed that farm burning was carried on unnecessarily and with painful results. The hon. Member for South Glamorgan said;

"It is the burning of the homestead without cause that I protest about. It is this burning of farms and houses, and the turning of women and children out on the veldt that is doing so much mischief."

The hon. Member belonged to the Government side of the House, and he would not speak in that way unless he felt it necessary to bring the position home to the country and the Government. The hon. and gallant Member added;

"It is not worthy of us, and at the first opportunity I shall raise my voice against it in another place."

Full and ample compensation should be given for these things. The Colonial Secretary in his speech had stated his reasons for offering a loan instead of a gift. The right hon. Gentleman stated that the Boers had burned as many farms as the British. He considered that statement fantastic, and attached no credence whatever to it. He had not been able to

discover any authenticated cases of farm burning on the part of the Boers. The right hon. Gentleman said that if we gave compensation to the farmers we must give compensation to the mines. Had the mines been destroyed? Were the owners of the mines destitute as the farmers were? With regard to the question of the loan, how were these unfortunate farmers to find security when their houses were burned and their stock taken away? Lord Kitchener and Sir Alfred Milner had seen the absolute necessity of giving compensation, and the Government in this matter might have been more generous. Looking at it as a mere matter of business, a fortnight's cost of the war would be more than sufficient to provide the necessary compensation, and such payment would do much to establish confidence between the two nations which had to live together.

With regard to the amnesty, the negotiations showed something for which the Boers had always been distinguished; their attachment to each other. He thought it a very curious inauguration of the new regime we hoped for that we should haggle over terms. He must say for himself that he respected the Boers not only for fighting but for fighting to the death sooner than accept the terms offered to them. The

Secretary for the Colonies had confessed that the spirit which animated the Government in their action was that they should not be thought weak. A strong Government could afford to disregard that. The right hon.

Gentleman said we must be just to the loyalists? Who were these loyalists? The Secretary for War said that those who were not believers in Sir Alfred Milner were disloyal. The hon. Member thought that statement had done an enormous amount of harm in South Africa.

It was sometimes said that we must not give in. We had reduced these petty Republics to the utmost destitution. We had taken everything away from the Boers, and they were absolutely homeless. Surely we could afford to be generous. We had robbed them of everything. [Cries of "No," and "Robbed them?"] He apologised, and withdrew the word, which escaped him, but we had taken everything away from them except their honour, and that would remain with them for ever. He would like to see the negotiations in different hands from those managing them at present. He believed that if Lord Salisbury and Lord Kitchener could treat directly with General Botha we should have a chance of securing peace more quickly. He could not agree with the Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs that this war was an unmixed blessing. He looked upon it as one of the greatest disasters that had ever happened to this great country. If the Government were a little less positive, a little less "cocksure," to use a familiar expression, there might be a little more chance of a solution. He was surprised at the infatuation of the Government in refusing to receive suggestions from Messrs. Merriman and Saner. That refusal would have almost as disastrous an effect as the statement that there were only two classes in South Africa; those who believed in Sir Alfred Milner and those who did not. That was playing directly into the hands of the anti-British party in South Africa.

The situation from the military point of view was very serious. It was sometimes thought that those who opposed the war actually did not care for military success. Bitterly opposed as he was to the war, if it was to go on he was anxious that we should hold our own. He wished to impress on the Government the gravity of the military situation. Of the 30,000 men sent out as reinforcements not more than 8,000 were trained. He should like to know what provision had been made by the Government for a constant stream of reinforcements, which was the very essence of the conduct of military affairs. If the Government were to continue this war, which he deeply deplored, the vigorous prosecution of it was more than ever necessary, but not by methods which Lord Roberts had to condemn and stop. The hon. Member did not think we would see peace in South Africa so long as Sir Alfred Milner was there. That was saying nothing against his personal character. What he suggested was that that gentleman should be removed to a higher post elsewhere, in order to relieve South Africa of his presence.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR WAR (Mr. BRODRICK, Surrey, Guildford): The hon. Member who has just sat down

has not added anything to what has been previously said in discussions of this subject; and, if it were possible to allow his remarks, and also those of the hon. and learned Member who introduced the subject, to go unchallenged. I should not trouble the House this afternoon; but I feel bound to say that it is necessary for the Government to dissociate themselves, on behalf of the great majority of the House of Commons, from the views which have been expressed; views which, of course, will be telegraphed out to South Africa as if they were the

views of the House of Commons. We are absolutely opposed, and I believe the great majority of the House and the country are opposed, to a good many of the expressions used this afternoon. I do not refer to those extreme suggestions with which the hon. Gentleman concluded his speech, for the removal of Sir Alfred Milner from South Africa, the general surrender on every point in dispute during the negotiations, backed by the profession that he was going to show his loyalty and patriotism by wishing our troops every success in the field, while asserting that the latest reinforcements sent out were unworthy to represent this country in the field. But I should like to point out that the eloquent and earnest address of the hon. and learned Member for the Border Burghs, and the opinions which he expressed, and which have been backed up by the hon. Member for North Aberdeen, were absolutely contrary to the expressions used the other day by two Members on his own side of the House, both of whom told the country that the terms offered to the Boers were "generous in the extreme." Those were the words of the hon. and learned Member for Linlithgow and of the hon. and learned Member for South Shields. According to the report,

"The hon. Member for Linlithgow said that he agreed with the previous speaker that never had such generous terms been offered by the victors to the vanquished, and he defied any student of history to contradict him."

I defy any student of history also. He was backed up by the hon. Member for South Shields, who said, in entire contradistinction to the speeches made this evening, that it was unreasonable for the Boers to expect anything like full representative government until there has been a settlement of the country. That opinion absolutely sets at naught the suggestion of the hon. and learned Member for the Border Burghs, that we should go by the precedent of Canada in this matter. It may be true that Lord Durham was in favour of granting representative Government to Canada, but he was not dealing with a country of which a great majority of the loyal population, and a very great majority of the whole of the inhabitants, had been expelled by the force of war. When the hon. and learned Gentleman proposes that the Boer leaders should be brought back and reinstated in a Legislative Assembly, in which there should be an unquestioned majority of those who brought about the war, I can only say, in reply, that such a policy would make this country simply ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

\*MR. THOMAS SHAW: I am quite sure the right hon. Gentleman does not wish to misrepresent me. That is not what I suggested. I suggested that Commandant Botha's offer should have been accepted; namely, that there should be an elective advisory body to act along with the nominated Executive. I suggested that that was the offer which should have been accepted.

MR. BRODRICK: The hon. and learned Member spoke of "an elective Assembly without delay." That was his expression, and that expression will go out to South Africa and be understood as representing the views of those with whom he acts. I do not labour the point. I do no more than point out the absolute absurdity of such a suggestion. In the same way, when the hon. Member suggests that there should be a free amnesty, I think the hon. Member will look in vain in history to find a parallel for what has taken place as regards the rebels in the Cape Colony. Having no grievance whatever of their own, having the full rights of

constitutional government, and even a majority in their Legislature in that colony, they proceeded across the border, and, for whatever reason, threw themselves into alliance with the Boers of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, and levied war on Her Majesty. The Government have to consider the feelings of the loyalists in

South Africa. We must see that we do not alienate the feelings of those loyalists who have supported us in this struggle, and what we must avoid, on the other hand, is to encourage those who might mistake concessions for weakness, and who, in consequence of such a mistake, would be inclined to a renewal of the struggle at the earliest opportunity.

Now, let me say one word on the constitutional point the hon. and learned Member raised. He spoke about annexation, but the hon. and learned Member has absolutely, if I may say so, misled the House by his argument. What did we attempt to do in regard to the Boers which we might not have done under annexation? Not only have we not treated them as rebels and traitors, but they have been allowed to go on parole to their homes after annexation, and only when that parole was broken on countless occasions did it become necessary to deport them, which is the process now adopted. It has been thought by hon. Gentlemen opposite desirable to renew the discussion which has been dealt with on several previous occasions. I believe that the Government have given the strongest pledges of the sincerity of their desire for peace by the terms which they entrusted Lord Kitchener to deliver in his final letter. The hon. and learned Member, in the course of an eloquent peroration, said he was afraid we might have lost honour in this business. I do not think it would tend to our honour as a nation to carry out the terms of peace to which he pinned his faith. I do not believe, when peace had been attained, this House would consider it redounded to our honour or credit that we had deserted our friends and those who stood by us. I do not believe in handing back the Transvaal to a body of men who would be in an uncontrolled majority, and who, therefore, would be brought into direct conflict with this country. I do not think that that would be a honourable, wise, or statesmanlike solution of the difficulty. We are earnestly desirous of peace, but it must be a peace on terms which we can recommend to the people of this country. Of course, if we had admitted from the very first that every contention of the Boer Republics was good, no war would have taken place. But the House knows what the

history has been, and I can only say that the speeches made to-night have been at variance with past speeches on the other side of the House, and they are, I believe, at variance with the sentiments of the country as to the conduct of the negotiations. For that reason they cannot possibly influence the Government in the work which we have in hand, but we must dissociate ourselves from them. We have full confidence in Sir A. Milner. We intend, with every desire to leave open the path for negotiations when the time comes, or when it pleases the Boer leaders to come to us, at the same time to make it clear that we shall carry the war through by every means in our power. For that reason we have sent out fresh troops; and I cannot but hope that the war may yet, despite all that has taken place, be brought to a speedy and honourable conclusion.

## ACCIDENTS TO RAILWAY SERVANTS.

\*MR. BELL (Derby): Much has been said since the assembling of this present Parliament on the South African question and the colonies generally, but this evening I am going to direct the attention of the House to something which I consider equally as important as even the question of South Africa. The subject to which I desire to draw attention is the enormous number of accidents which occur on our railways to those employed, and it is with a view to getting the Board of Trade to administer the Act of last year in a better manner than it has been administered up to the present time that I now intervene. The Act to which I refer was placed on the Statute-book on the 1st of July last, after a Royal Commission composed of representatives of both Houses of Parliament, together with experts from both the employers and the employees in the railway service, had considered the subject and reported. This Commission was not of the ordinary, orthodox style of Commissions, but one which carried out the task assigned to it in a workmanlike and satisfactory manner, and carried it out in a very short space of time, concluding with recommendations which were agreed to unanimously. This Report, which hon. Members of the late Parliament have been able to see, but which hon. Members who, like myself, are new to the House of Commons, have not had the opportunity of perusing, and probably are not familiar with, shows that the members of the Commission were unanimous in their opinion. I will quote a paragraph from their Report. They themselves have written;

"Having carefully considered the facts and figures above set out, we have come to the conclusion that the deaths occurring and the injuries sustained amongst railway servants are unnecessarily great in number, and can, by means of authoritative action be diminished. If we are right in this conclusion, we feel sure that every class of your Majesty's subjects will desire to see full and immediate action to diminish the preventable loss of life and injuries sustained by a deserving portion of the community."

I think that is a very definite and emphatic opinion, and it is the more remarkable from the Commission having among its members representatives of the railway companies. I will draw the attention of the House to another paragraph which, to my mind, is the strongest and most important of the whole lot. They say that;

"Lives that could be saved are lost, and men are injured unnecessarily. Ought the State to remain quiescent, and leave it to chance or to the will of individuals to apply a remedy? Even if the remedy is left in private hands, surely an obligation of a positive character should be imposed upon them to effect it."

The result of that Report was long discussions in this House, and a Bill was introduced by the late President of the Board of Trade, the present Home Secretary.

That Bill was one of considerable strength, and was very positive in some of its clauses, but, owing to the enormous opposition offered by representatives of the railway companies and private wagon owners, both inside and outside this House, the right hon. Gentleman the then President of the Board had to minimise, or considerably modify, the clauses in that Act. In spite of that, however, the

measure, when completed, set forth a schedule enumerating twelve subjects or headings under which the Commissioners declared themselves of opinion that steps should be taken immediately to prevent accidents. These twelve subjects are very simple in themselves. First we have "brake levers on both sides of the wagons." That is a very simple matter, and one I will deal with more particularly later on. The

second is "labelling wagons." Presently I will explain to the House the pernicious effect of having traffic labelled on one side only of the wagons. The third is "movement of wagons by propping and tow-roping"; the fourth, "steam or other power-brakes on engines." These things appear to be very simple, as I said, in the case of brake levers on both sides of wagons. One would hardly believe that it would be necessary for an Act of Parliament to be passed to compel railway companies or private wagon owners to label wagons on both sides, or even; in the case of companies; to adopt such appliances as power brakes in order to prevent accidents on their railways. The fifth subject is "Lighting of stations or sidings when shunting operations are frequently carried on after dark." It is needless to say, Mr. Speaker, that anyone who believes or would listen to the statements put forward by the railway companies inside and outside the House would hardly credit that it is necessary to have an Act of Parliament to compel them to fix up in their yards the lights that are essential to enable the men who carry on these dangerous avocations to do their work with the highest degree of safety. The sixth subject is "Protection of point rods and signal wires and position of ground levers working points." That is another simple matter, and the House will agree that it ought not to be necessary to have either rules of the Board of Trade or Acts of Parliament to compel employers' precautionary measures in connection with point rods, signal wires, and so forth. Then, the seventh subject is "Position of offices and cabins near working lines"; the eighth, "marking of fouling points"; and the ninth, "construction and protection of gauge glasses." Many a man has lost his eyesight in consequence of the bursting of a gauge glass. These are preventable accidents, and I maintain that the Board of Trade should set out in a more active way and put forth greater energy than it has done up to now in order to prevent these accidents from occurring. The tenth subject is "Arrangement of tool boxes and water gauges on engines"; the eleventh, "Working of trains without brake vans upon running lines beyond the limits of stations"; and twelfth, "Protection to permanent-way men when relaying or repairing permanent way."

