

Speeches on Questions of Public Policy, Volume 1

John Bright

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ON QUESTIONS OF PUBLIC POLICY

BY
JOHN BRIGHT, M.P.

EDITED BY
JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

'BE JUST AND FEAR NOT'

SECOND EDITION

* * * * *

PREFACE.

The speeches which have been selected for publication in these volumes possess a value, as examples of the art of public speaking, which no person will be likely to underrate. Those who may differ from Mr. Bright's theory of the public good will have no difficulty in acknowledging the clearness of his diction, the skill with which he arranges his arguments, the vigour of his style, the persuasiveness of his reasoning, and above all, the perfect candour and sincerity with which he expresses his political convictions.

It seems likely that the course of events in this country will lead those, who may desire to possess influence in the conduct of public affairs, to study the art of public speaking. If so, nothing which can be found in English literature will aid the aspirant after this great faculty more than the careful and reiterated perusal of the speeches contained in these volumes. Tried indeed by the effect produced upon any audience by their easy flow and perfect clearness, or analysed by any of those systems of criticism which under the name of 'rhetoric' have been saved to us from the learning of the ancient world, these speeches would be admitted to satisfy either process.

This is not the occasion on which to point out the causes which confer so great an artistic value on these compositions; which give them now, and will give them hereafter, so high a place in English literature. At the present time nearly a hundred millions of the earth's inhabitants speak the English tongue. A century hence, and it will probably be the speech of nearly half the inhabitants of the globe. I think that no master of that language will occupy a loftier position than Mr. Bright; that no speaker will teach with greater exactness the noblest and rarest of the social arts, the art of clear and persuasive exposition. But before this art can be attained (so said the greatest critic that the world has known), it is necessary that the speaker should secure the sympathies of his audience, should convince them of his statesmanship, should show that he is free from any taint of self-interest or dissimulation. These conditions of public trust still form, as heretofore, in every country of free thought and free speech, the foundation of a good reputation and of personal influence. It is with the fact that such are the characteristics of my friend's eloquence, that I have been strongly impressed in collecting and editing the

materials of these volumes.

Since the days of those men of renown who lived through the first half of the seventeenth century, when the liveliest religious feeling was joined to the loftiest patriotism, and men laboured for their conscience and their country, England has witnessed no political career like that of Cobden and Bright. Cobden's death was a great loss to his country, for it occurred at a time when England could ill spare a conscientious statesman. Nations, however, cannot be saved by the virtues, nor need they be lost by the vices, of their public men. But Cobden's death was an irreparable loss to his friends--most of all to the friend who had been, in an incessant struggle for public duty and truth, of one heart and of one purpose with him.

Those who have been familiar with Cobden's mind know how wide was his knowledge, how true was his judgment of political events. The vast majority of those who followed his public career had but a scanty acquaintance with the resources of his sagacity and foresight. He spoke to the people on a few subjects only. The wisdom of Free Trade; the necessity of Parliamentary Reform; the dangerous tendency of those laws which favour the accumulation of land in few hands; the urgent need for a system of national education; the mischief of the mere military spirit; the prudence of uniting communities by the multiplication of international interests; the abandonment of the policy of diplomatic and military intermeddling; the advocacy, in short, of the common good in place of a spurious patriotism, of selfish, local, or class aims, formed the subject of Cobden's public utterances. But his intimate friends, and in particular his regular correspondents, were aware that his political criticism was as general as it was accurate. The loss then of his wise and lucid counsel was the greatest to the survivor of a personal and a political friendship which was continued uninterruptedly through so long and so active a career.

At the commencement of Mr. Bright's public life, the shortsighted selfishness of a landlords' parliament was afflicting the United Kingdom with a continuous dearth. Labour was starved, and capital was made unproductive by the Corn-laws. The country was tied to a system by which Great Britain and her Colonies deliberately chose the dearest market for their purchases. In the same spirit, the price of freights was wilfully heightened by the Navigation-laws. Important branches of home industry were crippled by prying, vexatious, and wasteful excises. And this system was conceived to be the highest wisdom; or at any rate, to be so invincible a necessity that it could not be avoided or altered without danger. The country, if it were to make its way, could make it only because other nations were servile imitators of our commercial policy, and, in the vain hope of retaliation, were hindering their own progress.

The foreign policy of Great Britain was suspicious and irritating, for it was secret, busy, and meddling, insolent to the weak, conciliatory, even truckling, to the strong. The very name of diplomacy is and has been odious to English Liberals, for by means of it a reactionary Government could check domestic reforms, and hinder the community of nations indefinitely. The policy of the Foreign Office was constantly directed towards embittering, if not embroiling, the relations between this and other countries. It is difficult to account for these intrigues, except on the ground that successive Governments were anxious to maintain political and social anomalies at home, while they were affecting to support 'the balance of power' abroad. The abandonment of intervention in foreign politics was the beginning of agitation for

domestic reforms.

Perhaps no part of the public administration was worse than that of India. The great Company had lost its monopoly of trade in the Eastern seas, but retained its administrative powers over the subject races and dependent princes of India. Its system of finance was wasteful and oppressive. Its policy was that of aggression and annexation. In practice, the Government was irresponsible. Nobody listened to Indian affairs in Parliament, except on rare occasions, or for party purposes. The Governor-General did as he pleased. The President of the Board of Control did as he pleased. If the reader wishes to see how the former acted, Mr. Cobden's pamphlet, 'How Wars are got up in India' will enlighten him. If it be necessary to inquire what the policy of the latter might be, the disastrous and disgraceful Affghan War is an illustration. Never perhaps was a war commenced more recklessly. It is certain that when loss and dishonour fell on the English arms, the statesmen who recommended and insisted on the war tried to screen themselves from just blame by the basest arts.

The internal resources of India were utterly neglected. The Company collected part of its revenue from a land-tax, levied in the worst shape. In order to secure an income through a monopoly, it constrained the cultivation of certain drugs for which there was a foreign demand; and neglected to encourage the cultivation of cotton, for which the home demand was wellnigh boundless, and to which the Indian supply might be made to correspond. The Company constructed neither road nor canal. It did nothing towards maintaining the means of communication which even the native governments had adopted. It suffered the ancient roads and tanks to fall into decay. It neglected to educate the native gentry, much more the people. In brief, the policy of the Company in dealing with India was the policy of Old Spain with her Transatlantic possessions, only that it was more jealous and illiberal.

Against these social and political evils, and many others which might be enumerated, a very small body of true and resolute statesmen arrayed themselves. Among these statesmen the most eminent were the two chiefs of the Anti-Corn-law agitation. Never did men lead a hope which seemed more forlorn. They had as opponents nearly the whole Upper House of Parliament, a powerful and compact party in the Lower. The Established Church was, of course, against them. The London newspapers, at that time almost the only political power in the press, were against them. The 'educated' classes were against them. Many of the working people were unfriendly to them, for the Chartists believed that the repeal of the Corn-laws would lower the price of labour. After a long struggle they gained the day; for an accident, the Irish famine, rendered a change in the Corn-laws inevitable. But had it not been for the organization of the League, the accident would have had no effect; for it is a rule in the philosophy of politics that an accident is valuable only when the machinery for making use of the accident is at hand. Calamities never teach wisdom to fools, they render it possible that the wise should avail themselves of the emergency.

