

wrong. And then comes the fourth objection : " The second point which Her Majesty's Government desire should be reconsidered "—and this phrase is positively, so far as words can give it, a command on the part of Her Majesty's Government that it shall be reconsidered :—

The second point which Her Majesty's Government desire should be reconsidered is the constitution of the Legislative Council. They appreciate the considerations which have influenced the Conference in determining the mode in which this body, so important to the constitution of the Legislature, should be composed. But it appears to them to require further consideration whether, if the members be appointed for life, and their number be fixed, there will be any sufficient means of restoring harmony between the Legislative Council and the popular Assembly, if it shall ever unfortunately happen that a decided difference of opinion shall arise between them. These two points, relating to the prerogative of the Crown and the Constitution of the Upper Chamber have appeared to require distinct and separate notice.

Is not that a pretty emphatic dissent ?

Questions of minor consequence and matters of detailed arrangement may properly be reserved for a future time, when the provisions of the bill intended to be submitted to the Imperial Parliament shall come under consideration.

So, sir, there are more objections still which the Colonial Secretary has not stated. He gives a general sanction, but specifies four matters, two of which he distinctly says must be altered, and the other two he does not approve of, and he says that other matters—too numerous, I suppose, to specify—must be reserved for remark at a future time. Well, just at the time that this despatch made its appearance, there was an article in the *London Times*, a passage from which I will read in this connection, though it may seem to bear on a somewhat different branch of the question from that with which I am just more particularly dealing. The *London Times*, referring to this despatch, makes use of these expressions, and I beg the attention of the House to them, because they give the key-note of a great deal of the public opinion at home with reference to this matter :—

It is true we are not actually giving up the American colonies,—nay, the despatch we are quoting does not contain the slightest hint that such a possibility ever crossed the mind of the writer; but yet it is perfectly evident—and there is no use in concealing the fact—that the Confederation movement considerably diminishes the difficulty which would be felt by the colonies in

separating from the Mother Country. Even now the North American Confederation represents a state formidable from the numbers of its hardy and energetic population, and capable, if so united, of vigorously defending the territories it possesses. A few years will add greatly to that population, and place Canada, Hochelaga, Acadia, or by whatever other name the Confederacy may think fit to call itself, quite out of the reach of invasion or conquest. Such a state would not only be strong against the Mother Country under the impossible supposition of our seeking to coerce it by force, but it might be separated from us without incurring the disgrace of leaving a small and helpless community at the mercy of powerful and warlike neighbors.

Here, then, is the somewhat less diplomatic utterance of the *Times*, on the occasion of the appearance of this despatch. It is perfectly true that no hint was given officially, when this scheme was sent home, that it contemplated separation. Perfectly true, that in the answer there is no hint that separation is contemplated. But it is perfectly true, also, that the leading journal instantly sees in it, and seizes at, the possibility—first, of its greatly facilitating our going—and, secondly, of its greatly facilitating, on the part of the Mother Country, the letting of us go. I shall come back to this branch of the subject presently, after I shall have quoted from a much more important expression of public opinion than any article in the *Times*. Meantime, I must refer to the language of Her Majesty's Speech from the Throne. It has been read during this debate already, and has been read as if it contained the most emphatic approval possible of this whole scheme—so emphatic an approval, that even to assume to discuss it now would seem to amount almost to treason. This language, of course, it is needless to say, is that of Her Majesty's Imperial advisers, and is to be read in connection with what Her Majesty's Government have said about this plan in the Colonial Secretary's despatch—that before it is passed into an enactment, it will require a good deal of revision. We may be told here that the document before us is a treaty, on which not a line or letter of amendment can be made by us. But Her Majesty's Government clearly understand that they are not bound by it, and that they are to alter it as much as they please. They won't give the pardoning power to these lieutenant-governors; they won't constitute the Legislative Council in this way; they won't look with indifference to the incurring of unheard-of expenses, and the hampering of commerce which they