Now, I submit that the enumeration of those twelve matters on which protection is required is an evidence to the Board of Trade that the workmen whose interests are in question are engaged in what is called "dangerous trades." It is a clear indication to the Board of Trade that the employers in these respects can adopt measures by which many of the accidents which would otherwise occur may be prevented. But what is the position? It is this: that notwithstanding the Act which has been in force since the 1st July, 1900, the accidents to railway servants; fatal and non-fatal; are largely on the increase. The return given in the Board of Trade Report for the last six months of the year 1900 has not yet



been published. The last I have is for the half-year ending 30th June, 1900. Now, I find from perusing this report; without going into the whole of the details; that accidents have been very largely on the increase, and I find, on comparing the monthly reports from the Labour Gazette with this report for the half-year ending 30th June, 1900, that the fatal accidents were 33 per cent. higher than in 1896. Imagine that, Sir; The fatal accidents have increased on railways to the extent of 33 per cent. in five years. Non-fatal accidents have increased by 11 per cent. Now these accidents, as no doubt a large number of Members are aware, were principally amongst three or four grades or sections of those employed on railways. I have taken out here a short schedule of the four grades which occupy, perhaps, the foremost place, so far as risk is concerned, on railways. Take first the grade of shunters. There are only 9,244 of these men employed, and of these in the six months ending 30th June last year 23 were killed and 347 injured. Goods guards come next; second on the list; and of these there are 14,720 on our railways. There were 20 killed in the six months and 436 injured. Firemen are third on the list, numbering 21,821, and of these 13 were killed and 266 injured. Then come the drivers, of whom there are 22,237, and of these 12 were killed and 202 injured. These four grades combined give a total of 68,022, and of that number 68 were killed and 1,251 injured during the short period of six months. I know there is very great objection on the part of railway companies to State interference, and I am not here to advocate anything that is arbitrary, even against railway companies, but I do maintain this, that the State has a distinct right to interfere where it can prevent accidents, fatal or otherwise, to His Majesty's subjects. Let us compare for a moment the case of the mechanics who are employed by these same railway companies with that of the railway employees. The mechanics number 68,661, or 639 more than the men in the four grades I have enumerated. Of these 68,601 mechanics employed 10 only were killed and 19 injured in the same period that 68 of the railway-men were killed and 1,251 injured. Now, Sir, what I want particularly to point out here is that the mechanics, or those employed in the works of the companies, are subject to statutory supervision. They are under the Home Office, and the Home Office inspectors can at any time when they think it desirable, or when they feel inclined, go to the factory and inspect them, even on anonymous reports or complaints. It is evident that this inspection is not without its effect in preventing accidents, when we find that with a higher total number of men employed than the men in the four grades I have referred to there have only been 10 killed and 19 injured in the six months. I maintain, therefore, that I am justified in insisting that the Board of Trade should be active, and utilise to the fullest extent the powers conferred upon it by the Act of 1900 for the Prevention of Accidents. There is one thing I want to bring prominently to the attention of the President of the Board of Trade, and it is that since the passing of the Act at the commencement of the last half-year the responsibility which has rested upon the Board of Trade has been greater than it was previously. Unless something is done by the Department to reduce or diminish this large number of accidents occurring

amongst railway-men, the responsibility for this enormous loss of life and injury to limb, or at any rate for its increase, will rest with the Board of Trade. There are various things which should be done, and many of them should be done immediately, and I trust that after calling the right hon. Gentleman's attention to them it will not be necessary for me at a later stage of the session to repeat what I am saying here to-night. Some people; even Members of this House; who are interested in the railways will very likely say that they welcome complaints from their men, and are always ready to pay attention to them. Sir, I do believe that many hon. Members of this House, who hold positions on the directorates of the various companies, and many railway directors outside, do sincerely desire to hear complaints, and respond to them, but we men know how difficult it is for complaints to reach their ears. There are such a large number of superintendents and officials of various degrees through whom the complaints have to pass that they very often do not reach the high authorities. Complaints have to run the gauntlet of crowds of interested officials, who throw every kind of obstacle in the way of their reaching those persons for whom they are intended and who would have the power to redress the grievances. I have here several instances, of which I will only mention a few, where complaints have been made sometimes by the men themselves and sometimes through their organisation. But they have too often been ignored by the officials of the companies, accidents in this way being allowed to continue. I am not going to particularise any of the large number of companies here to-night. I do not propose to specialise any of them, but it is necessary to give a few typical cases, and I must, therefore, mention the railways; but it should be understood that the general principle and my remarks apply to one and all of the railways throughout the kingdom. It is true that there are some railways which give more attention to these things than others; it is also true that some give better attention to the Board of Trade recommendations and to various other things with a view to reducing the number of accidents than others. In fact, the Report of the Royal Commissioners themselves states that there are some companies who are ready to comply with the recommendations of the Board of Trade, whilst others ignore them, consequently it is necessary that the Board should be active so as to allow no negligence in these matters, and so as to secure everything being done to reduce the number of accidents to railway servants.

I take a few typical cases of what has recently occurred. One case I am about to mention is that of a man who has been seriously injured, in fact I believe he has since died of his injuries. I believe notice had been sent to the railway company, or to the general manager of the company, calling his particular attention to this class of danger in 1899, but I understand it has not been remedied at all. I am told indeed that no attention at all has been given to the matter. The complaint is as to a particular class of engine that is employed on the London, Brighton, and South Coast Railway. These engines have on them pumps instead of injectors for inserting water into the boilers. These pumps have sometimes to be attended to after the engine has perhaps climbed up a steep

incline with a heavy train. The driver is obliged to use all the steam power he has till he has got to the summit of the incline. Very often he is not able to put water into the boiler until he has got to the summit, and it is then very often found that the pumps are full of air. It is necessary to let this air out before the pump can get to the water. The pet-cocks of the pumps are sometimes not connected with the footplate, which is desirable in order to avoid the necessity for the engine driver to walk along the framing of the engine to open the cocks in order to let out the air. Engines on other railways with these pumps have a connection to the footplate, and the driver can open the pumps without leaving the footplate. Well, the top of the framing along which the men have to walk is less than three inches wide, and the pumps have to be frequently attended to, otherwise they will not work. The attention of the general manager of the company was called to this so far back as 28th March, 1899, but no notice was taken of the matter. The men had to continue walking round the framing of the engine, and in the case to which I have referred the fireman, after attending to the pet-cock of the pump, fell from the framing of the engine on to the ballast, which caused concussion of the brain.

He thus sustained very serious injury' and I believe that he has died in consequence of his injuries. I find also that there are various other things; the details of which, however, I will not trouble the House with; which ought to be put before the House. I hope to be able to put them before the President of the Board of Trade in another way, so that the matter, at any rate, may not escape his attention and be overlooked, and so that the engines may be inspected or examined by the Board of Trade.

I may say that the reason I make these remarks here this evening is in order that the Board of Trade may do something, and that speedily, in the direction of putting a stop to the danger which this case demonstrates. I know it is very objectionable to railway companies to have inspectors examining into their arrangements, but I must say that I fail to see why railway companies should be exonerated, or any of their plant, yards, stations, premises, or anything else should be exonerated from statutory inspection any more than the premises or works of other employers' factories, shops, and things of that kind. Every other employer has to have his plant, machinery, shop, factory, or foundry subjected to State interference, and I fail to see why railway companies, of all employers in the country, should be exempted from this interference. The only reason I can find for it is that railway directors perhaps have been rather more powerful in this House than other employers, and, objecting to interference when it has been proposed, have been successful in getting themselves exempted. I find that a shipowner cannot even build his ship, cannot launch his ship, cannot load his ship, cannot man his ship, or cannot even feed his men, or berth his men, without being subjected to State interference. If such is the case with regard to ships, surely we, have a right to expect to see that the State should interfere in the case of another dangerous calling and should see whether or not shunting yards are in a proper condition and are fit for the persons who have to work in them? Surely we can expect the State to intervene and ascertain through their own officials whether, for instance,

there is sufficient light in this, that, or the other yard. Surely we can expect the State to see whether obstacles such as point-rods, signal wires, and ground levers for working points, which are known in the railway service as death-traps, are sufficiently removed out of the way of those who have to work in the yards. It is in this direction that I ask the President of the Board of Trade to do all he can to render the work of railwaymen less dangerous, and to do it speedily. I readily admit this, that had not the General Election taken place when it did, probably something more would have been done. I do not for a moment say that there has been any laxity on the part of the right hon. Gentleman the present President of the Board of Trade. I know that he has lately succeeded the present Home Secretary in the position he now holds. The present Home Secretary it was, practically, who brought about the measure as to the administration of which I am now referring. The right hon. Gentleman was familiar with the Act right through, and, probably, had he remained at the Board of Trade, he, through his knowledge and experience, would have been more active than the present right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, who is not so familiar with these subjects. No doubt it was necessary for him to spend some little time in acquainting himself with the facts and circumstances surrounding the particular subject to which I am now drawing his attention, but I think that since last October, now six months gone, the right hon. Gentleman has had sufficient time to give effect to the provisions of the Act. I hope he will now give practical effect, and give that speedily, to the measure which has given him so much power.

Then there is the question of steam or other power brakes on engines. I desire to say a word or two on this, as the question of providing power brakes on engines is one that should not be delayed. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade, in reply to a question I addressed to him a week or two ago, said that the railway companies were doing all they could to give effect to the schedule of the Act. That may be correct so far as it applies to some companies, but it is incorrect so far as it applies to others. I venture to suggest that unless pressure is brought to bear upon them the managers of railway companies will not put themselves out of the way at all in order to give full effect to the Act of 1900. I have here a report as to engines, ten in number, turned by the Great Northern of Ireland Railway since the passing of this Act out of their repairing shops. In many cases the engines were in the shops for general repairs, but yet they have all been turned out without the power brakes specified in the Act. Now, if the railway companies are so ready and willing to put the Act into effect without pressure from the Board of Trade, why, I ask, did the Great Northern Railway of Ireland turn out ten engines they had had in the shops for repairs without trying to apply to them the power brakes referred to? The result of the engines being turned out without power brakes has been illustrated by one typical incident which I will mention. An accident occurred on the 9th of last month through an engine working a ballast train running into a platelayers bogey a mile south of Portadown. It went into a gang of platelayers, and one man was killed and another was injured so seriously that he is not expected to recover.

I am told that this accident would not have occurred had this engine possessed the power brake. That is only one case out of a large number I could mention, but I am not going to trouble the House with a great number of details. If the President of the Board of Trade or the House desire to have the details I shall be very pleased to submit them, but I know they do not. Therefore I would simply mention one or two typical cases under each of the headings I have here, in order to show the House how prevention can be applied in these cases, and how the present absence of regulations operates to the detriment of railway men. I find in regard to shunters;shunting yards and shunting operations;that in many cases;in the majority of instances I am sorry to say;signal wires, point rods, and so, forth are allowed in between the lines on which the men have to carry out the shunting operations. Shunting operations even with the best of point rods and with all obstacles out of the way are dangerous enough, and I do hope that something will be done to compel the railway companies to remove these obstacles out of the way. The result of these obstacles being allowed to continue on the lines in the shunting yard is very lamentable. In the day time it is bad enough, but imagine a man working in a shunting yard at night time when he has to walk astraddle, as it were, in order to avoid point rods and signal wires, and when he has to dodge out of the way of ground levers, holding his light turned upon the wagons he is shunting with one hand, whilst in the other he holds his shunting pole, six feet long; How is it possible that he can see all the obstacles in his way and take necessary precautions to avoid them? Therefore I think the companies should be compelled to take these things away. As long as they do not remove them themselves, the Board of Trade should step in and require them to do it.

Then there are other matters which, I claim, should come under State supervision. There is the question of putting lads to do the important work of shunting. I have here a report which refers to a youth of sixteen years of age being employed by the South-Eastern and Chatham and Dover Hail-way at Tunbridge as late as the 17th of February last. An accident occurred, and the coroner's jury, and all the evidence, in fact, condemned the employment of a boy of sixteen years of age in such dangerous work as that of shunting. In this case I maintain that the Board of Trade ought to take the responsibility on itself and declare that lads like this should no longer be permitted to follow this dangerous occupation. It may be said that boys as well as men were allowed to work in other dangerous trades, such as in mines, but in those cases the State interferes, and I do not see why they should not interfere in this case. I do not think I ought to specialise or particularise any shunting yard, for almost every railway in the kingdom is a sinner more or less in this direction. They do not light their yards sufficiently or protect the men by removing from their paths the obstacles to which I have referred. Therefore, I maintain that the Board of Trade should intervene, and if they have not a sufficient staff to enable them to do the necessary inspecting work, the staff should be increased so that the Act of 1900 may be put efficiently into operation. I find that the Irish railways are perhaps the greatest offenders in connection with this subject. [Hear, hear; from the Nationalist Members.]

I find from reports I have from the Great Southern and Western, the Midland Great Western and the Great Northern of Ireland; on these railways nearly the whole of the shunting yards are badly lit and some not lit at all, and that so far as protection of point rods and signal wires and so on is concerned, such protection is almost out of the question. I maintain that the present number of officers that the Board of Trade have at their disposal is absolutely inadequate to do the work of protecting the life and limb of the many thousands of men employed on these and other railways. To my mind, the two sub-inspectors employed by the Board of Trade would be insufficient even to look after the Irish railways, to say nothing of those in this country. There is another matter of great importance, if not of the greatest importance, to which I desire to call attention, and that is the necessity of doing something to get rid of the obnoxious shunting pole upon our railways. It is very much nursed and cherished by the railway companies, and two or three weeks ago, in reply to a question put by me the President of the Board of Trade said that nothing was being done in this direction, but that they had not lost sight of it. But they have had it "in sight" for the last twenty years, and I hope that we are not going to keep it in sight at such a long distance in the future. The number of accidents which happen to rail way men through the shunting pole cannot be calculated by the return in the Blue-book, because the accidents are given there as occurring through coupling and uncoupling operations.