A similar calamity, long foreseen by prudent men, caused the political extinction of the East India Company. The joint action of the Board of Control and the Directors led to the Indian mutiny. The suppression of the Indian mutiny led to the suppression of the Leadenhall Street Divan. Another calamity, also foreseen by statesmen, the outbreak of the American Civil War, gave India commercial hope, and retrieved the finances which the Company's rule had thrown into hopeless disorder.

I have selected the speeches contained in these two volumes, with a view to supplying the public with the evidence on which Mr. Bright's friends assert his right to a place in the front rank of English statesmen. I suppose that there is no better evidence of statesmanship than prescience; that no fuller confirmation of this evidence can be found than in the popular acceptance of those principles which were once unpopular and discredited. A short time since, Lord Derby said that Mr. Bright was the real leader of the Opposition. It is true that he has given great aid to that opposition which Lord Derby and his friends have often encountered, and by which, to their great discredit, but to their great advantage, they have been constantly defeated. If Lord Derby is in the right, Mr. Bright is the leader of the People, while his Lordship represents a party which is reckless because it is desperate. The policy which Mr. Bright has advocated in these pages, and throughout a quarter of a century, a policy from which he has never swerved, has at last been accepted by the nation, despite the constant resistance of Lord Derby and his friends. It embodies the national will, because it has attacked, and in many cases vanquished, institutions and laws which have become unpopular, because they have been manifestly mischievous and destructive. No one knows better how conservative and tolerant is public opinion in England towards traditional institutions, than Mr. Bright does; or how indifferent the nation is to attacks on an untenable practice and a bad law, until it awakens to the fact that the law or the practice is ruinous.

Mr. Bright's political opinions have not been adopted because they were popular. He was skilfully, and for a time successfully, maligned by Lord Palmerston, on account of his persevering resistance to the policy of the Russian War. But it is probable that the views he entertained at that time will find more enduring acceptance than those which Lord Palmerston and Lord Palmerston's colleagues promulgated, and that he has done more to deface that Moloch, 'the balance of power,' than any other man living. Shortly after the beginning of the Planters' War, almost all the upper, and many of the middle classes, sympathized with the Slave-owners' conspiracy. Everybody knows which side Mr. Bright took, and how judicious and far-sighted he was in taking it. But everybody should remember also how, when Mr. Bright pointed out the consequences likely to ensue from the cruise of the Alabama, he was insulted by Mr. Laird in the House of Commons; the Mr. Laird who launched the Alabama, who has been the means of creating bitter enmity between the people of this country and of the United States, and has contrived to invest the unlawful speculation of a shipbuilder with the dignity of an international difficulty, to make it the material for an unsettled diplomatic question.

There are many social and political reforms, destined, it may be hoped, to become matter of debate and action in a Reformed Parliament, towards the accomplishment of which Mr. Bright has powerfully contributed. There is that without which Reform is a fraud, the redistribution of seats; that without which it is a sham, the ballot; that without which it is possibly a danger, a system of national education, which should be, if not compulsory, so cogently expedient that it cannot be rejected. There is the great question of the distribution of land, its occupancy, and its relief from that pestilent system of game preserving which robs the farmer of his profit and the people of their home supplies. There is the pacification of Ireland. The only consolation which can be gathered from the condition of that unhappy country is, that reforms, which are highly expedient in Great Britain, are vital in Ireland, and that they

therefore become familiar to the public mind. There is the development of international amity and good-will, first between ourselves and the people of our own race, next between all nations. There is the recognition of public duty to inferior or subject races, a duty which was grievously transgressed before and after the Indian mutiny, and has been still more atrociously outraged in the Jamaica massacre. Upon these and similar matters, no man who wishes to deserve the reputation of a just and wise statesman,--in other words, to fulfil the highest and greatest functions which man can render to man,--can find a worthier study than the public career of an Englishman whose guiding principle throughout his whole life has been his favourite motto, 'Be just and fear not.'

I have divided the speeches contained in these volumes into groups. The materials for selection are so abundant, that I have been constrained to omit many a speech which is worthy of careful perusal. I have naturally given prominence to those subjects with which Mr. Bright has been especially identified, as, for example, India, America, Ireland, and Parliamentary Reform. But nearly every topic of great public interest on which Mr. Bright has spoken is represented in these volumes.

A statement of the views entertained by an eminent politician, who wields a vast influence in the country, is always valuable. It is more valuable when the utterances are profound, consistent, candid. It is most valuable at a crisis when the people of these islands are invited to take part in a contest where the broad principles of truth, honour, and justice are arrayed on one side, and their victory is threatened by those false cries, those reckless calumnies, those impudent evasions which form the party weapons of desperate and unscrupulous men.

All the speeches in these volumes have been revised by Mr. Bright. The Editor is responsible for their selection, for this Preface, and for the Index at the close of the second volume.

JAMES E. THOROLD ROGERS.

OXFORD, _June_ 30, 1868.

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The Second Edition of these volumes is an exact reprint of the first, certain obvious errors of the press only having been corrected.

OXFORD, _Dec_. 21, 1868.

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INDIA

I

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 3, 1853.

From Hansard.

[The ministerial measure for the government of India was introduced by Sir Charles Wood on June 3, 1853. The particulars of the Bill were as follows: The Government proposed that for the future the relations between the Directors and the Board of Control should be unchanged, but that the constitution of the former should be altered and its patronage curtailed. It reduced the number of the Members of the Court from twenty-four to eighteen, of whom twelve were to be elected as before, and six nominated by the Crown from Indian servants who had been ten years in the service of the Crown or the Company. One-third of this number was to go out every second year, but to be re-eligible. Nominations by favour were to be abolished. The governorship of Bengal was to be separated from the office of Governor-General. The legislative council was to be improved and enlarged, the number to be twelve. The Bill passed the House of Lords on June 13.]

I feel a considerable disadvantage in rising to address the House after having listened for upwards of five hours to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman. But the question is one, as the right hon. Gentleman has said, of first-rate importance; and as I happen from a variety of circumstances to have paid some attention to it, and to have formed some strong opinions in regard to it, I am unwilling even that the Bill should be brought in, or that this opportunity should pass, without saying something, which will be partly in reply to the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and partly by way of comment on the plan which he has submitted to the House. There is, as it appears to me, great inconsistency between the speech of the right hon. Gentleman, and that which he proposes should be done; because, really, if we take his speech as a true and faithful statement of the condition of India, and of the past proceedings of the Government in that country, our conviction must be that the right hon. Gentleman will be greatly to be blamed in making any alteration in that Government. At the same time, if it be not a faithful portraiture of the Government, and of its transactions in

India, then what the right hon. Gentleman proposes to do in regard to the home administration of that country is altogether insufficient for the occasion. I cannot on the present occasion go into many of the details on which the right hon. Gentleman has touched; but the observations which I have to make will refer to matters of government, and those will be confined chiefly to the organisation of the home administration. I am not much surprised that the Government should have taken what I will call a very unsatisfactory course with regard to the measure they have propounded, because they evidently did not seem exactly to know what they ought to do from the very first moment that this question was brought before them. I do not allude to the whole of the Treasury bench, but I refer particularly to the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell), because he was at the head of the Government when this question was first brought before them. Lord Broughton, then Sir John Hobhouse, was at that time the President of the Board of Control, and he was not in favour of a Committee to inquire into the past government and present condition of India. Shortly afterwards, however, it was considered by the noble Lord (Lord J. Russell) that it would be desirable to have such a Committee appointed. A Committee was appointed, and it sat.

But at the commencement of the present Session the noble Lord intimated very distinctly, in answer to a question which I put to him, and which seemed to make the noble Lord unnecessarily angry, that it was the intention of the Government to legislate, and in such a way as to leave the Indian Government almost entirely the same as it had hitherto been. ['No, no!'] Well, I thought that the noble Lord said so, and in corroboration of that I may mention that the noble Lord quoted--and I believe that it was the noble Lord's only authority--the opinion of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Stamford (Mr. Herries), who considered that no material change was required in the constitution of the home Indian Government. Well, when the noble Lord made that announcement, considerable dissatisfaction was manifested on both sides of the House, some hon. Members speaking in favour of a delay of one, two, or three years, or declaring themselves strongly against the present constitution of the Indian Government. However, from that time to this, various rumours were afloat, and everybody was confident one week that there would be no legislation, or only a postponement; in another week it was thought that there was to be a very sweeping measure (which last report, I must say, I never believed); and the week after that people were again led to the conclusion that there would be a measure introduced such as the one this night submitted to the House. Again, it was understood so lately as last Saturday that there would be no legislation on the subject, excepting a mere temporary measure for a postponement. I confess that I was myself taken in by that announcement. On Monday the hon. Member for Poole (Mr. Danby Seymour) gave notice of a question on the same subject, and he was requested not to ask it till Tuesday. On Tuesday there was a Cabinet Council, and whether there was a change of opinion then I know not, but I presume that there was. The opinion that was confidently expressed on Saturday gave way to a new opinion, and the noble Lord announced that legislation would be proceeded with immediately. All this indicates that there was a good deal of vacillation on the part of the Government. At last, however, has come the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control. There were some good things in it, no doubt. I do not suppose that any man could stand up, and go on speaking for five hours, without saying something that was useful. But as to the main question on which this matter rests, I do not believe that the plan which the Government proposes to substitute will be one particle better than that

which exists at the present moment.

With regard to the question of patronage, I admit, so far as that goes, that the plan proposed by the right hon. Gentleman will be an improvement on the present system. But I do not understand that the particular arrangement of the covenanted service is to be broken up at all. That is a very important matter, because, although he might throw open the nominations to the Indian service to the free competition of all persons in this country, yet if, when these persons get out to India, they are to become a covenanted service, as that service now is constituted, and are to go on from beginning to end in a system of promotion by seniority--and they are to be under pretty much the same arrangement as at present--a great deal of the evil now existing will remain; and the continuance of such a body as that will form a great bar to what I am very anxious to see, namely, a very much wider employment of the most intelligent and able men amongst the native population.

The right hon. Gentleman has, in fact, made a long speech wholly in defence of the Indian Government; and I cannot avoid making some remarks upon what he has stated because I wholly dissent from a large portion of the observations which he has made. But the right hon. Gentleman, above all things, dreads that this matter should be delayed. Now I will just touch upon that point. The right hon. Gentleman has said that he has not met any one who does not consider it highly desirable that the House should legislate upon the subject of the Government of India this year; and that it will be a great evil if such legislation is postponed. In support of this view he produces a private letter from Lord Dalhousie upon the subject. Now I do not consider such evidence as by any means conclusive, because the House knows that Lord Dalhousie has been connected with the system that now exists. That noble Earl is also surrounded by persons who are themselves interested in maintaining the present system. From his elevated position also in India--I do not mean his location at Simlah--but from his being by his station removed from the mass of the European population, and still more removed from the native population, I do not think it at all likely that Lord Dalhousie will be able to form a sounder opinion upon this question than persons who have never been in India. In my opinion, no evil can possibly arise from creating in the minds of the population of India a feeling that the question of Indian Government is considered by the House of Commons to be a grave and solemn question; and I solemnly believe that if the decision on the question be delayed for two years, so as to enable Parliament to make due inquiries as to the means of establishing a better form of government in India, it will create in the minds of all the intelligent natives of India a feeling of confidence and hope, and that whatever may be done by them in the way of agitation will be rather for the purpose of offering information in the most friendly and generous spirit, than of creating opposition to any Government legislation. However, the question of delay is one which the House in all probability will be called upon to decide on another occasion.

But passing from that subject, I now come to the principle upon which the right hon. Gentleman founded his Motion. The speech of the right hon. Gentleman was throughout that of an advocate of the Indian Government, as at present constituted; and, if Mr. Melville had said everything that could possibly be dragged into the case, he could not have made it more clearly appear than the right hon. Gentleman has done that the Government of India has been uniformly worthy of the confidence of the country. My view of this matter, after a good deal of observation, is, that the Indian Government, composed of two branches,

which the right hon. Gentleman does not propose to amalgamate into one, is a Government of secrecy and irresponsibility to a degree that should not be tolerated in a country like this, where we have a constitutional and Parliamentary Government, I have not the least idea in any observations which I may make either in this House or elsewhere of bringing a charge against the East India Company--that is to say, against any individual member of the Board of Directors, as if they were anxious to misgovern India. I never had any such suspicion. I believe that the twenty-four gentlemen who constitute the Board of Directors would act just about as well as any other twenty-four persons elected by the same process, acting under the same influences, and surrounded by the same difficulties--having to act with another and independent body--the Board of Control. Neither am I hostile to the Board of Control, because I think that the duty imposed upon it is greater than any such body can properly perform. The right hon. Gentleman, the enormous labours of whose office could not be accomplished by any one man, coming into office in December, and having to propose a new Government for India in the month of May or June, must have found it extremely difficult to make himself master of the question. But beyond this the House should bear in mind, that during the last thirty years there has been a new President of the Board of Control every two years. Nay, in the course of last year there were no less than three Presidents of the Board of Control. Thus that Board seems framed in such a manner as to make it altogether impossible that any one man should be able to conduct it in the way which it ought to be conducted. Beyond this, the President of that Board has to act in conjunction with the Court of Directors. Without saying anything which would impute blame to any party, it must be obvious that two such bodies combined can never carry on the government of India wisely, and in accordance with those principles which have been found necessary in the government of this country. The right hon. Gentleman has been obliged to admit that the theory of the old Government of India was one which could not be defended, and that everybody considers it ridiculous and childish. I am not at all certain that the one that is going to be established is in any degree better. It was in 1784 that this form of government was established, amid the fight of factions. In 1813 it was continued for twenty-years longer, during a time when the country was involved in desperate hostilities with France. In 1833 another Bill, continuing that form of government, passed through Parliament immediately after the hurricane which carried the Reform Bill. All these circumstances rendered it difficult for the Government, however honestly disposed, to pass the best measure for the government of India. But all the difficulties which then existed appear to me wholly to have vanished. Never has any question come before Parliament more entirely free from a complication of that nature, or one which the House has the opportunity of more quietly and calmly considering, than the question now before them.