There are scores of accidents which happen to men employed in our shunting yards which do not arise from coupling or uncoupling, but which take place through the men having to carry this six-foot shunting pole about with them to do their work. To my mind, to require a man to move about in a shunting yard coupling and uncoupling wagons, with a six-foot shunting pole in one hand and a light in the other, is like requiring a soldier to go into an engagement with a gun in one hand and an umbrella in the other. That might appear ridiculous to hon. Gentlemen, and no doubt it was. But it was equally ridiculous to expect a man to do shunting work with a pole six feet long in his hand. Three weeks ago a fatal accident occurred, not through the use of the coupling pole, but through it being carried when not used at the time of coupling or uncoupling. One end of the pole caught and penetrated the body of a man who was oiling his engine as the shunter passed. I claim that one accident of that description is sufficient in itself to condemn any such instrument as the shunting pole. There are plenty of automatic couplings to be selected from which are applicable to the working of our railways, and I claim that the Board of Trade, in the interest of the safety of life and limb, should insist upon the adoption of something in that direction on all our railways, and not allow the companies to adopt automatic couplings in their own way and at their own time. I could give a large number of instances of accidents through the want of automatic couplings. I have selected cases from the different railways, so that it could not be said that I had singled out one railway as an object of attack more than another. I have given you a typical case that occurred to a man, not one using the pole or engaged in the act of coupling or uncoupling, but another person altogether; and this is only one instance out of a

number I could have mentioned.

I desire further to call the attention of the President of the Board of Trade to the absolute necessity there is for having some system of uniformity with regard to the brake levers that you have on rolling stock. It has been laid down in the Act that brake levers shall be applied to both sides of the wagons. It is true that there are a large number of companies experimenting by putting levers on both sides of their trucks, but every company has its own idea as to a brake, and each company has its own brakes. What I wish here to draw attention to is the great danger in a lack of uniformity. In the first place I would illustrate that by pointing out that the Great Western are building twenty-ton trucks. I believe that is a step in the right direction, but I would further draw attention to the fact that instead of having a brake that is handy they have a wheel brake attached to the side of the truck. Now, I would ask hon. Members who have seen railway operations carried on to imagine the difficulty a man must be under in a shunting yard going about amongst moving wagons turning a wheel here and there. What, I would ask, are his chances either of protecting the company's property by a quick application of the brake, which is very often necessary, or even of preventing himself from stumbling and meeting with a serious accident? The Caledonian Railway have another kind of brake; the Lancashire and Yorkshire have yet another, and the Great Northern have still a different kind, and I think the majority of the companies have adopted one sort of brake or another, but they are not all alike, and in that lies the danger. The danger in a difference of brake is this; that the wagons of the different companies bearing different brakes go from one place to another; one section of employees are accustomed to use a particular description of brake, and through the necessity of the exchange of traffic which takes place on our railways men accustomed to one sort of brake may have half-a-dozen brakes from another railway to deal with of a totally different kind. When a man goes to apply a brake which is absolutely new to him, and which he has never seen before, and is totally ignorant as to how it operates, and knows nothing of its power, in applying such a brake he is likely to meet with an accident, and of that I had intended to give an illustration, but I will not go into detail now. I will give the details more fully to the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Trade on another occasion and in another way if he desires it. The main point that I desire to impress upon the right hon. Gentleman is the desirability of bringing about uniformity in the matter of brakes.

I come now to a very simple matter which will in itself show the House how desirous the companies and the private wagon owners are of preventing accidents on our railways. It is simply the question of labelling on each side of a wagon. These labels do not cost a large sum of money by any means. I have a very large number of them here as specimens, and I should think that many thousands of them might be got for a few pounds. I have no fault to find with the size of the labels, but what I desire to point out to the President of the Board of Trade is, that since this agitation has been going on and the Royal Commission came into existence, some of the railway companies, I am bound to admit, have done a great deal in the way

of labelling the wagons on both sides, but the companies have not brought sufficient pressure to bear upon the colliery owners and upon private owners of wagons throughout the country to induce them also to label their wagons on both sides. The result is this: that of a large number of wagons which get into the shunting yard, one will be labelled on one side and another will be labelled on the opposite side, and these wagons, so mixed, will have come from different parts at different times and will be going in different directions. They have to be identified in the yard, and when they are labelled on one side only the railwayman has to creep under one to see where the next is labelled to. Shunting operations are taking place the while, and a large number of accidents take place whilst the men are going underneath a wagon or between two others to find out the destination of each. Since the passing of the Act of 1900 I find that a few colliery companies have adopted the system of labelling on both sides; but I desire to point out to the President of the Board of Trade that the system they have adopted is so useless that they might as well not have adopted it at all. I have here a number of labels bearing the address "to" or "from" certain collieries to or from "Wicker, Sheffield." That is a yard where exchange of traffic takes place between the Midland and the Great Central, and so forth. When the trucks get to "Wicker, Sheffield," they have not reached their destination, and that is where the danger exists. The wagons have to be marshalled there to be sent to the suburbs of Sheffield itself. It will not give me satis-

faction until not only every wagon has been labelled to its destination and station, but even the name of the consignee has been put on both sides, so that a wagon labelled to Sheffield will go there without the railwayman having to go from one side to another to ascertain where it is to be sent to.

This is an important matter, which I hope the President of the Board of Trade will not overlook. If he does overlook it the Act will not confer the amount of benefit that it was intended it should confer, and it will not prevent the accidents it was intended it should prevent. I earnestly ask the right hon.

Gentleman not to overlook this matter. I have here some sheets of names of collieries that only label their wagons on one side. I do not know that I should gain anything by particularising these collieries, but I leave it as a general question, and I hope the President of the Board of Trade will, under the powers conferred on him by the Act, notify the railway companies that after 1st May next they will be penalised in accordance with the penalties of the Act if they do not have every wagon carried by them on their lines labelled on both sides.

To do this they do not require new appliances or machinery. All that is necessary is that they shall give instructions that when a man has labelled a wagon on one side he shall go round to the other side and affix a label there also, in each case giving the consignee's name. There are also a large number of other dangerous subjects that I desire particular attention to be drawn to, and I am going to specify one or two, in order that the President of the Board of Trade may take measures to put a stop to that which is a fruitful source of accidents. I wish to call his attention to the large number of lads who at present are subject to a very dangerous occupation; namely, that of lighting



signal lamps. That occupation under the best of circumstances is a dangerous one, but under the actual circumstances in which the lads have to do it it is most perilous. The South-Eastern and Chatham and Dover Railway lads have to walk on the coping stones of arches to get to the signals to light the lamps. I have here a list of the cabin concerned; eight or ten of them; and I hope the President of the Board of Trade will look into the matter. As to the question I put to the right hon. Gentleman

to-day. I do not say that the answer I received has not given me satisfaction. It is that he has not yet received the report of the inspecting officer who inquired into the fatal boiler explosion on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway. I will leave what I had intended to say on that subject over until another day, but the question is of too great importance to be neglected, and I hope the President of the Board of Trade will not, at any rate, neglect to make full inquiries into the case. This is the second boiler explosion that has occurred, I believe, within the last twelve months; one on the Great Eastern and the other on the Lancashire and Yorkshire. From the reports of the two experts that I employed to investigate the case; an engineer and a boiler maker; so far as the explosion on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway is concerned, it is, to my mind, imperative that the Board of Trade should exercise the power now given to it and inspect not only the yards and other premises of the companies, but that some responsibility should be undertaken by the Board in the interest of public safety; leaving out of question the employees of the companies; even for the inspection of locomotive boilers. The right hon. Gentleman may examine and see whether he has, under the present Act, power to inspect locomotive boilers. I believe he has, but if he finds that that is not the case, I trust that the House will not be content until such power has been conferred on the Board of Trade. The Board of Trade should protect the interests of the public, of the employers and their workmen, and of all classes of His Majesty's subjects. The accidents I have referred to may appear to the minds of my hon. friends here as being insignificant, but a perusal of the Returns of the 30th June of last year will show that these accidents are of a very serious character. What do we find? Why, we find that out of the 1,251 non-fatal accidents which occurred in the six months to railway men, thirty-five were of the loss of legs or feet, eleven of arms or hands, seventeen of fingers or toes, six were fractures of the skull, fifty seven fractures of legs or arms, forty seven fractures of the collar-bone or ribs, and thirty-three fractures of other bones. I will content myself with enumerating these accidents, without going into the others, which are given in the tables, and which are also serious. I say that when all these legs and feet and arms and hands have been lost and fractured in one six months on our railways, to say nothing of the lives that have been lost, I trust the Board of Trade will see the necessity of exercising to the full the power now given to it. I trust that when this House comes to discuss the Board of Trade Estimates this time next year, and I may have to appeal to the right hon. Gentleman, I shall not be able in anyway to criticise any laxity on his part in giving effect to the powers now reposed in him by the Act of 1900.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF TRADE (Mr. GERALD BALFOUR, Leeds, Central): I do

not propose to follow the hon. Member for Derby into the details of the dangerous operations he has described, the particular accidents he has referred to, or the general statistics he has cited. It will probably be sufficient if I make the admission, as I do most fully make it, that everyone who has read the Report of the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into Railway Accidents must have arrived at the conclusion that the Commission were justified in expressing the opinion that "the deaths occurring and the injuries sustained among railway employees are unnecessarily great in number, and can, by means of authoritative action, be diminished." I make that admission, as I say, most fully. But the principal object of the hon. Member for Derby seems to have been to complain that up to the present time the Board of Trade has not administered the Act passed last year as effectively as it should have done and might have done. It is to that point I will especially direct my attention. The Railway Employment (Prevention of Accidents) Act was passed last year, at the end of the session, at the end of July. The autumn holidays followed close on that, and then; as the hon. Member has himself remarked; came the General Election at the end of September, which interfered with any steps that might otherwise have been taken, and then came the change of Government, and these events all caused delay. When, however, early in November I was appointed to my present office, I endeavoured to establish an Advisory Committee, to draw up the rules contemplated by the Act in respect of the twelve scheduled subjects. There was, I admit, considerable delay in appointing that Committee, the reason of that being that I was anxious to have on the Committee representatives both of the railway companies and of the men. The railway companies, however, for reasons which I readily understood, though I did not agree with them, were unwilling to nominate representatives to sit on the Committee, because they held that if they did so it would prejudice their right to any appeals they might desire to make under the rules which the Committee was to draw up for the sanction of the Board of Trade. The negotiations with the railway companies and my endeavours to get them to nominate representatives caused much delay; and ultimately I was obliged to give up all hope of having an Advisory Committee, and I appointed the Committee from the officers of the Department, with Lord James of Hereford as chairman, that noble Lord having kindly consented to occupy that position. That Committee has sat for some time, and has been occupied with the task of drafting rules for the consideration of the Board of Trade. I am happy to say that they have now brought their labours to a conclusion. I have this morning received the draft rules they have prepared. I will take care there shall be no delay in advertising those rules and in carrying out the necessary preliminaries to final sanction being given to them. In addition to the action I have described, I may say that the Board of Trade has also by-letter directed the attention of the railway companies to certain complaints as to dangerous operations referred to in the schedule to the Act. The hon. Member has himself described a good many dangerous operations, none of them, I think; or, at all events, hardly any of them; outside the scope of the schedule. The rules which have been prepared by the Committee of the Board of Trade; the draft rules; will apply to all the dangerous operations set out in

the schedules of the Act of last year, and I trust that when the hon. Member has an opportunity of seeing the draft rules he will be satisfied that they will effectually carry the purposes of the Act into operation. It is only fair to say that many of the railway companies, including the most important of them, have issued instructions in respect of the twelve scheduled matters, and it will be found when the rules are promulgated that they have been practically put into operation by these companies. This will show that the Board of Trade have not been indifferent to the carrying out of the Act of last year. I can assure the hon. Member that it is the intention of the Board to administer the Act vigorously, and I trust that a year hence the result of our action will be shown in a diminished list of accidents.

\*MR. BELL inquired if the President of the Board of Trade proposed to make any addition to his staff of inspectors to see that the rules were carried out.

MR. GERALD BALFOUR replied that two additional inspectors had already been appointed, and if experience showed that their services were insufficient to carry the Act into effect, application would be made to the Treasury by the Board of Trade for permission to employ a larger staff.

MR. ASQUITH (Fifeshire, E.): I rise to make two observations on a subject which must have engaged the attention of the House. The first is that everyone in the House will agree that the hon. Member for Derby was justified in calling attention to the subject; and the appalling list of accidents he was able to bring forward, the accuracy of which, I am afraid, no one can deny, shows that this is a matter of very great importance. But I must add that I am very glad to hear from the right hon. Gentleman opposite that steps have been taken, and are now in a forward state, for the purpose contemplated, and therefore of giving effect to the Act for the first time. Unfortunately, although this Act was passed last summer, practically nothing has been done to give effect to the intention of Parliament. I quite accept and acknowledge, however, the force of some of the dilatory pleas advanced by the right hon. Gentleman; the General Election, the change of officials, the difficulty with the railway companies, and so forth. All these matters might fairly be taken into account. My object is to join in the appeal of the hon. Member for Derby; and I am sure I am addressing willing ears; that the intentions of Parliament shall be promptly and effectually carried out, and this appalling, and to a large extent avoidable, loss of life and limb prevented.

EDUCATION; REX v. COCKERTON.