I should have been pleased if the right hon. Gentleman had given the House the testimony of some two or three persons on his own side of the question. But, as he has not done so, I will trouble the House by referring to some authorities in support of my own views. I will first refer to the work of Mr. Campbell, which has already been quoted by the right hon. Gentleman. It is a very interesting book, and gives a great deal of information. That writer says--

'The division of authority between the Board of Control and the Court of Directors, the large number of directors, and the peculiar system by which measures are originated in the Court, sent for approval to the Board, then back again to the Court, and

so on, render all deliverances very slow and difficult; and when a measure is discussed in India, the announcement that it has been referred to the Court of Directors is often regarded as an indefinite postponement. In fact, it is evident that (able and experienced as are many of the individual directors) twenty-four directors in one place, and a Board of Control in another, are not likely very speedily to unite in one opinion upon any doubtful point.'

That, I think, is likely to be the opinion of any man on the Government of India. There is another authority to which I will refer, Mr. Kaye, who has also written a very good book. It was actually distributed by the Court of Directors; I have therefore a right to consider it a fair representation of their views of what was done, especially as the Chairman of the Court has given me a copy of the book. Mr. Kaye, in referring to the double Government which existed in Bengal in 1772, makes use of these expressions. When I first read them, I thought they were a quotation from my own speeches:--

'But enlightened as were the instructions thus issued to the supervisors, the supervision was wholly inadequate to the requirements of the case. The double Government, as I have shown, did not work well. It was altogether a sham and an imposture. It was soon to be demolished at a blow.... The double Government had, by this time, fulfilled its mission. It had introduced an incredible amount of disorder and corruption into the State, and of poverty and wretchedness among the people; it had embarrassed our finances, and soiled our character, and was now to be openly recognised as a failure.'

This is only as to Bengal. The following are the words he uses in respect to the double Government at home:--

'In respect of all transactions with foreign Powers--all matters bearing upon questions of peace and war--the President of the Board of Control has authority to originate such measures as he and his colleagues in the Ministry may consider expedient. In such cases he acts presumedly in concert with the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors--a body composed of the chairman, deputy-chairman, and senior member of the Court. The Secret Committee sign the despatches which emanate from the Board, but they have no power to withhold or to alter them. They have not even the power to record their dissent. In fact, the functions of the Committee are only those which, to use the words of a distinguished member of the Court (the late Mr. Tucker), who deplored the mystery and the mockery of a system which obscures responsibility and deludes public opinion, could as well be performed "by a secretary and a seal."

Further on he says--

'In judging of responsibility, we should remember that the whole foreign policy of the East India Company is regulated by the Board of Control; that in the solution of the most vital questions--questions of peace and war--affecting the finances of the country, and, therefore, the means of internal improvement, the Court of Directors have no more power than the mayor and aldermen of any corporate town. India depends less on the will of the twenty-four than on one man's caprice--here to-day and gone

to-morrow--knocked over by a gust of Parliamentary uncertainty--the mistaken tactics of a leader, or negligence of a whipper-in. The past history of India is a history of revenue wasted and domestic improvement obstructed by war.'

This is very much what I complain of. I admit the right of the East India Company to complain of many things done by the Board of Control; and I am of opinion, that if the House left the two bodies to combat one another, they would at last come to an accurate perception of what they both are. The East India Company accused the Board of Control of making wars and squandering the revenue which the Company collected. But Mr. Kaye said that Mr. Tucker deplored the mystery and the mockery of a system which obscured responsibility and deluded public opinion. It is because of this concealment, of this delusion practised upon public opinion, of this evasion of public responsibility and Parliamentary control, that you have a state of things in India which the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles) has described, when he says that the Company manages the revenues, collects the taxes, and gets from 20,000,000 l. to 30,000,000 l. a-year, and nobody knows how much more. But, whatever it is, such is the system of foreign policy pursued by the Board of Control--that is to say, by the gentlemen who drop down there for six or eight or twelve months, never beyond two years--that, whatever revenues are collected, they are squandered on unnecessary and ruinous wars, till the country is brought to a state of embarrassment and threatened bankruptcy. That is the real point which the House will have to consider.

With regard to some of the details of the Government plan, we should no doubt all agree: but this question of divided responsibility, of concealed responsibility, and of no responsibility whatever, that is the real pith of the matter. The House should take care not to be diverted from that question. [Mr. Mangles: 'Produce your own plan.'] An hon. Gentleman has asked me to produce my plan. I will not comply with that request, but will follow the example of a right hon. Gentleman, a great authority in this House, who once said, when similarly challenged, that he should produce his plan when he was called in. I believe that the plan before the House to-night was concocted by the Board of Control and the hon. Member for Guildford and his Colleagues I shall, therefore, confine myself at present to the discussion of that plan. Some persons are disposed very much (at least I am afraid so) to undervalue the particular point which I am endeavouring to bring before the House; and they seem to fancy that it does not much matter what shall be the form of government in India, since the population of that country will always be in a condition of great impoverishment and much suffering; and that whatever is done must be done there, and that after all--after having conquered 100,000,000 of people--it is not in our power to interfere for the improvement of their condition. Mr. Kaye, in his book, commences the first chapters with a very depreciating account of the character of the Mogul Princes, with a view to show that the condition of the people of India was at least as unfavourable under them as under British rule. I will cite one or two cases from witnesses for whose testimony the right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Wood) must have respect. Mr. Marshman is a gentleman who is well known as possessing a considerable amount of information on Indian affairs, and has, I presume, come over on purpose to give his evidence on the subject. He was editor of a newspaper which was generally considered throughout India to be the organ of the Government; in that newspaper, the 'Friend of India', bearing the date 1st April, 1852, the following statement appears:--

'No one has ever attempted to contradict the fact that the condition of the Bengal peasantry is almost as wretched and degraded as it is possible to conceive--living in the most miserable hovels, scarcely fit for a dog-kennel, covered with tattered rags, and unable, in too many instances, to procure more than a single meal a-day for himself and family. The Bengal ryot knows nothing of the most ordinary comforts of life. We speak without exaggeration when we affirm, that if the real condition of those who raise the harvest, which yields between 3,000,000 l and 4,000,000 l a-year, was fully known, it would make the ears of one who heard thereof tingle.'

It has been said that in the Bengal Presidency the natives are in a better condition than in the other Presidencies; and I recollect that when I served on the Cotton Committee the evidence taken before it being confined to the Bombay and Madras Presidencies, it was then said that if evidence had been taken about the Bengal Presidency it would have appeared that the condition of the natives was better. But I believe that it is very much the same in all the Presidencies. I must say that it is my belief that if a country be found possessing a most fertile soil, and capable of bearing every variety of production, and that, notwithstanding, the people are in a state of extreme destitution and suffering, the chances are that there is some fundamental error in the government of that country. The people of India have been subjected by us, and how to govern them in an efficient and beneficial manner is one of the most important points for the consideration of the House. From the Report of the Indian Cotton Committee it appears that nearly every witness--and the witnesses were nearly all servants of the Company--gave evidence as to the state of destitution in which the cultivators of the soil lived. They were in such an abject condition that they were obliged to give 40 or 50 per cent, to borrow money to enable them to put seed into the ground. I can, if it were necessary, bring any amount of evidence to prove the miserable condition of the cultivators, and that in many places they have been compelled to part with their personal ornaments. Gentlemen who have written upon their condition have drawn a frightful picture, and have represented the persons employed to collect the revenue as coming upon the unhappy cultivators like locusts, and devouring everything. With regard to the consumption of salt, looking at the Friend of India, of April 14, 1853, it appears that it is on the decline. In the year 1849-50, the consumption was 205,517 tons; in 1850-51, 186,410 tons; and in 1851-2, 146,069 tons. Thus, in the short period of three years, there has been a decrease in the consumption amounting to 59,448 tons, which will involve a loss to the revenue of 416,136 l. [Footnote: The Friend of India was incorrect in this statement the real decline in the consumption of salt was about 12,000 tons.] Salt is one of those articles that people in India will use as much of as they can afford, and the diminution in the consumption appears to me to be a decided proof of the declining condition of the population, and that must affect adversely the revenue of the Indian Government. Now there is another point to which the right hon. Gentleman has slightly alluded; it is connected with the administration of justice, and I will read from the Friend of India a case illustrative of the efficiency of the police. The statement is so extraordinary that it would be incredible but for the circumstance of its having appeared in such a respectable journal:--

'The affair itself is sufficiently uninteresting. A native Zemindar had, or fancied he had, some paper rights over certain lands occupied by a European planter, and, as a

necessary consequence, sent a body of armed retainers to attack his factory. The European resisted in the same fashion by calling out his retainers. There was a pitched battle, and several persons were wounded, if not slain; while the Darogah, the appointed guardian of the peace, sat on the roof of a neighbouring hut and looked on with an interest, the keenness of which was probably not diminished by the fact of his own immunity from the pains and perils of the conflict. There has been a judicial investigation, and somebody will probably be punished, if not by actual sentence, by the necessary disbursement of fees and douceurs, but the evil will not be thereby suppressed or even abated. The incident, trifling as it may appear--and the fact that it is trifling is no slight evidence of a disorganised state of society--is an epitome in small type of our Bengal police history. On all sides, and in every instance, we have the same picture--great offences, the police indifferent or inefficient, judicial investigations protracted till the sufferers regret that they did not patiently endure the injury, and somebody punished, but no visible abatement of the crime. The fact is, and it is beginning at last to be acknowledged everywhere, except perhaps at home, that Bengal does not need so much a "reform" or reorganisation of the police, as a police, a body of some kind, specially organised for the preservation of order. Why the change is so long postponed, no one, not familiar with the _arcana_ of Leadenhall-street and Cannon-row, can readily explain.'

Mr. Marshman uses the expression, 'the incident, trifling as it may appear;' but I will ask the House if they can conceive a state of society in a country under the Government of England where a scene of violence such as has been described could be considered trifling?

The right hon. Gentleman has, while admitting that the want of roads in some districts of India is a great evil, endeavoured to show that a great deal has been done to remedy the deficiency, and that on some roads the mails travel as fast as ten miles an hour. Now, I believe that if the speed were taken at five miles an hour, it would be nearer the truth; and I will beg the House to excuse me if I read another extract from the _Friend of India_ of April 14, 1853:--

'The Grand Trunk, however, is the only road upon which a good speed has been attained, remarks being attached to all of the remainder strongly indicative of the want of improved means of communication. From Shergotty to Gyah, and Gyah to Patna, for instance, the pace is four miles and a half an hour; but then "the road is cutcha, and the slightest shower of rain renders it puddly and impracticable for speedy transit." From Patna to Benares the official account is the same, but the rate increases at one stage to five miles and a half. The southern roads are, however, in the worst condition, the mails travelling to Jelazore at three miles an hour, or less than a groom can walk; and even between Calcutta and Baraset the rate rises to only four miles and a half an hour, while everywhere we have such notices as "road intersected by numerous unbridged rivers and nullahs," "road has not been repaired for these many years," "road not repaired for years," the "road in so bad a state, and so

much intersected by rivers and nullahs, that no great improvement in the speed of the mails can be effected." And yet the surplus Ferry Funds might, one would think, if economically administered, be sufficient to pay at least for the maintenance of the roads already in existence. New roads, we fear, are hopeless until Parliament fixes a minimum, which must be expended on them; and even then it may be allowed to accumulate, as the Parliamentary grant for education has done at Madras.'

The right hon. Gentleman has referred to the subject of irrigation; and I hold in my hand an extract from the Report of the Commission which inquired into the subject. The Report states that--

'The loss of revenue by the famine of 1832-33 is estimated at least at 1,000,000 l. sterling; the loss of property at a far greater amount; of life, at 200,000 or 300,000; and of cattle, at 200,000 at the lowest, in Guntore alone, besides the ruin of 70,000 houses. The famine of the Northern Circars in 1833, and that of the north-western provinces of India at a later period, prove with irresistible force that irrigation in this country is properly a question, not of profit, but of existence.'

The right hon. Gentleman has also quoted from a Report by Colonel Cotton on the subject of the embankment of the Kistna. Now, the embankment of the Kistna has been recommended as far back as the year 1792, and from that time has been repeatedly brought forward. The whole estimate for it is but 155,000 l., and it was not until September, 1852, that the preliminary operations were commenced. I find this officer stating with respect to the district of Rajamundry, that if a particular improvement that had been recommended above twenty years ago had been carried out, it would have saved the lives of upwards of 100,000 persons who perished in the famine of 1837. I say that such facts as these are a justification of stronger language than any in which I have indulged in reference to the neglect of the Indian Government whether in this House or out of it. The right hon. gentleman candidly informs us that this very embankment has been recently stopped by order of the Madras Government, because the money was wanted for other purposes--the Burmese war, no doubt. In the year 1849 it was reported that Colonel Cotton wrote a despatch to the Madras Government, in which, after mentioning facts connected with the famines, he insisted, in strong and indignant language, that the improvements should go on. I believe that there was an allusion in the letter to the awkward look these things would have, pending the discussions on the Government of India, and I understand that it was agreed that the original letter, which countermanded the improvements, should be withdrawn, and that then the remonstrance from Colonel Cotton should also be withdrawn. A gentleman who has been in the Company's service, and who has for some time been engaged in improvements, chiefly in irrigation, writes in a private letter as follows:--

'From my late investigations on this subject, I feel convinced that the state of our communications is the most important subject which calls for consideration. I reckon that India now pays, for want of cheap transit, a sum equal to the whole of the taxes; so that by reducing its cost to a tenth, which might easily be done, we should as good as abolish all taxes. I trust the Committees in England are going on well, in spite of the unbecoming efforts which have been made to circumscribe and quash

their proceedings. Woe be to India, indeed, if this opportunity is lost! Much will depend upon you--

(the letter was not addressed to myself)--

and others now in England, who know India, and have a single eye to its welfare. It behoves you to do your utmost to improve this most critical time, and may God in his mercy overrule all the efforts of man for its good! What abominations, villainies, and idiotcies there still are in our system! Is there no hope, no possibility, of infusing a little fresh blood from some purer source into these bodies?

(the ruling authorities).

It is quite clear that no radical improvement can take place till some influences can be applied to stimulate our rulers to more healthy, wholesome action; health can never be looked for in a body constituted as the Court of Directors now is; nothing but torpid disease can be expected as matters now stand.