\*MR. YOXALL (Nottingham, W.): I hope I may have a few of the minutes that remain in order to impress on the Government the urgent and redoubled necessity of doing something within the next few weeks to place upon a legal footing a great deal of the work now being done in public elementary schools. This question was urgent at half-past ten yesterday morning, before the Master of the Rolls began his judgment, but at the end of that judgment it became doubly urgent, for this reason. I do not speak as a lawyer, but after a careful examination of the judgment I am forced to the conclusion, which I think possibly will be shared by the right hon. Gentleman, that the judgment of the Master of the Rolls has not only disabled the school boards as regards higher grade and higher elementary

education, but it has gone very far to endanger a great deal of what is known as ordinary elementary education in schools. The judgment of Mr. Justice Wills and Mr. Justice Kennedy was that a school board could not pay out of a school board rate for science and art teaching in schools or for elementary teaching in evening schools to persons of more than sixteen and a half years old. Mr. Justice Wills laid down that whatever was in the day school code was elementary education and could be paid for out of a school board rate in an ordinary day school so long as it was taught to persons not more than sixteen or sixteen and a half years old, but that the code issued from South Kensington was not to be regarded as elementary education, and could not be taught at the cost of the school board rate. That was the judgment that came before the Master of the Rolls, and the Master of the Rolls confirmed most of it. He confirmed the disablement of school boards from teaching science and art subjects at the cost of the school board rate, but he has gone further and questioned the right of the day school code to be regarded as the criterion as to what is elementary education and what is not. If it were possible for an auditor to surcharge a school board on the authority of Mr. Justice Wills' decision, apparently on the Master of the Rolls' decision, it is possible for an auditor to surcharge a school board for teaching cookery, sewing, or drawing, or anything else above the three R's. If the need for legislation were acute yesterday morning it is doubly acute at the present moment, and I trust we shall get a satisfactory assurance from the Government that they will take steps to legalise the position of the school boards.

THE VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION (Sir J. GORST, Cambridge University): It is rather a happy thing, I think, that we have the Easter recess in which to digest this very important judgment. I have not been so rapidly able as the hon. Member to grasp the whole effect of that judgment, and I shall be very glad to have a fortnight's holiday to think it over. Of one thing I would remind him; that the Education Bill which the Government has announced its intention of bringing before the House this session will give Parliament the opportunity of dealing with the whole of this matter, and I have no doubt that when the time comes the Government will be prepared to make recommendations to Parliament. But it must be for the wisdom of Parliament itself to find a solution of these difficulties. There is another thing I can assure him. I do not think there is the slightest danger of any school which has been already established and is doing good work being under the necessity of closing its doors. With that assurance I hope hon. Members will be satisfied until the end of the Recess, and then I think the Government may be called upon, after mature deliberation, to explain the proposals which they intend to submit to Parliament.

\*MR. SPEAKER: I may remind hon. Members that it is absolutely necessary that the motion should be put at or before ten minutes to seven o'clock.

MR. DUFFY (Galway, S.) said he regretted he would not have an opportunity of bringing forward a matter of great interest to a number of people in the West of Ireland, and, indeed, to Ireland generally. Listening to the debates which had taken place during the last few weeks it would be not unreasonably concluded

that outside the Transvaal and the Orange Free State there was not a prisoner of war in existence. He would point out that for the last eighteen years two men had suffered, and were still suffering, for a crime, or an offence, which sprang out of the agrarian agitation twenty years ago.

MR. A. J. BALFOUR rose in his place and claimed to move, "That the Question be now put."

AYES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir A. F.  
Greene, Henry D. (Sherwsbury  
Murray, Rt Hn A. Graham (Bute  
Anson, Sir William Reynell  
Grenfell, William Henry  
Murray, Charles J. (Coventry  
Arkwright, John Stanhope  
Greville, Hon. Ronald  
Murray,) Col. Wyndham (Bath)  
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis  
Groves, James Grimble  
Newdigate, Francis Alexander  
Atkinson, Rt. Hon. John  
Guthrie, Walter Murray  
Nicol, Donald Ninian  
Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r  
Hain, Edward  
Parker, Gilbert  
Balfour, Rt. Hn. G. W. (Leeds)  
Hamilton, Rt Hn Lord G. (Mid'x  
Peel, Hn. Wm. Robt. Wellesley  
Banbury, Frederick George  
Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Rbt. Wm.  
Pilkington, Richard  
Bartley, George C. T.  
Hare, Thomas Leigh  
Platt-Higgins, Frederick  
Bathurst, Hon. Allen B.  
Harris, Frederick Leverton  
Powell, Sir Francis Sharp  
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol  
Hay, Hon. Claude George  
Pretymann, Ernest George  
Bignold, Arthur  
Hayne, Rt. Hn. Chas. Seale-  
Purvis, Robert  
Bigwood, James  
Heath, J. (Staffords., N. W.)

Quilter, Sir Cuthbert  
Bill, Charles  
Henderson, Alexander  
Rasch, Major Frederic Carne  
Blundell, Colonel Henry  
Hermon-Hodge, Rbt. Trotter  
Rea, Russell  
Bond, Edward  
Higginbottom, S. W.  
Remnant, James Farquharson  
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-  
Hoare, E. Brodie (Hampstead)  
Ridley, Hon. M. W (Stalybridge  
Boulnois, Edmund  
Hope, J. F. (Sheffield, Brightsde  
Rigg, Richard  
Bull, William James  
Hornby, Sir Wm. Henry  
Ritchie, Rt. Hn. Chas. Thomson  
Billiard, Sir Harry  
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry  
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney)  
Caine, William Sproston  
Howard, J. (Kent, Faversh.)  
Robson, William Snowdon  
Carlile, William Walter  
Hozier, Hn. Jas. Henry Cecil  
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.  
Carson, Rt. Hon. Sir Edw. H.  
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick  
Rollit, Sir Albert Kaye  
Cavendish, R. F. (N. Lanes.)  
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop  
Round, James  
Cavendish, V. C. W (Derbyshire  
Keswick, William  
Royds, Clement Molyneux  
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)  
Kimber, Henry  
Sackville, Col. S. G. Stopford-  
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Worc'r  
King, Sir Henry Seymour  
Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)  
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry  
Knowles, Lees  
Samuel, S. M. (Whitechapel)

Chapman, Edward  
Lawrence, William F.  
Seely, Chas. Hilton (Lincoln)  
Cochrane, Hn. Thos. H. A. E.  
Lawson, John Grant  
Seton-Karr, Henry  
Collings, Rt. Hon. Jesse  
Lee, Arthur H (Hants, Fareham  
Shaw, Thomas (Hawick B.)  
Colomb, Sir John Charles R.  
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage  
Smith, James Parker (Lanarks.)  
Colston, Charles Edw. H. A.  
Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie  
Smith, Samuel (Flint)  
Corbett, A. Cameron (Glasgow)  
Leighton, Stanley  
Soames, Arthur Wellesley  
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)  
Llewellyn, Evan Henry  
Spear, John Ward  
Cox, Irwin Edward Bainbridge  
Long, Rt Hn Walter (Bristol, S.)  
Stanley, Lord (Lancs.)  
Cranborne, Viscount  
Lonsdale, John Brownlee  
Stirling-Maxwell, Sir John M.  
Dalrymple, Sir Charles  
Lowe, Francis William  
Stroyan, John  
Dickinson, Robert Edmond  
Loyd, Archie Kirkman  
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier  
Dickson, Charles Scott  
Lucas, Reginald J. (Portsmouth  
Thornton, Percy M.  
Dimsdale, Sir Joseph Cockfield  
Lyttelton, Hon. Alfred  
Tomlinson, Wm. Edw. Murray  
Dorington, Sir John Edward  
Macartney, Rt Hn W. G. Ellison  
Tritton, Charles Ernest  
Douglas, Rt. Hon. A. Akers-  
Macdona, John Cumming  
Valentia, Viscount  
Duke, Henry Edward

MacIver, David (Liverpool)  
Vincent, Col. Sir C. E. H (Sheff'ld  
Dunn, Sir William  
Maconochie, A. W.  
Wallace, Robert  
Durning-Lawrence, Sir Edwin  
M'Arthur, Charles (Liverpool)  
Warde, Col. C. E.  
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edw.  
Majendie, James A. H.  
Wason, Eugene (Clackmannan  
Fielden, Edward Brocklehurst  
Malcolm, Ian  
Welby, Lt.-Col. A. C. E. (T'unt'n  
Finlay, Sir Robert Bannatyne  
Manners, Lord Cecil  
Whiteley, George (York, W. R.)  
Fitz Gerald, Sir Robert Penrose-  
Mappin, Sir Frederick Thorpe  
Whitmore, Charles Algernon  
Fitzroy, Hn. Edw. Algernon  
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.  
Williams, Colonel R. (Dorset)  
Fletcher, Sir Henry  
Meysey-Thompson, Sir H. M.  
Willox, Sir John Archibald  
Faster, Sir Walter (Derby Co.)  
Middlemore, Jno. Throgmorton  
Wilson, John (Glasgow)  
Garfit, William  
Milward, Col. Victor  
Wilson-Todd, W. H. (Yorks.)  
Gibbs, Hn. A. G. H (City of Lond.  
Molesworth, Sir Lewis  
Wodehouse, Rt. Hn. E. R. (Bath  
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.  
Montagu, G. (Huntingdon)  
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-  
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (Elgin & Nairn  
Montagu, Hon. J. Scott (Hants)  
Wyndham, Rt. Hon. George  
Gordon, Maj Evans T'rH'mlets  
Moon, Edward Robert Pacy  
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong  
Gorst, Rt. Hn. Sir John Eldon  
More, Robt. Jasper (Shropshire)



Young, Commander) Berks, F.)  
Goschen, Hon. George Joachim  
Morgan, David J (Walthamst'w  
Goulding, Edward Alfred  
Morris, Hon. Martin Henry F.  
TELLERS FOR THE AYES;  
Graham, Henry Robert  
Morton, Arthur H A. (Deptford)  
Mr. Anstruther and Mr. Hayes Fisher.  
Grant, Corrie  
Mount, William Arthur  
NOES.  
Abraham, William (Cork, N. E.)  
Bell, Richard  
Caldwell, James  
Allen, Chas, P. (Glouc., Stroud)  
Boland, John  
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)  
Ambrose, Robert  
Bolton, Thomas Dolling  
Condon, Thomas Joseph  
Question put, "That the Question be now put."  
The House divided:;Ayes, 185; Noes, 56. (Division List No. 123.)  
Cullinan, J.  
Levy, Maurice  
Power, Patrick Joseph  
Davies, Alfred (Carmarthen)  
Lewis, John Herbert  
Reckitt, Harold James  
Davies, M. Vaughan- (Cardigan  
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.  
Reddy, M.  
Delany, William  
Macnamara, Dr. Thomas J.  
Redmond, John E. (Waterford  
Doogan, P. C.  
Markham, Arthur Basil  
Redmond, William (Clare)  
Duffy, William J.  
Mooney, John J.  
Roberts, John Bryn (Eifion)  
Ffrench, Peter  
Murphy, J.  
Shipman, Dr. John G.  
Flavin, Michael Joseph  
Nannetti, Joseph P.

Sullivan, Donal  
Flynn, James Christopher  
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)  
Thomas, Alfred (Glamorgan E.)  
Gilhooly, James  
Norton, Capt. Cecil William  
Warner, Thos. Courtenay T.  
Goddard, Daniel Ford  
O'Brien, Jas. F. X. (Cork)  
White, Patrick (Meath, North)  
Hayden, John Patrick  
O'Brien, Kendal (Tipperary Md  
Whittaker, Thomas Palmer  
Horniman, Frederick John  
O'Connor, James (Wicklow, W.  
Yoxall, James Henry  
Jacoby, James Alfred  
O'Connor, T. P. (Liverpool)  
Jones, William (Carnarvonsh.  
O'Dowd, John

TELLERS FOR THE NOES;

Joyce, Michael

O'Kelly, J. (Roscommon, N.)

Mr. Patrick O'Brien and Mr. Haviland-Burke.

Leamy, Edmund

O'Malley, William

Main Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

Resolved, That this House at its rising this day do adjourn till Thursday, 18th April.

EVENING SITTING.

STANDING COMMITTEES (AMENDMENT OF STANDING ORDER 50).

Standing Order 50 read:; "That all Bills which shall have been committed to one of the said Standing Committees shall, when reported to the House, be proceeded with as if they had been reported from a Committee of the whole House: Provided that the, provisions of the Standing Order 'Consideration of a Sill as amended' shall not apply to a Bill reported to the House by a Standing Committee."

\*SIR FRANCIS POWELL (Wigan) said that if any apology were needed from him for introducing this very important subject of the Amendment of Standing Orders, he begged to make it at once. He had for many years taken a deep interest in the work of the Standing Committee, and was familiar with the time in the history of Parliament when the new system was inaugurated by Mr. Gladstone, which, as he thought, wisely embodied the principle of delegation. He hoped the House would remember the circumstances under which that principle was adopted. He believed that the result of the experiment had been highly successful. The duties of Standing Committees had been confined to problems of administrative detail, and he, for his part, would strengthen those Committees; as he was quite sure that

the business of the House was now becoming so heavy and covered so wide a range that the principle of delegation had become absolutely necessary to the successful issue of Parliamentary proceedings.

The feeling of the Parliament elected in 1895 was less satisfactory on this point than the system which prevailed in the preceding Parliament. He had observed with great regret in the Parliament which had recently expired that the decisions of Standing Committees had not been received with the same respect as in the preceding Parliament; and he trusted that the Parliament now commencing its duties would, under the guidance of Mr. Speaker, follow the precedent of earlier Parliaments rather than that of the later. Parliament had certainly shown confidence in these Committees, because it had delegated to them subjects of the most gigantic importance. Not many years ago it was the rule of the House when a Bill had been amended in Committee of the Whole House to put the Report stage from the Chair in these words, "That the Bill be now considered." That proceeding involved considerable delay; for it often gave rise to a Second Reading debate, and constituted a great impediment to the advancement of wholesome legislation. When the Standing Committees were first inaugurated, no Amendment was introduced to effect the abolition of that stage, and one part of his present proposal was to secure that when a Standing Committee had carefully considered a Bill and amended it, the Report stage should be taken without question put, and that the House be enabled to proceed immediately with the Report. There was one point in the procedure of the Standing Committees and of Committees of the Whole House which was, as he thought, unfortunately identical. If a Committee of the whole House had passed a Bill without amendment there was no Report stage. He did not regret that condition of things, because the whole House had had an

opportunity of considering the whole question, and every clause of the Bill had passed in review before it. But in the case of Standing Committees which had passed a Bill without amendment the same rule applied, and he did not think that that was desirable; because in that case the House as a whole had had no opportunity of examining the Bill in detail, and was granted none except by the cumbrous and oftentimes impossible procedure; of moving that the Bill be, recommitted. They all knew the great difficulty of adopting that course and the impediment which it interposed to the progress of a Bill. The proposal which he made, therefore, was, that in cases where a comparatively thinly attended Committee had passed a Bill without amendment, an opportunity should be given for the measure to be considered by the whole House, and for every clause to be submitted to investigation.