With respect to the administration of justice, I shall not go at any length into that subject, because I hope it will be taken up by some other Gentleman much more competent than myself, and I trust that a sufficient answer will be given to what has been stated by the right hon. Gentleman. However, as far as I am able to understand, there appears to be throughout the whole of India, on the part of the European population, an absolute terror of coming under the Company's Courts for any object whatever. Within the last fortnight I have had a conversation with a gentleman who has seen a long period of service in India, and he declared it was hopeless to expect that Englishmen would ever invest their property in India under any circumstances which placed their interests at the disposal of those courts of justice. That is one reason why there appears no increase in the number of Europeans or Englishmen who settle in the interior of India for the purpose of investing their capital there. The right hon. Gentleman endeavoured to make an excuse on the ground that the Law Commission had done nothing. I was not in the House when the right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay) brought forward the Bill of 1833, but I understand it was stated that the Law Commission was to do wonders; yet now we have the evidence of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control, that the Report of the Law Commission has ever since been going backwards and forwards, like an unsettled spirit, between this country and India. Mr. Cameron, in his evidence, said (I suppose it is slumbering somewhere on the shelves in the East India House) that the Court of Directors actually sneered at the propositions of their officers for enactments of any kind, and that it was evidently their object to gradually extinguish the Commission altogether. Yet the evidence of Mr. Cameron went to show the extraordinary complication and confusion of the law and law administration over all the British dominions in India. The right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control also referred to the statistics laid before the public; but I want to know why Colonel Sykes' statistical tables are not before the House. They are at the India House; but a journey to Leadenhall-street seems to be as long as one to India, and one can as soon get a communication by the overland mail as any information from the India House. What did Colonel Sykes say, with respect to a subject referred to by the right hon. Gentleman, who had given the House to suppose that a great deal had been done in respect to improvements in India? Colonel Sykes stated that in fifteen years, from

1838 to 1852, the average expenditure throughout the whole of India on public works, including roads, bridges, tanks, and canals, was 299,732_l_. The north-west appeared to be the pet district; and in 1851 the total expenditure was 334,000_l_, of which the north-west district had 240,000_l_. In 1852 the estimate was 693,000_l_, of which the north-west district was to have 492,000_l_, leaving only 94,000_l_ in 1851, and 201,000_l_ in 1852, for public works of all kinds in the three Presidencies of Bengal, Madras, and Bombay, with a population of 70,000,000 souls. The right hon. Gentleman then referred to the exports from this country, and the increase of trade with India; and a kindred subject to that was the mode in which Englishmen settle in India. What I want to show is, that the reason why so little is done with India by Englishmen is, that there does not exist in that country the same security for their investments as in almost every other country in the world. I recollect receiving from Mr. Mackay, who was sent out by the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, a letter expressing his amazement on finding that in the interior of India an Englishman was hardly known, unless he now and then made his appearance as a tax collector. The following Return shows in what small numbers Europeans resort to India:--

'British-born subjects in India not in the service of the Queen or the Company:--

Bengal	6,749
Madras	1,661
Bombay	1,596

	10,006

'In the interior of the country, engaged in agriculture or manufactures--

Bengal	273
Madras	37
Bombay	7

	317'

I cannot believe, if the United States had been the possessors of India, but that where there are tens of Europeans now in that country there would have been, not hundreds, but thousands of the people of America. The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the exports to India, and wanted to show how large they were. Certainly they have increased very much, because they started from nothing at all. Before the opening of the trade, the Court of Proprietors, by resolution, declared that it was quite a delusion to suppose it possible to increase the trade with India. In 1850 the total exports to India from Great Britain and Ireland were 8,024,000_l_, of which cotton goods alone amounted to 5,220,000_l_, leaving 2,804,000_l_ for the total exports from Great Britain and Ireland upon all other branches of industry other than cotton. Now, let the House make a comparison with another country, one with which a moderately fair comparison might be made. Brazil has a population of 7,500,000 souls, half of whom are reckoned to be slaves, yet the consumption of British goods is greater in Brazil, in proportion to the population, than in India--the former country, with a population of 7,500,000, taking British goods to the amount of 2,500,000_l_. If India took but half the quantity of our exports that Brazil did in proportion to her population, she would take more than five times what

she now takes. Yet Brazil is a country upon which we have imposed the payment of exorbitant duties, which we have almost debarred from trading with us by an absurd monopoly in sugar, while India is a country entirely under our own government, and which, we are told, is enjoying the greatest possible blessings under the present administration, compared with what it enjoyed under its former rulers. Our exports to India in 1814 were 826,000_l_; in 1832 they were 3,600,000_l_; in 1843 they were 6,500,000_l_; and in 1850 they were 8,000,000_l_. India consumes our exports at the rate of 1_s_. 3_d_. per head; whilst in South America, including the whole of the slave population, the consumption per head is 8_s_. 8_d_. These are facts which the right hon. Baronet is bound to pay serious attention to. For myself, representing, as I do, one of our great seats of manufacturing industry, I feel myself doubly called upon to lose no opportunity of bringing such facts before the House, satisfied as I am that there is no Member of this House so obtuse as not to comprehend how materially the great manufacturing interests of this country are concerned in the question--what shall be the future Government of India?

Another subject requiring close attention on the part of Parliament is the employment of the natives of India in the service of the Government. The right hon. Member for Edinburgh (Mr. Macaulay), in proposing the Indian Bill of 1833, had dwelt on one of its clauses, which provided that neither colour, nor caste, nor religion, nor place of birth, should be a bar to the employment of persons by the Government; whereas, as matter of fact, from that time to this, no person in India has been so employed, who might not have been equally employed before that clause was enacted; and, from the statement of the right hon. Gentleman the President of the Board of Control, that it is proposed to keep up the covenanted service system, it is clear that this most objectionable and most offensive state of things is to continue. Mr. Cameron, a gentleman thoroughly versed in the subject, as fourth member of Council in India, President of the Indian Law Commission, and of the Council of Education for Bengal--what does he say on this point? He says--

'The statute of 1833 made the natives of India eligible to all offices under the Company. But during the twenty years that have since elapsed, not one of the natives has been appointed to any office except such as they were eligible to before the statute. It is not, however, of this omission that I should feel justified in complaining, if the Company had shown any disposition to make the natives fit, by the highest European education, for admission to their covenanted service. Their disposition, as far as it can be devised, is of the opposite kind.

'When four students (added Mr. Cameron) were sent to London from the Medical College of Calcutta, under the sanction of Lord Hardinge, in Council, to complete their professional education, the Court of Directors expressed their dissatisfaction; and when a plan for establishing a University at Calcutta, which had been prepared by the Council of Education, was recommended to their adoption by Lord Hardinge, in Council, they answered that the project was premature. As to the Law Commission, I am afraid that the Court of Directors have been accustomed to think of it only with the intention of procuring its abolition.'