The system of delegation had been carried out successfully as a whole, but he thought that the Amendments which he had ventured to indicate ought to be made. The House had committed to Standing Committees subjects of the greatest importance, one or two of which he would enumerate in order to illustrate his point. First there was the question of vaccination, a subject of very great importance indeed, and yet the number of Members who took part in the deliberations of the Standing Committee on that was most unsatisfactory. He found that the highest number who voted in any one division was not more than

twenty-two, and yet they knew how the public mind was stirred upon that question, and how great was the magnitude of the issue involved. Then they had in 1899 the Act which, for the first time, gave this country free elementary education. That again was most important, and yet the highest number of Members who voted on that Standing Committee was twenty-one. In

1900 there was another Education Bill, in charge of his right hon. friend the Member for Cambridge University, and in the Standing Committee to which that was referred the highest number of votes recorded was twenty-six. He might recall to their minds the Corrupt Practices Bill of

1895; a Bill of very great importance, which gave new powers with regard to the conduct of elections and exposed many persons to the severest penalties. That was passed through a Standing Committee in which the highest number of votes recorded was twenty-two. Did not those figures constitute sufficient proof that the action of Standing Committees in considering proposed changes in a Bill was not altogether satisfactory? He was quite aware that his right hon. friend would say not many Bills had passed the Standing Committees without amendment. But still there were some, and some, too, of considerable importance. There was at least one each year, and last year there were two; one of them a Government Bill of very great moment, dealing with education. It was greatly to be regretted that no opportunity was afforded for submitting that Bill to the House clause by clause and word by word. His desire was to strengthen the existing Standing Committees and to bring them back to the position which they occupied in the Parliament elected in 1893 rather than to their inferior position in the succeeding Parliament. He believed that the proposals which he made would tend in that direction, and would give greater vigour to the proceedings of those Committees. They would render possible legislation which was now difficult by reason of rules tending to impede legislative progress. He begged to move.

MR. TOMLINSON (Preston) seconded the motion. He said the whole question could be put in a nutshell. Under the present system if a Bill happened to pass through the Standing Committee without amendment the House had no power over it except on a proposal to re-commit, or on the motion for Third Reading. His contention was that a Bill referred to a Standing Committee should under no circumstances be withdrawn from the action or cognisance of the House, and the effect of his hon. friend's proposal would be to enable any Member to put down Amendments on the Report stage of any Bill which had so passed through the Standing Committee. Motion made, and Question proposed. "That Standing Order 50 be amended by leaving out from the word 'Provided,' to the end, in order to add the words.

'only that all Bills reported from a Standing Committee, whether amended or not, shall be considered on Report by the House without question put, unless the Member in charge thereof desire to postpone its consideration or a motion be made to re-commit the Bill.'"; (Sir Francis Sharp Powell.)

\*COLONEL MILWARD (Warwickshire, Stratford-upon-Avon) supported the motion. They knew that if a Bill passed through Committee and if no alteration were made in it it did not again come before the House by way of the Report stage. There was a very important Government Bill to which that happened; the Agricultural Rating Act. It was considered in Committee of the whole House, not a comma was allowed

to be altered in it, and the consequence was that it did not come before the House again. But on that occasion the House had an opportunity again and again of considering and voting upon the details. But in the case of a Bill sent to Grand Committee it was most unfortunate, when details had to be settled, that it should be withdrawn entirely from the cognisance of the House. They all knew the difficulty of securing a good attendance at these Standing Committees. They often had to wait some time before a quorum could be constituted, and it had occurred that a Committee had had to disperse without obtaining a quorum. The other night a Crematorium Bill was passed through the House after very hurried consideration, and was sent to a Committee upstairs. If no alteration was made in it by that Committee the Bill, which embodied a principle of the greatest importance to the whole community, would come back to the House and have to be either accepted or rejected on the motion for the Third Reading. Many hon. Members might wish to make important alterations in it, and yet be unwilling to take upon themselves the responsibility of moving its rejection on the Third Reading. It might be suggested that if an hon. Member took particular interest in a Bill he could get his name added to the Standing Committee dealing with it; but recent experience had shown that that was not always possible, and the result was that many Members might be deprived of an opportunity of dealing with questions in which they were deeply interested. He had himself endeavoured, without success, to get his name added to a Standing Committee. It might further be suggested that one

result of the abolition of the Report stage was to do away with obstruction. His reply to that was that Parliament had always proved itself strong enough to deal with obstruction, and had carried through legislation when determined so to do. MR. SYDNEY BUXTON also supported the motion. He was glad to think that this was not a question of party. It was a question affecting the Grand Committees which were experimentally created some years ago. He was quite sure that the general opinion of Members of the House was that the work of the Grand Committees had on the whole been very successful, and he was afraid that the only danger likely to arise from them was that they might be used, not for party purposes, but for the promotion of certain Bills by certain Members who did not desire that the House should have an opportunity of giving due consideration to them. At the present moment, if a Bill passed through the Grand Committee without amendment, then those Members of the House who were not Members of the Grand Committee had no opportunity at all of placing their views before the House, or of amending the Bill. He thought the House would agree that that was not a proper position in which such Bills should be placed, and that the effect of the Grand Committee ought not to be to relieve the House of Commons of all responsibility in regard to those Bills. He was quite sure that when the system of Grand Committees was originally introduced there was no desire on the part of the promoters of it to withdraw from the House effective control over the work done by the Committees. No doubt many Bills were sent to such Committees with the general assent of the House, with the object of being improved and passed through the Committee. There might be cases in which for some reason or other, possibly from apathy, there was a bad attendance of the Members of the Committee, with the result that the

Bill was not properly considered. In such cases the motion of the hon. Member would effect a very desirable improvement of procedure. If, on the other hand, a Bill had been properly considered by the Committee, then the proposal would have no effect, and the House would be willing to pass on to the Third Reading. There had been some flagrant cases in which efforts

had been made to avoid a Report stage. The Government Education Bill was one on which, above all others. Members on both sides of the House should have had an opportunity, if they so desired, of discussing and amending if necessary the work done in Committee. But in consequence of that Bill having been forced by the majority through the Committee without any amendment at all, the only opportunity afforded them of discussing the matter in which they were interested was on the motion for the Third Reading, which, of course, was perfectly futile, so far as Amendments were concerned. He was sure the general view of the House would be in favour of maintaining the integrity, power, and usefulness of Grand Committees, and, as he believed the motion would tend in that direction, he cordially supported it.

\*THE LORD ADVOCATE (Mr. A GRAHAM MURRAY, Buteshire): If there had been any indication of any opposition on the part of the House to the motion. I would have delayed troubling the House; but as there seems to be general assent, the time has, perhaps, come for me to state the views of the Government. This is really a House of Commons' matter, I think that the Standing Order referred to by the hon. Gentleman is a curious instance of how a provision sometimes works exactly in the opposite direction from that intended. Under the old common law of Parliament, in the case of every Bill which came to the Report stage, the question was submitted. "That this Bill be now considered." This practice was found to be so irksome and to lend itself to undue discussion that the House passed Standing Order No.

40;

"That when the Order of the Day for the consideration of a Bill, as amended in Committee of the Whole House, has been read, the House do proceed to consider the same without question put, unless the Member in charge thereof shall desire to postpone its consideration, or a motion shall be made to recommit the Bill."

The date of that Standing Order was 1882. When Standing Committees were inaugurated it was intended that the House should have proper control over the Bills referred to these Committees,

and accordingly Standing Order No. 50 was framed, which provides;

"That all Bills which shall have been committed to one of the said Standing Committees shall, when reported to the House, be proceeded with as if they had been reported from a Committee of the Whole House; provided that the provisions of the Standing Order, 'Consideration of the Bill as amended,' shall not apply to a Bill reported to the House by a Standing Committee."

The intention was to prevent the whole Committee stage being gone over again on Report, but the old practice was still retained that the question should be put, with debate ensuing thereon, "That this Bill be now considered." That was a laudable thing, but what was the practical working of it? If the Bill was not

amended, then it came under the common law practice and escaped the Report stage. I venture to think that that was quite outside the obvious view of the framers of Standing Order No. 50, and I think that my lion, friend behind me is acting in accordance with the intention and true spirit of the framers of Standing Order No. 50 in bringing his Amendment before the House. You must always look at this Standing Order from the point of view of the use as well as the abuse of procedure; both are equally deserving of attention. The use of procedure is undoubtedly that when a Bill has been carefully considered upstairs, there is no reason for an extra debate on the question, "That the Bill be now considered." The abuse of procedure is that, inasmuch as under the present Standing Order, if the Bill is not amended and comes to the Report stage, it puts before the Standing Committees the temptation to commit; I do not say their besetting sin, but what is liable to become their besetting sin; that is, to refuse Amendments in order to avoid the Report stage. There may be also, possibly, the opposite abuse; Amendments may be put in upstairs which are not necessary, in order that it may be open to discuss the Bill on the Report stage in the House. During the ten years I have been in the House I have had as much experience as any one of the Grand Committees. I have been a Member of the Standing Committee on Law during the whole of that time: I have had the conduct of several very

long Bills in Committee, and I have no hesitation in saying that I have never observed any controversial spirit in a purely party sense introduced into the discussions on these Committees. But it is possible that there may be a controversial spirit in another than a party sense of the word, and where there are many Members who are anxious to discuss certain subjects but cannot find an opportunity of doing so in the Grand Committee, I think they ought to have that opportunity when the Bill comes back to the House. The Amendment of my hon. friend affords that, and at the same time does away with the possible abuse of a rule which takes a Bill out of the cognisance of the House. The Government would be very glad if the Amendment were passed.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: I have only too much reason to fear that the adoption of this Amendment of the Standing Order will be a serious blow at the few remaining opportunities which private Members have to pass legislation. The only chance which a private Member has of getting his Bill passed after the Second Reading is by referring it to a Grand Committee, and if a Bill which has passed the Grand Committee stage can be discussed as a whole on the Report stage the chance of having it passed into law will almost entirely disappear. A Bill cannot get to the Grand Committee unless its principle has been adopted by the House itself on the Second Reading. The Report stage, when the Bill comes back, cannot disappear unless it has passed through Grand Committee without amendment. It has been said that a Bill often passes through Grand Committee on account of apathy or want of interest in the Bill on the part of the Members. For my part, I do not believe that any Bill, raising any question of any substance, could possibly pass through Grand Committee without full discussion. I have had some experience of the Grand Committee on Law, and have seen Bills discussed by fifty or sixty hon. Members who had been appointed to that Committee with special reference to

these Bills, and it seems to me an absurdity to state that Bills can pass through Grand Committees without discussion.

MR. GEORGE WHITELEY (Yorkshire, W.R., Pudsey): I congratulate the hon. Member for Wigan and the hon. Member for Preston on having placed this resolution before the House. It seems to me deserving of more attention than can be given to it in the absence of a very large number of the right hon. Gentlemen who represent the Ministry. The change suggested by the hon. Baronet is one which vitally affects the procedure of this House, and goes to the root of Parliamentary government. It changes in a very material degree the practice of Parliament in the discussion of Bills that have been referred to Standing Committees; and, in my humble judgment, in a matter of such great gravity and such vital importance we might fairly expect the presence of the right hon. Gentleman who leads the House, in order to have from him an expression of his views based on his ripe experience on all matters that affect the honour and dignity of the House of Commons. I regret very much that we should have had a statement only from the Lord Advocate, who, after all is said and done, is not of Cabinet rank. On a matter of this importance we ought to have had from a Cabinet Minister an expression of the opinion and feelings of the Government. I am entirely at one with the Lord Advocate, and also with the hon. Member on the Front Opposition Bench, that we ought to deliberate this question as removed from party politics. No questions of tactics or party differences should be dragged into this discussion, as it is a matter which will be of importance when parties are altered, and when Members on this side of the House shall have crossed to the other side. The fact that this resolution has been introduced by two old Members of the standing and position of the hon. Member for Wigan and the hon. Member for Preston ought to have some weight with the House of Commons. This House is largely composed at the present time of new Members. Now, new Members enter with a desire to gain, as rapidly as they can, a full appreciation and knowledge of all the forms and ceremonies of the House; and they are apt, and rightly so, to look to the guidance of old Members in arriving at the decision

which they may take. I do not think that the House could take, on a question similar to this, better guides than the hon. Members for Wigan and Preston. The very fact that they are detached in matters of this kind, that they have no political axe to grind, and have no desire to further officialism in Parliamentary procedure, should have considerable weight with young Members. The Leader of the House we are all acquainted with. A Bill comes on for Second Reading, and hon. Members rise to debate questions which are perhaps of vital importance to their constituents and their friends, but the House knows too well that the pressure is such that many Members are debarred from speaking, and that when the debate is dragging its weary length the First Lord drops into the Chamber and moves the closure, thus preventing many Members who have fresh, original ideas, and who wish to place them before the House, from doing so. This does not assist or add to the dignity of debate, or the due consideration of measures brought before the House. When a proposal is made that such and such a Bill should be referred to the Grand Committee on Law or on Trade, very little