Under the Act of 1833 the natives of India were declared to be eligible to any office under the Company. No native has, in the twenty years

which have since elapsed, been appointed to any office in pursuance of that clause which he might not have held before the Bill passed, or had it never passed at all. There might not, perhaps, have been so much reason to complain of this circumstance, had the Government of India meanwhile shown a disposition to qualify the natives for the covenanted service; but the fact is that the Government has, on the contrary, manifested a disposition of a totally opposite character. The House must be very cautious not to adopt the glossed and burnished statement of the right hon. Gentleman as exhibiting the real state of things in India; for it is essential, in the highest degree, that in the present critical juncture of things the whole truth should be known. The right hon. Baronet, towards the close of his speech, has gone into the subject of education, and not so much into that of ecclesiastical establishments in India, but somewhat into that of religion. Now, with reference to education, so far as can be gathered from the Returns before the House-- I have sought to obtain Returns of a more specific character, but to no purpose, having received the usual answer in these matters, that there was no time for preparing them--but from the Returns we have before us I find that while the Government has overthrown almost entirely that native education which had subsisted throughout the country so universally that a schoolmaster was as regular a feature in every village as the 'potail' or head man, it has done next to nothing to supply the deficiency which has been created, or to substitute a better system. Out of a population of 100,000,000 natives we instruct but 25,000 children; out of a gross revenue of 29,000,000_l_. sterling, extracted from that population, we spend but 66,000_l_. in their education. In India, let it be borne in mind, the people are not in the position with regard to providing for their own education which the people of this country enjoy, and the education which they have provided themselves with, the Government has taken from them, supplying no adequate system in its place. The people of India are in a state of poverty, and of decay, unexampled in the annals of the country under their native rulers. From their poverty the Government wrings a gross revenue of more than 29,000,000_l_. sterling, and out of that 29,000,000_l_., return to them 66,000_l_. per annum for the purposes of education!

What is our ecclesiastical establishment in India? Three bishops and a proportionate number of clergy, costing no less than 101,000_l_. a-year for the sole use of between 50,000 and 60,000 Europeans, nearly one-half of whom, moreover--taking the army--are Roman Catholics. I might add, that in India, the Government showed the same discrimination of which the noble Member for the City of London (Lord J. Russell) seemed to approve so much the other night, for, although they give to one Protestant bishop 4,000_l_. a-year, with 1,200_l_. a-year more for expenses and a ship at his disposal, and to two other Protestant bishops between 2,000_l_. and 3,000_l_. a-year, they give to the Roman Catholic bishop a paltry sum of about 250_l_. a-year. The East India Company are not, perhaps, herein so much to blame, seeing that they do but follow the example of what is going on in this country.

There is another question--perhaps the most important of all--the question of Indian finance, which, somehow or other, the right hon. Baronet has got over in so very lame a manner, in so particularly confused a style, that had I not known something of the matter previously, I should have learnt very little from the right hon. Baronet's statement. A former Director of the East India Company has, on this subject, issued a book--of course, in defence of the Company. Here

are two or three facts extracted from this book:--From 1835 to 1851-- sixteen years--the entire net taxation of India has produced 340,756,000_l_.; the expenditure on the Government in the same period having been 341,676,000_l_--an amount somewhat in excess of the revenue. During these sixteen years there has been also expended on public works of all kinds 5,000,000_l_., and there has been paid, in dividends, to the proprietors of East India stock, 10,080,000_l_.; making a total expenditure of 356,756,000_l_. In the same period the Company has contracted loans to the extent of 16,000,000_l_.; every farthing of which has gone to improvements, the stated extent of which I believe to have been greatly magnified, and to pay the amiable ladies and gentlemen whose votes return to Leadenhall-street those immaculate Directors whom the Government seems so desirous of cherishing. All expenditure for improvements of every kind, and all dividends to stockholders, have been paid from loans contracted during the last sixteen years; so that the whole revenue has been expended, leaving nothing for improvements and nothing for the Company's dividends. This seems to me a formidable, an alarming state of things.

The right hon. Gentleman spoke of the Indian debt coming upon the people of this country, expressing the opinion that if the Government of India were transferred to the Crown--which assuredly it ought to be--the debt ought so to be transferred. The debt is not in the present Budget, indeed, but it will certainly come before the House. I have already referred to a memorable speech of the late Sir Robert Peel on this subject, in 1842, just after he had come into office, and when, finding the country left by the Whigs with an Exchequer peculiarly discouraging to a Chancellor of the Exchequer, he was about to propose that temporary income-tax which has since become permanent. He said, after referring to the affairs of Canada and China--

'For the purpose of bringing before the House a full and complete view of our financial position, as I promised to do, I feel it to be my duty to refer to a subject which has of late occupied little attention in the House, but which I think might, with advantage to the public, have attracted more of their regard--I refer to the state of Indian finance, a subject which formerly used to be thought not unworthy of the consideration of this House. I am quite aware that there may appear to be no direct and immediate connexion between the finances of India and those of this country; but that would be a superficial view of our relations with India which should omit the consideration of this subject. Depend upon it, if the credit of India should become disordered, if some great exertion should become necessary, then the credit of England must be brought forward to its support, and the collateral and indirect effect of disorders in Indian finances would be felt extensively in this country. Sir, I am sorry to say that Indian finance offers no consolation for the state of finance in this country. I hold in my hand an account of the finances of India, which I have every reason to believe is a correct one. It is made up one month later than our own accounts--to the 5th of May. It states the gross revenue of India, with the charges on it; the interest of the debt; the surplus revenue, and the charges paid on it in England; and there are two columns which contain the net surplus and the net deficit. In the year ending May, 1836, there was a surplus of 1,520,000_l_. from the Indian revenue. In the year ending the 5th of May, 1837, there was a surplus of 1,100,000_l_., which was reduced

rapidly in the year ending May, 1838, to one of 620,000 l. In the year ending the 5th of May, 1839, the surplus fell to 29,000 l.; in the year ending the 5th of May, 1840, the balance of the account changed, and so far from there being any surplus, the deficit on the Indian revenue was 2,414,000 l. I am afraid I cannot calculate the deficit for the year ending May, 1841, though it depends at present partly on estimate, at much less than 2,334,000 l. The House, then, will bear in mind, that in fulfilment of the duty I have undertaken, I present to them the deficit in this country for the current year to the amount of 2,350,000 l., with a certain prospect of a deficit for the next year to the amount of at least 2,470,000 l., independently of the increase to be expected on account of China and Affghanistan, and that in India, that great portion of our Empire, I show a deficit on the two last years which will probably not be less than 4,700,000 l.'-- [3 Hansard, lxi. 428-9.]

Now, this deficit has in the period since 1842 been growing every year, with the exception of two years, when, from accidental and precarious circumstances, a surplus of between 300,000 l. and 400,000 l. was made out. The course of deficit has now, however, been resumed, and there is probably no one in this House or in the country but the right hon. President of the Board of Control, who does not perceive that the Burmese war will materially aggravate the amount of that deficit. Where is this to end? When the Board of Control was first established, the debt was 8,000,000 l.; in 1825 it was 25,000,000 l.; in 1829 it was 34,000,000 l.; in 1836, 37,000,000 l.; in 1843, 36,000,000 l.; in 1849, 44,000,000 l.; in 1853, 47,000,000 l.; and now, including the bond debt at home and the debt in India, it is about 51,000,000 l. The military expenditure of India has increased since the last Charter Act from 8,000,000 l. a-year to more than 12,000,000 l. a-year, and now forms no less than 56 per cent. of the whole expenditure. I believe that if the Indian Government would endeavour to improve the condition of the people by attending to economic principles, by establishing better means of communication, by promoting irrigation, and by affording facilities for education, the Indian population would at once be convinced that there was a feeling of sympathy entertained towards them on the part of their rulers and conquerors, and the idea--which I believe prevails very extensively--that we held India more with the object of extorting taxation than of benefiting the people, would speedily be removed.