discussion is possible, as the debate is rightly confined to the substantive motion, so that hon. Members who possess encyclopædic knowledge and fertility of ideas, like the hon. Members for King's Lynn and West Islington, are not able to prolong the debate and deal with the very pith and marrow of the Bill. The motion is put, and the Bill is sent to the Grand Committee. For a very long time I have been a member of the Grand Committee on Trade. I have very great respect for that Committee, and fully recognise the ability of its members in dealing with matters of trade; but, after all is said and done, even a Grand Committee, which is specially struck, and is representative of every view in this House, cannot possibly possess the expert and technical knowledge which is shared and enjoyed by the House as a whole. It is possible that upon a Grand Committee there may be a number of members who have strong opinions on any Bill referred to it, and the Grand Committee is debarred from finally considering and elaborating the details of the Bill. I do not desire to generalise altogether on these matters, but I will give one specific instance, namely, the Bill on Beer. What chance has this House, when the motion is made that this Bill should be referred to a Grand Committee, of objecting to it in detail? All chance is lost. If a Bill goes to a Grand Committee, hon. Gentlemen who are supporters of the Bill are in a majority, and all Amendments, even though they may be beneficial, are defeated, even if they have right on their side, not because the Amendments are wrong, but simply for the reason that if one word in the Bill is altered it is impossible to return the Bill un-amended to the House. That is carrying matters to extremes. The Grand Committee occupies a position of greater importance than the House itself, and I think in matters of such importance, of such magnitude, affecting a great article of consumption, the House as a whole ought to have power to deal with the details. If a Bill is returned un-amended by the Grand Committee, it is impossible to deal with it in the House except upon Third Reading. It is possible to move to recommit the Bill, but all hon. Members know that the House has a strong objection to any motion for the recommittal of a Bill, and very naturally so, after the Committee have worked upon it. It is looked upon as a waste of labour to recommit it, and therefore the power of recommitting a Bill is very seldom used. Therefore, so far as the recommittal of the Bill is concerned, it is almost impossible to obtain it, and even if it were obtained, the result, after the Committee's labours, would possibly be the same. Then comes the Third Reading, but it is a very responsible thing for an hon. Gentleman to move the rejection on the Third Reading of a Bill which is in the main an unobjectionable and a good Bill. No one likes to take such a responsibility upon himself, and if he did, and the measure was a popular one, the man who took that responsibility knows very well he would have an angry body of constituents to meet, and would receive from all parts of the country letters and postcards, anonymous and otherwise, innumerable. There is nothing down on the Notice Paper to-day which is of such vital importance to our debates, discussions, and procedure as this matter, and therefore I say it is the last weapon in the armoury of an objecting Member. A motion for the adjournment of the House is a broken reed, which would pierce the hand of any hon. Member who used it.

In the face of all these facts I venture to ask the House, notwithstanding the objection of the hon. Member for Waterford, whether it is not a desirable change in the rules of procedure of the House which has been moved by the hon. Baronet. I do not think that any hon. Gentleman who has carefully watched the discussions on Bills in this House can rise in his place, without he has some motive, and object to this resolution. I regret that the motion has not been on the Paper for a longer time. I venture to say that it ought to have been considered for a week or two, and possibly referred to a Select Committee, but above all, when a matter of such great moment is brought before the House we ought to have the direct advice, knowledge, and experience of the First Lord of the Treasury at the service of the House. It is to be deplored that when a matter affecting the well-being of Parliament as this does comes up for discussion the right hon. Gentleman should not be in his place. I hope that notwithstanding any opposition my hon. friend will go to a division.

MR. CALDWELL (Lanarkshire, Mid) said he did not rise for the purpose of prolonging the debate. He approached this subject with a perfectly open mind, and he admitted that it might be looked at from two points of view. There were two classes of Bills which were sent to Grand Committees. So far as the Bills of private Members were concerned he was in complete agreement with the hon. Member for Waterford, that if it was desired to carry through a Bill to which there was the least opposition in the House, the only way to do so was to send it to a Standing Committee. But if private Members' Bills were to be considered on Report, very few Bills would be passed. In regard, however, to the other class of Bills; Government Bills; he welcomed the clause. Everybody knew that the Government, if they had a very contentious Bill, referred it to a Standing Committee, with the result that it was nicely got through the House. While he admitted that it would be disadvantageous to private Members, he welcomed the clause because in contentious Government Bills Amendments could be put down on the Report stage, and dealt with by the House. That was a great lever against the Government, and he should vote for the clause.

MR. BANBURY (Camberwell, Peckham) said he had listened to the remarks of the hon. Member for Mid-Lanark with great astonishment. During the nine years he had sat in the House he had always thought the hon. Gentleman had exercised all his remarkable ingenuity in order to try and prevent private Members passing Bills through the House.

MR. CALDWELL said he never put down Amendments to any Bills when they had been properly discussed either in Committee or in the House,; he only did so when proper discussion had not taken place.

MR. BANBURY said all he knew was that he once undertook to pilot a private Bill through the House, and the only objection to the Bill came from the hon. Member for Mid-Lanark. There was no doubt that when Standing Committees were first introduced, the idea was to relieve the House of a certain amount of work which it could not undertake, but it was not contemplated to withdraw all power of supervision from the House on these matters. His experience was that twice out of three times the only Members who attended Committees were those who were interested in passing the Bills with which they were dealing into law. It was

impossible to get other Members to attend, and the result was that if a Bill passed its Second Reading and was sent to a Committee, there was every possibility of its being passed into law.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND (Clare, E.) said he had always regarded the House as an extremely conservative assembly so far as its rules and procedure were concerned, but here was an attempt being made at ten o'clock at night to alter one of the most important Standing Orders without notice having been given to Members.

\*SIR FRANCIS POWELL: I beg the hon. Gentleman's pardon, but my notice has been on the Paper in one form or another during two or three years.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND admitted; that that was so, but it could not be denied that the opinion held by most Members was that the idea was that there was to be a morning sitting for taking the discussion on the adjournment of the House, and that the adjournment

would be taken at seven o'clock, and that there was practically no possibility of sitting at nine. It would be conceded that if the House sat at nine it was not because of any burning desire to alter the Standing Orders, but to discuss the question of pure beer. The House of Commons had no right under these circumstances to set itself to alter in the slightest degree the Standing Orders of the House. He was of opinion that the proper course would be to adjourn the debate until such time as a purely representative attendance of Members should be present. It was not a party question, but a question for the House generally to decide. If the motion was passed, the logical inference would be that Standing Committees ought to be abolished, because if a Bill, after it had passed through a Standing Committee, could be discussed in the House, the investigations by the Standing Committee would be a pure waste of time. The Members who attended the Standing Committees for the purpose of passing the Bills in which they were interested, as was alleged by the hon. Member for Peckham, were not permanent Members of the Committee, but were imported on various occasions. Of course, if it was alleged that the permanent Members neglected their duty, that would be an argument in favour of the rule, and if that were so, he would say, do not alter the rule, but abolish the Standing Committee altogether. He urged the House not to alter the rule upon such comparatively short notice as had been given, and he begged leave to move, "That the Debate be now adjourned."

\*MR. SPEAKER: I cannot accept the motion. The motion of the hon. Baronet has been down on the Paper for several days; there is no surprise.

MR. JOHN REDMOND: On a point of order, do I understand, Sir, that you refuse the motion made because you consider it to be an abuse of the privileges of the House?

\*MR. SPEAKER: Yes.

MR. RICHARDS (Finsbury, E.): After your ruling, Sir, I cannot do what I was about to do, namely, second the motion of the hon. Member for East Clare. I heartily concur with what has been said by the hon. Member for Peckham as to the attendance on Grand Committees. In my own experience, a large number of hon. Gentlemen are put on the Grand Committee to

discuss a particular measure, and what happens? A large number of those gentlemen are always absent, and are fetched in to take part in the division without their having heard one word of the arguments. But it seems an extraordinary thing that at this period of the session, and on this particular evening, we should be asked to discuss a motion of a somewhat revolutionary character, and I cannot help thinking that we should not proceed further upon this motion without some advice and guidance from the Government.

MR. HARWOOD (Bolton) said the motion practically rang the knell of the Standing Committees, and he should vote for it on that account. He had been for some time a Member of the Standing Committee on Law, and his experience was that there was the greatest difficulty in getting a quorum. The thing was simply reduced to a farce time after time. They had had to suspend the proceedings in order that those who were in favour of something in a Bill might run about to get other Members to support them. The sending of a Bill to a Standing Committee meant avoiding the Report stage and getting it through by a back door. He thought, therefore, they should, understand exactly what they were doing.

MR. JOHN BURNS (Battersea) said he was a member of the Grand Committee on Law. His experience was that the Grand Committee on Trade had done its work exceedingly well, and had materially lightened the duties of the House. It was true that the attendance at the sittings of the Grand Committee on Law had not been quite so numerous as in the other case, but that was probably due to the fact that the number of lawyers on the Committee was disproportionately large, and they all knew very well that the House of Commons and the British Constitution had to adapt themselves absolutely and entirely to the exigencies of their legal work. He was not disposed to surrender these Standing Committees simply because a few lawyers did not attend so often as they ought. The point should not be raised in the way his hon. friend had raised it. If they were to consider whether the Grand Committees should be abolished, let them have a separate and distinct motion, and all the facts placed before the House. The hon. Member pointed out that by having Bills considered in the Grand Committees the time of the House was economised. They could have too much discussion in the House of Commons. He thought the Government would not force Bills through Committee by using their majority unduly.

MR. CREMER (Shoreditch, Haggerston) said his experience as a member of the Grand Committee on Law was that on some occasions, not many, they found difficulty in getting a quorum. On one occasion when the County Councils Consolidation Bill was before the Committee he had a private interview with respect to some Amendments he had on the Paper with the then Attorney General, who had charge of the measure. The learned Gentleman told him that the Amendments were very good, and two or three of them excellent. He said he would be glad to assist him in passing them in the Grand Committee, but that there was no chance whatever of doing it, because there were too many lawyers on it. If the House pressed him he would state who expressed that opinion

[Cries of "Name."] It was the present Lord Chief Justice. He moved his Amendments, and not one of them was

AYES.

Allen, Charles P (Glouc., Stroud  
Godson, Sir Augustus Fredk.  
Redmond, John (Waterford)  
Ashton, Thomas Gair  
Grant, Corrie  
Redmond, William (Clare)  
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)  
Groves, James Grimble  
Remnant, James Farquharson  
Bell, Richard  
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seale-  
Richards, Henry Charles  
Bignold, Arthur  
Horniman, Frederick John  
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.  
Boland, John  
Joues, William (Carnarvonsh.  
Shipman, Dr. John G.  
Bolton, Thomas Dolling  
Joyce, Michael  
Sullivan, Donal  
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-  
Lay land-Barratt, Francis  
Trevelyan, Charles Philips  
Burns, John  
Levy, Maurice  
Warde, Col. C. E.  
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)  
Lloyd-George, David  
Warner, Thomas Courtenay T.  
Condon, Thomas Joseph  
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.  
Wodehouse, Hn. Armine (Ess'x  
Cremer, William Randal  
More, Robert J. (Shropshire)  
Young, Commander (Berks, E.)  
Culliman, J.  
Morris, Hon. Martin Henry F.  
Doogan, P. C.  
Murphy, J.  
TELLERS FOR THE AYES;  
Emmott, Olfred  
Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)  
Mr. Patrick O'Brien and Mr. Haviland-Burke.  
Ffrench, Peter  
O'Malley, William

Garfit, William

Reckitt, Harold James

passed by the, Grand Committee on Law. He believed the occasional difficulty in getting a quorum was not owing to any disinclination on the part of Members to attend, but because they found it practically impossible to do so. First of all, the Selection Committee made the mistake of giving Members too much to do by making them members of too many Committees. That was the real cause of the difficulty which was found in getting a quorum. He merely rose to controvert the statement made by the hon. Member for Peckham that it was very frequently found exceedingly difficult to get a quorum on the Committees. He ventured to say that some of the best Bills passed by the House owed their existence on the Statute-book to the efforts made by the Grand Committees on Law and Trade.

MR. JOSEPH NOLAN (Louth, S.) said he agreed with the hon. and learned Member for East Clare that the majority of the Members of the House had not expected to be called upon that night to consider the constitutional change proposed by the hon. Baronet opposite. The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition were both absent, and he thought the hon. Baronet would only be acting fairly if he withdrew the motion now and brought it forward at a more suitable, time. He would vote against the motion if it went to a division.

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

The House divided::Ayes, 46; Noes, 82. (Division List No. 124.)

NOES.

Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex, F.

Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)

Philipps, John Wynford

Anstruther, H. T.

Grenfell, William Henry

Platt-Higgins, Frederick-

Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis

Gretton, John

Purvis, Robert

Balfour, Rt. Hn. A. J. (Manch'r)

Greville, Hon. Ronald

Quilter, Sir Cuthbert

Balfour, Rt Hn Gerald W (Leeds

Hanbury, Rt. Hn. Robt. Wm.

Ratcliffe, R. F.

Banbury, Frederick George

Harmsworth, R. Leicester

Rigg, Richard

Beach, Rt Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol)

Harwood, George

Robertson, Herbt. (Hackney)

Bill, Charles

Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry

Round, James  
Boulnois, Edward  
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick  
Royds, Clement Molyneux  
Bullard, Sir Harry  
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop  
Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)  
Buxton, Sydney Charles  
Lawrence, William F.  
Seely, Charles H. (Lincoln)  
Caldwell, James  
Lawson, John Grant  
Skewes-Cox, Thomas  
Carlile, William Walter  
Legge, Col. Hon. Heneage  
Soames, Arthur Wellesley  
Causton, Richard Knight  
Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie  
Spear, John Ward  
Cavendish, V. C. W. (Derliysh.)  
Llewellyn, Evan Henry  
Spencer, Rt. Hn. C R (Northants  
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)  
Lowe, Francis William  
Strachey, Edward  
Chamberlain, J. A. (Worc'r)  
Loyd, Archie Kirkman  
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier  
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry  
Lucas, Reginald J. (Portsmouth  
Valentia, Viscount  
Colomb, Sir John Charles K.  
Macartney, Rt Hn W. G. Ellison  
Vincent, Col. Sir C E H (Sheffield  
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)  
Macdona, John Cumming  
Welby, Lt.-Col. A C E (Taunton  
Cranborne, Viscount  
Majendie, James A. H.  
Whiteley, George (York, W. R.)  
Dickson, Charles Scott  
Massey-Mainwairing. Hn W. F.  
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth)  
Duke, Henry Edward  
Milward, Colonel Victor  
Wortley, Rt. Hon. C. B. Stuart-

Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edw.  
Morgan, D. J. (Walthamstow  
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong  
Fisher, William Hayes  
Murray, Rt. Hn. A. G. (Bute)  
Fitz Gerald, Sir R. Penrose-  
Newdigate, Francis Alexander  
TELLERS FOR THE NOES;  
Flower, Ernest  
Nicol, Donald Ninian  
Sir Francis Powell and Mr. Tomlinson.  
Fuller, J. M. F.  
Norton, Capt. Cecil William  
Gordon, Hn. J. E. (Elgin & Nairn  
Peel, Hon. Wm. Robert W.  
Question put, "That those words be there added to the Standing Order."  
AYES.  
Acland-Hood, Capt. Sir Alex. F.  
Fuller, J. M. F.  
Pilkinngton, Richard  
Anstruther, H. T.  
Gladstone, Rt. Hn. Herbert J.  
Purvis, Robert  
Ashmead-Bartlett, Sir Ellis  
Gordon, Hn J. E. (Elgin & Nairn)  
Quilter, Sir Cuthbert  
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J. (Manch'r  
Greene, Henry D. (Shrewsbury)  
Ratcliffe, R. F.  
Balfour, Rt Hn Gerald W (Leeds  
Grenfell, William Henry  
Richards, Henry Charles  
Banbury, Frederick George  
Gretton, John  
Robertson, Herbert (Hackney  
Beach, Rt. Hn. Sir M. H. (Bristol  
Greville, Hon. Ronald  
Rolleston, Sir John F. L.  
Bill, Charles  
Hanbury, Rt. Hon. Robert Wm.  
Round, James  
Boulnois, Edmund  
Harwood, George  
Royds, Clement Molyneux  
Bullard, Sir Harry  
Horniman, Frederick John



Samuel, Harry S. (Limehouse)  
Buxton, Sydney Charles  
Houldsworth, Sir Wm. Henry  
Seely, Charles Hilton (Lincoln)  
Caldwell, James  
Jeffreys, Arthur Frederick  
Shipman, Dr. John G.  
Carlile, William Walter  
Kenyon-Slaney, Col. W. (Salop.  
Skewes-Cox, Thomas  
Causton, Richard Knight  
Lawrence, William F.  
Soames, Arthur Wellesley  
Cavendish, V. C. W (Derbyshire  
Lawson, John Grant  
Spear, John Ward  
Cecil, Evelyn (Aston Manor)  
Legge, Col. Hon. Haneage  
Spencer, Rt Hn. C. R. (North'nts  
Chamberlain, J. Austen (Wore.  
Leigh-Bennett, Henry Currie  
Strachey, Edward  
Chaplin, Rt. Hon. Henry  
Llewellyn, Evan Henry  
Sturt, Hon. Humphry Napier  
Colomb, Sir John Charles Ready  
Lowe, Francis William  
Valentia, Viscount  
Corbett, T. L. (Down, North)  
Lucas, Reginald J. (Portsmo'th)  
Vincent, Col. Sir C E H. (Sheffield  
Cranborne, Viscount  
Macartney, Rt. Hn. W G Ellison  
Welby, Lt.-Col. A C E. (Taunton  
Cremer, William Randal  
Macdona, John Cumming  
Whiteley, George (York, W. R.)  
Dickson, Charles Scott  
Massey-Mainwaring, Hn. W. F.  
Williams, Osmond (Merioneth  
Duke, Henry Edward  
Milward, Colonol Victor  
Wortley, Rt. Hn. C. B. Stuart-  
Dunn, Sir William  
Murray, Rt Hn A Graham (Bute  
Yerburgh, Robert Armstrong

Evans, Sir V. H. (Maidstone)  
Newdigate, Francis Alexander  
Fellowes, Hon. Ailwyn Edw.  
Nicol, Donald Ninian  
TELLERS FOR THE AYES; Sir Francis Powell and Mr. Tomlinson.  
Fisher, William Hayes  
Norton, Capt. Cecil William  
Fitz Gerald, Sir Robert Penrose-  
Peel, Hn. Wm. Robt. Wellesley  
Flower, Ernest  
Philipps, John Wynford  
NOES.  
Allen, Chas. P. (Glouc., Stroud  
Bayley, Thomas (Derbyshire)  
Boland, Arthur  
Ashton, Thomas Gair  
Bignold, Arthur  
Bolton, Thomas Dolling  
The House divided; Ayes, 85; Noes 41. (Division List No. 125.)  
Boscawen, Arthur Griffith-  
Hayne, Rt. Hon. Charles Seal-  
Redmond, William (Clare)  
Burke, E. Haviland  
Jones, William (Carnarvonsh.  
Remnant, James Farquharson  
Campbell, John (Armagh, S.)  
Joyce, Michael  
Rigg, Richard  
Condon, Thomas  
Levy, Maurice  
Sullivan, Donal  
Cullinan, J.  
Lloyd-George, David  
Trevelyan, Charles Philips  
Doogan, P. C.  
MacDonnell, Dr. Mark A.  
Warde, Col. C. E.  
Emmott, Alfred  
More, Robt. Jasper (Shropshire  
Warner, Thomas C. T.  
Ffrench, Peter  
Morris, Hon. Martin Henry F.  
Wodehouse, Hon. A. (Essex)  
Garfit, William  
Murphy, J.  
Young, Commander (Berks, E.)

Godson, Sir Augustus Frederick

Nolan, Joseph (Louth, South)

Grant, Corrie

O'Malley, William

TELLERS FOR THE NOES;

Groves, James Grimble

Reckitt, Harold James

Mr. Patrick O'Brien and Mr. John Burns.

Harmsworth, R. Leicester

Redmond, J. E. (Waterford)

Ordered, That all Bills which shall have been committed to one of the said Standing Committees shall, when reported to the House, be proceeded with as if they had been reported from a Committee of the Whole House: Provided only, that all Bills reported from a Standing Committee, whether amended or not, shall be considered on report by the House without question put, unless the Member in charge thereof desire to postpone its consideration or a motion be made to re-commit the Bill.

CHINA CRISIS;RUSSIA AND MANCHURIA.

\*SIR E. ASHMEAD-BATLETT (Sheffield, Ecclesall): I do not propose to detain the House long upon the subject that I have placed upon the Paper. I consider there is ample justification for that motion in the fact that when this question was before the House last week there was no practical declaration made on the part of the Government. I do not wish to press the Government even to-night for an elaborate declaration with regard to China. I only wish to impress upon them that if they fail to do their duty with regard to the present position in the Far East, if they allow Russia to obtain control of the north-eastern part of China, they will not be readily forgiven by the people of this country. The mistakes of the Government in South Africa have been sufficiently serious; they have lost opportunities of settling the South African question and preventing enormous expenditure of blood and treasure; and the country will not stand a similar experience with regard to China. I ventured to suggest the other day that the Government had the dealing with this question in their own hands. They hold all the cards if they will only play them with courage and determination. The principal card is the position and the temper of the great nation of Japan. If the Government are willing to use Japan as they may, they have nothing to fear, and there is no danger of or necessity for war. But I am very much afraid that the Government will hesitate to give that support in resisting this Russian encroachment which Japan expects from us. It is necessary that the ring should be kept for Japan at sea in the event of force being necessary; and unless the Government are willing to give a pledge of that support I am afraid the Japanese will be forced into an alliance with Russia rather than with us. A very remarkable article appeared in a Russian paper three or four days ago, which says;

"It is only from Russia that Japan can look for any genuine help; she cannot count on any other Power, least of all upon England. At the present moment, in the most shameless manner, the English are trying to raise Japan against

Russia";

and so on. That article shows the danger which we incur if we hesitate to give the necessary encouragement to Japanese policy at this time. The Russians can offer a great deal to Japan, and they will not hesitate to do so, if necessary to prevent the Japanese pursuing a policy favourable to this country. That is the danger. We must offer something to Japan. No doubt the Government will hesitate and say that nothing can be offered. I do not expect them to make public the offer. I only wish the country to notice the way in which the Government can solve this important question without danger or difficulty. They can offer Japan a protectorate over Korea. That would be a great boon to the Japanese. Korea, in a sense, is a necessity to Japan. Japan requires a close connection with Korea to feed her people and to provide a place of occupation for her surplus population. Such a course would do no injury to anyone in Asia. It would establish a permanent bulwark there against the further advance of Russia southward. For that purpose I suggest it to the Government. I do not expect them to proclaim this policy at once, but I warn them most emphatically that if the same course is pursued in this north-eastern China question as has been followed in South Africa, the result will be exceedingly serious for them and for the great party which they represent.

There is one other subject to which I wish to call attention, and that is the necessity of encouraging the party of reform in China. The one part of the speech of the Foreign Secretary the other night to which I take exception, is the cold water that he threw upon the possibility of the British Government supporting the reform movement in China. It should be one of the first objects of our policy to support the party which is anxious to establish administrative and general reforms in that country. Unless His Majesty's Government take the lead in that direction there can be little hope for China. It has always been and is still the policy of our great rival in the East to prevent reforms in China, to keep the Government there thoroughly corrupt and rotten, in order that when the favourable moment comes China may fall more readily a prey to her ambitions. That is the policy which Russia has pursued with regard to Turkey for the last fifty years. Ever since, and even before, the Crimean War that was her policy with regard to Turkey. Seventy years ago there was in Turkey a great reforming Sultan, Mahmud II., and if he had been allowed his way the history of Turkey would have been very different. But the moment Russia saw that reforms were likely to be effected she forced war upon Turkey, and destroyed Mahmud's power and all hope of reform. Precisely the same policy is being pursued by Russia in China to-day. On the one hand, she is massacring the Chinese people and destroying the Chinese Army: on the other hand, she is holding out the arm of her protection to the corrupt coterie at court, doing her utmost to persuade the corrupt and tyrannical clique that has too long ruled over China that she is China's friend, and that if they will play the Russian game she will support them. Attention called to the fact that forty Members were not present.

MR. WILLIAM REDMOND: Mr. Speaker, nearly all the Cabinet are standing behind

your Chair; why do they not come in?

House counted, and forty Members being found present;

\*SIR E. ASHMEAD BARTLETT: I am not surprised at the attitude of the Government; it is quite on a par with the underhand methods which have been adopted, I am sorry to say, by some leaders of the great party to which I belong to choke off discussions on important subjects. I am very glad that that very carefully organised attempt to count out the House failed. I think it was unworthy of those who planned it. I was calling the attention of the House to the great importance of supporting the party of reform in China. The other day the Foreign Secretary tried to draw a distinction between principles and details upon this question, and he seemed to think that if we got the principles we might abandon the details. But in Chinese affairs the truth is just the reverse, for there it is the details that count. We used to hear a good deal about the principle of Free Trade in China, but nevertheless the Russians got Port Arthur. We heard a great deal about the policy of the open door and open ports, but the fact that the Russians have political and military control of Manchuria, is far more valuable to them than all this vague talk about open doors is to us. We were told that we were going to have all our trade rights in the Yang-tsze Valley and other parts of China protected, but, nevertheless, a great Power like Russia manages to obtain direct control of the North-East of China, and will, if she is allowed to remain in possession there, obtain control of all China.

In conclusion, I say that now is the time for the Government to act. It is not necessary for them to say publicly that they are going to act, or to make any strong statement with regard to the question. I do not care how considerate their language towards Russia is, but what we do want from the Government are acts and not words. We want them to take up this question before it is too late. We want them to take it up before Russia gets permanent control of Manchuria and conscripts a large army there, which would enable her to conquer all China, and indeed all Asia. We want to see China strong and fortified, so that she can resist the attack when it comes. We do not want this question put off, as the South African question was put off, until it has cost this country £130,000,000 and a terrible loss of life. That is the policy which I venture to urge upon His Majesty's Government. The action which I recommend is not in favour of war, or of threatening war, but is the most peaceful action which the Government could take; for it is the neglect of these questions which causes war. Those persons who would put off dealing with these dangers, who would keep silent about them and who would keep the country uninformed about them, are the real advocates of war and the enemies of peace. Several of my hon. friends have told me that my motion is one which is likely to lead to war, but I deny it. I advocate a policy of peace, a peace made certain by timely precautions, a peace with strength, and a peace with honour. I beg to move the resolution standing in my name,

MR. HARWOOD: I rise to second this resolution, and I wish to call the attention of the Government to the rather serious aspect of the question so far as it affects the county of Lancashire. The Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs stated in reply to a question that, according to the versions the Government has seen, the suggested Agreement between China and Russia apparently affects British

Trade interests only in those parts of the Chinese Empire to which the Agreement applied. China is the second largest customer Lancashire possesses in regard to cotton manufactures, and the people of Lancashire feel that if the Agreement is allowed to be concluded it will start a principle full of danger and threatening to their trade. The noble Lord may say that the Lancashire trade with Manchuria is not very great. I grant that; but, if we allow the principle that any portion of the Chinese Empire can be detached from our trade, there is no reason why the principle should not be carried further. It is said that we stand by the principle of the open door, but we know that we have spent much blood and treasure in order to secure our trade privileges in China, and if those privileges are lost to us in one province, it is no equivalent to say that we have got a special sphere of influence elsewhere. We already possess extensive trade privileges, and we do not want to lose those privileges in any portion of the Chinese Empire. It is not so much a question as to how wide the door in China is open if we can get through it, but it is a question as to the size of the garden on the other side after we have got through. If the garden is made smaller it is no use making the door wider. In Lancashire we recognise the difficulty of the problem, which has existed for the last fifty years. We hear of the existence of the European Concert, but the fact remains that Russia, while a member of the Concert, has been going behind the backs of the other members and secretly negotiating arrangements with China. This is not the kind of conduct which is likely to inspire you with confidence for the future. When a member of any firm goes behind your back and attempts to negotiate an arrangement privately, it makes you full of suspicion regarding his future conduct. The noble Lord says that he absolutely begged Russia to tell us, and that Russia is not only negotiating, but she persists in secretly withholding all information on the subject. In view of the attitude of Russia he thinks we are justified in being anxious and watchful and in taking some firm stand if occasion should necessitate it. The noble Lord also said that the Boxer movement was a surprise to everybody. I do not think it was. I think it shows; the existence of some national spirit in China. One nation steps in and takes possession of the Chinaman's front sitting rooms, another takes his back sitting rooms, and then another comes along and demands his bedrooms, and under these circumstances, I think it is to the credit of the Chinese that they resent this conduct, and it gives some hope for the future. I do not want the Government to be dragged by Germany or any other Power into exacting too severe terms from China. The Government must make up its mind to one of two courses. Either you are going to displace the present Government of China, or you are going to keep it. If you are going to displace it you are going to take on a thing which is far beyond the power of this Government to carry out. If you are going to retain the present form of government in China, what is the interest of England in the matter? Why to keep that Government strong. I hope the Government will not exact from China any kind of penalty which would permanently weaken her, because that would injure us in Lancashire, and would also injure the whole country. I ask,

firstly, that the Government will see that no portion of our present trade privileges are taken away in any portion of China; and, secondly, that they will not insist upon any punishment or penalty which will be calculated to weaken the power of the Chinese Government in controlling the affairs of that vast empire. Motion made, and Question proposed, "That no settlement of the present Crisis in China will be satisfactory to this House that does not completely exclude Russian military and political control from Manchuria.";(Sir E. Ashmead-Bartlett.)

MR. YERBURGH (Chester): I should like to add my testimony to what has been stated by the hon. Member who spoke last. I did not have the advantage of hearing the speech of the hon. Member for the Ecclesall Division of Sheffield, and I do not know whether I should have been in order in proposing an Amendment to his motion. Had I been in order I intended to move an Amendment in favour of the southern viceroys being supported. While there is no doubt that the action of Russia in the northern part of China has aroused suspicions which are well warranted, and while there is no doubt that it is the bounden duty of the Government to take every precaution to see, that our interests in northern China are not injured, at the same time I am bound to say that, in my opinion, it is far better to

leave those matters at the present stage in the hands of the Government.

Turning to the Amendment which I should have moved had I been in order, I would like to point out that, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, the Government missed a golden opportunity in the centre of China before the troubles in the North of China reached their climax. I think I am correct in saying that before the outbreak attained any great proportions the Viceroy of Nanking offered to our Government the joint occupation of the forts of the Yang-tsze. Consider, for a moment, the position our Government occupies in Central China. We had proclaimed that we occupied a special position there, owing to our great trade interests. We had proclaimed that on several occasions. I think I am right in saying that in 1894 the late Liberal Government, in so many words, warned Japan from the Yang-tsze territory, and by our understanding with China that she should not alienate any of the Yang-tsze region we again told the world that we had special interests in that portion of China. By the agreement between German merchants and the merchants of our country we arrived at an understanding that the Yang-tsze region was to be considered as our sphere of railway development, and we had a further agreement with Russia on the same lines, namely, that we were to have the Yang-tsze region for railway development and Russia, was to have Manchuria for railway development. That showed conclusively our special position in the Yang-tsze valley. When the trouble broke out, the Government was offered possession of these forts, and it appears to me from the position they held and the responsibility they had assumed, they were bound, in the interests of all countries concerned, to have occupied those forts. They let, however, the offer go by, and the trouble increased, but there is good reason to suppose that the viceroys of Central China would have been strengthened in the position they took up against the evil influences of Peking if that offer had been accepted, and that in all probability the troubles in

Peking itself would never have reached the disastrous volume they did. Another opportunity was found

when negotiations were entered into between ourselves and the court. Who were the proper people through whom to negotiate? Why, surely the viceroys of Central China, who had stood by us through all the troubles. Were they not, the people to have represented the court of Peking in these negotiations? What did we do? We went to Li Hung Chang and other persons, not certainly of the best repute, and another opportunity went by. If we had had the influence of these viceroys we should have strengthened our position. They were advocates of reform, and we should have given them a commanding position to enable them to deal with Peking. We have one more opportunity before us. Lord Lansdowne stated the other day, in another place, that it was not our business to force reform upon China. I know of no one who has ever ventured to suggest that reform should be forced on China, but I know those who suggest that reform should be offered to China, and that people who are capable of carrying out those reforms might, if required, be lent to China. That is quite a different thing. The people who use this argument appear to me to assume that all China is against reform. I notice that the hon. Member for Bolton assumes that the Boxer movement was a national movement. Those who are best qualified to judge say that the Boxer movement was not a national movement at all. They say, on the contrary, that it was engineered by the Manchu party, who saw their privileges slipping from their grasp, and who utilised the disorderly element in order to recover the privileges they thought they were losing. The best proof of that is that wherever viceroys or governors were well disposed towards foreigners the people did not rise against them. If the movement were a national movement, would a single foreigner; man, woman, or child; have escaped? But there is to-day in China a national movement. It is a movement organised against what is believed to be the aggressive action of Russia in the north. That is a genuine national movement, and when people look forward with horror to the advance of Russia, I look forward to the day when China, having reformed herself, will be able to meet

any enemy who may approach her from the north.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: We must help China.

MR. YERBURCH: My hon. friend says, we must help China. Yes, we will have to help China to help herself. I have said just now that the Chinese people are not adverse to reform. It is well known that many Chinese, hold property registered under foreign names. They take advantage of foreign law because they consider it better than their own. A remarkable book, which I think everybody interested in China ought to read, was recently published. It was written by one of the great viceroys of China, and it is called "The Only Hope of China." That book displays a marvellous knowledge of all that is best for a nation; education, literature, languages, railway development, and everything that goes to the development of a nation; and it has been received by the Emperor with the highest approval, and he has ordered it to be distributed all through China. Is a man like that viceroy opposed to reform? The leaders are in favour of reform, and why, therefore, do we not go a little further and see that the viceroys of the Yang-tsze Province



shall have the right given them to carry out in their own province the reforms for which they have memorialised the Throne? If we did that we would strengthen the position of the viceroys enormously, and give new life to China. They should be allowed to carry out these reforms, and also be given a sufficient tenure of office for the purpose. The Government have the opportunity of making it an integral part of the settlement that these viceroys should be given that power.

\*MR. SPEAKER: The hon. Member must remember that the question before the House is the position of Russia in Manchuria. A great deal of what he is now saying is not relevant to that question.

MR. YERBURGH: I apologise for having trespassed beyond the limits of the motion. I will conclude by saying that, as stated in the book to which I have referred, this Government and all other

Governments in dealing with China have shown a slipshod, drifting attitude, and a habit of depending on mere fortuitous success.

\*SIR JOHN COLOMB (Great Yarmouth): The hon. Member for Bolton in seconding this resolution never referred to the question of Manchuria at all. I will confine myself strictly to the motion, and I wish to give my views to the House as to why it should not be accepted. Manchuria is really a vague geographical expression. I doubt very much whether any Member of this House or any person outside it could really define the geographical boundaries of political Manchuria. When we discuss the resolution with the object of compelling another Power to be excluded from a certain territory, it is extremely important that we should be perfectly clear in our own minds what that means. If we do not know the present political boundaries ourselves, then it is only waste of time to discuss such a resolution as this.

SIR E. ASHMEAD-BARTLETT: I know them perfectly well.

\*SIR JOHN COLOMB: My hon. friend says that he knows them perfectly well. I am very glad to hear it. I would ask him does his resolution mean that no settlement will be satisfactory that does not exclude Russia from acquiring more of Manchuria than she now has, or does he mean that no settlement will be satisfactory that does not turn out Russia from the portions of Manchuria she has long held? I wish to deal with this question of the Russian advance in Manchuria, and with the circumstances which have led up to the present state of affairs. In the press, and even in this House the position of Russia in Manchuria is discussed as if it were a question of yesterday, or the day before. I will give the House, as briefly as I can, a sketch of the persistent advance of Russia from Europe to Manchuria for the purpose of getting to the sea on the sunny side of Siberian territory in order to have open ports. It was a definite, persistent policy, and it is important with reference to this question that we should remember that we are not dealing with a series of questions which have suddenly arisen, but that we are dealing with a policy which has come down through generations to the present time. It was during the reign of Henry VIII. that the Russians first began to move eastward. At the time of the Spanish Armada they got so far eastward as to be able to found Tobolsk. In the reign of Charles I. there was a great expedition to the Upper Amur, and later another expedition penetrated further eastward, and

attempted to occupy this very region of Manchuria. That expedition, with all its gallantry and all its persistency, was almost completely destroyed with the exception of forty-seven, who were taken prisoners to Peking, and founded the Russian college in that city, which has had a continuous history up to the present time. Then followed another expedition which went still further east, and founded Nerchinsk. That was about the time that Bombay was ceded to England, so that Russia was advancing towards the Pacific Ocean before we had established ourselves at Bombay. Still pushing on, the Russians made a settlement at Albazin, on the upper reaches of the Amur, but that settlement was wiped out by the Manchus, and the 5,000 gallant men composing it were massacred. Manchuria is really the water-shed of the Amur, and the Amur is the key of the whole position. During the reign of William III. the Russians approached the position from the sea. They acquired Kamtskatka in 1728, and explored the coast, with the result that they acquired that territory which they recently transferred to America Alaska. The next interesting point occurred at the commencement of the last century. They tried to extend their position, but they were shut out by Manchuria and China from actual contact with the sea territorially. In the year of Trafalgar the Russian Hag was hoisted on the Island of Saghalien. This was a persistent policy, characterised by great energy, great gallantry and great perseverance on the part of Russia, though often attended by defeat and disaster. In dealing with this question it is important we should have an historical outline of the persistency of Russia and a knowledge of the fact that Russia occupied these regions two or three times and suffered defeat in her attempts to hold them.

Now as to modern times, during the Crimean War a great Russian general was at the furthest eastward position on the Amur, 2,000 miles from the sea, while we were marching the Guards through London and were preparing to meet Russia in the Crimea. He cast guns and made ammunition there, and built barges and a steamer to tow them. The, Russians, with a splendid conception of strategy, which they accomplished in a most wonderful way, were preparing to extend their territory to the sea which for centuries she had fought and bled to attain. At the eastward point I have mentioned boats and barges were built thus to go straight down the Amur. They did not go to the mouth of the river, but crossed over where the Amur takes a bend, and arrived at a place now known as Port Imperial. Our fleet was already in search of the Russian fleet, in the summer of 1854, which was known to be in the Pacific. We could not discover it, and the fleet were instructed to ascertain if the Russian ships had taken shelter in the vicinity of Petro-paulovski in Kamtskatka. The combined fleets of England and France sailed one morning into the bay. They found it commanded by five Russian forts swarming with Russian soldiers, and the Russian fleet under cover of the guns of the forts. I am not going to abide to that disastrous affair in naval history. Our Admiral shot himself going into action, and the ultimate result was that we had to retire. We could not take the ships, and we tried to take the forts, but we could not do it. We lost heavily and had to withdraw. People were then full of the Crimea, and did not; hear much about it, but next year the Governments of

England and France, being determined to wipe out the disaster, sent out a powerful fleet. The ships were ordered not to advance into the bay until the whole force was assembled, but many weeks elapsed after the arrival of the first ship at the rendezvous, 100 miles south of the bay. During these weeks the Russian ships passed within fifty miles of our fleet without being seen, and when our fleet sailed into the bay they found the forts dismantled, the ships gone, and; the inhabitants selling trophies of our defeat. Another squadron was sent to Saghalien. One Sunday morning they saw in Castries Bay the whole Russian fleet. Our force was a weak one, and sailed away south to give information, but they did not leave a watch, with the result that when they looked in again a week later they found the Russians had left. During all those years Russian policy was to come to a very distinct understanding with China with regard to certain portions of territory, but they always left that portion of boundary nearest the sea undefined. The treaty confirming what they had taken of Manchuria in 1855 was not ratified by China until we met with that unfortunate disaster of our unsuccessful attack on the Taku Forts in 1859. The Russian admiral used his friendly offices for us with the, Chinese. What he really did was to pull the rejected treaty out of his pocket and call on China to sign it. Ever since that time Russia has been gradually extending her territory down towards the north of China. Is this House going to pass a resolution to exclude Russia from the territory which she has occupied in Manchuria for years, and which she has gained at the expenditure of blood and treasure. I cannot understand anyone knowing history bringing forward any such resolution as this. The policy suggested by it is an impossible policy. You cannot get the Powers to engage in a policy to turn Russia out of Manchuria, where she has established herself by a persistent policy pursued generation after generation, and it is ridiculous to talk about it. What is the alternative? The alternative is to recollect that Russia has been forced onward on her land destiny, as we have been forced onward on our sea destiny, and to see that our interests and trade rights are not adversely affected by Russia being in Manchuria on the sea, on the rivers, and at Chinese ports. It being midnight, the, debate stood adjourned. Adjourned at one minute after Twelve of the clock till Thursday, 18th April.