When I come to consider the amount of the revenue, and its pressure upon the population, I think I can show a state of things existing in India which cannot be paralleled in any other country in the world. The evidence of Mr. Davies and Mr. Stewart, collectors in Guzerat, shows that in that district the actual taxation varies from 60 to 90 per cent. upon the gross produce of the soil. Mr. Campbell calculates the gross revenue of India at about 27,000,000 l.; and Mr. Kaye, a recent authority, who, I presume, wrote his book at the India House, states that the gross revenue was 29,000,000 l. The land revenue is 12,000,000 l. or 13,000,000 l.; and although the Government took, or intended to take, all the rent, it is not half enough for them, and they are obliged to take as much more from other sources in order to enable them to maintain their establishments. I mention this fact to show the enormous expense of the Indian Government, and the impossibility of avoiding a great and dangerous financial crisis unless

some alteration is made in the present system. Mr. Campbell, speaking of the Indian revenues under the Mogul Princes, says--

'The value of food, labour, &c., seems to have been much the same as now--that is, infinitely cheaper than in Europe; and, certainly, in comparison to the price of labour and all articles of consumption, the revenue of the Moguls must have been more effective than that of any modern State--I mean that it enabled them to command more men and luxuries, and to have a greater surplus.'

I would ask the House to imagine that all steam engines, and all applications of mechanical power, were banished from this country; that we were utterly dependent upon mere manual labour. What would you think if the Chancellor of the Exchequer, under such circumstances, endeavoured to levy the same taxation which is now borne by the country? From one end of India to the other, with very trifling exceptions, there is no such thing as a steam engine; but this poor population, without a steam engine, without anything like first-rate tools, are called upon to bear, I will venture to say, the very heaviest taxation under which any people ever suffered with the same means of paying it. Yet the whole of this money, raised from so poor a population, which would in India buy four times as much labour, and four times as much of the productions of the country, as it would obtain in England, is not enough to keep up the establishments of the Government; for during the last sixteen years the Indian Government has borrowed 16,000,000_l_. to pay the dividends to the proprietors in England.

The opium question has been alluded to by the right hon. Gentleman (Sir C. Wood). I must say I do not know any one connected with China, or at all acquainted with the subject, who is not of opinion that the opium revenue is very near its termination. Even the favourite authority of the President of the Board of Control, Mr. Marshman, declared his opinion that India was on the verge of a great financial crisis. Whether the present Chinese Government retains its power, or the insurgents be successful and a new dynasty be established, the scruple against the importation of opium into China from India having once been removed, the transition to the growth of the drug in China is very easy, and there can scarcely be a doubt that opium will soon be as extensively cultivated in that country as ever it was in India. This might very soon produce a loss of 3,000,000_l_. of revenue to the East India Company. There has already been an annual deficit in the revenues of the East India Company for the last fifteen years; they have to bear the cost of a Burmese war; and the annexation of new territory will only bring upon them an increased charge, for Pegu will probably never repay its expenses, and yet they have the prospect of losing 3,000,000_l_. of their revenue within a very few years. Now, what would the Chancellor of the Exchequer say if the President of the Board of Control came to that House and proposed to raise a loan upon the credit of this country for the purpose of maintaining our territory in India? Would it not be better at once to ascertain whether the principles and policy on which we have hitherto proceeded have not been faulty? Should we not rather endeavour to reduce our expenditure, to employ cheaper labour, to increase the means of communication in India, which would enable us to dispense with a portion of our troops, and to make it a rule that the Governor-General should have more honour when he came home, for not having extended by an acre the territory of our Indian possessions, than if he had added a province or a kingdom to them?

The plan proposed by the President of the Board of Control appears to me very closely to resemble that which exists at present. The result, so far as regards the real question, about which the public are most interested, is this, that the twenty-four gentlemen who are directors of the East India Company are, by a process of self-immolation, to be reduced to fifteen. I think this reduction will be one of the most affecting scenes in the history of the Government of India. As the East India Company keep a writer to record their history, I hope they also keep an artist to give us an historical painting of this great event. There we shall see the hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles), the hon. Member for Honiton (Sir J. W. Hogg), one of the hon. Members for the City of London, and the other directors, meeting together, and looking much like shipwrecked men in a boat casting lots who should be thrown overboard. To the fifteen directors who are to remain, three others are to be added, and the result will be that, instead of having twenty-four gentlemen sitting in Leadenhall-street, to manage the affairs in India, there will be eighteen. The present constituency is so bad that nothing the President of the Board of Control can do can make it worse; but as that right hon. Gentleman finds it impossible to make it better, he lets the constituency remain as it was. The right hon. Baronet proposes that the Crown should appoint six members of the Board who have been at least ten years in India, so that there may at all events be that number of gentlemen at the Board fit for the responsible office in which they are placed. But this is an admission that the remaining twelve members of the Board are not fit for their office. They have two ingredients--the one wholesome, the other poisonous; but there are two drops of poison to one of wholesome nutriment. The right hon. Gentleman mixes them together, and then wants Parliament and the country to believe that he has proposed a great measure.

As regards the right hon. Gentleman's speech, I must say that I have never heard so great a one--I mean as to length--where the result, so far as the real thing about which people wish to know, was so little. The twelve gentlemen appointed by the present constituency are degraded already by the right hon. Gentleman's declaration, that they are not elected in a satisfactory manner, and that they are not fit persons for the government of India. They are, in fact, bankers and brewers, and men of all sorts, in the City of London, who find it their interest to get into the Court of Directors--no matter by what channel--because it adds to the business of their bank, or whatever else may be the undertaking in which they are engaged; but who have no special qualification for the government of India. If the Government thinks it right to have six good directors, let them abolish the twelve bad ones. Then it appears that the Secret Department is to be retained. Speaking of this, Mr. Kaye, quoting the authority of Mr. Tucker, a distinguished director, said it was no more than a secretary and a seal. Next comes a most extraordinary proposition. Hitherto the directors have undergone all the hardship of governing India for 300_l_ a-year; but the right hon. Gentleman now proposes to raise their wages by 4_l_ per week each. I must say, that if this body is to be salaried at all, and is not to have the profit of the patronage enjoyed by the present Government, nothing can be worse economy than this, with a view to obtaining a body which shall command the respect, and have the amount of influence, requisite for conducting the Government of India. Sixteen of the directors, receiving 500_l_ a-year each--why, they would have to pay their clerks much more!--and the chairman and the deputy-chairman 1,000_l_ a-year each. The whole of the right hon. Gentleman's scheme seems to bear the marks of--I am almost afraid to say what; but he seems to have tried to please every one in framing his great proposition, and at last has

landed the House in a sort of half measure, which neither the East India Company nor India wants. If I had made a speech such as the right hon. Gentleman has delivered, and believed what he said, I would leave the Indian Government as it is; but if I thought it necessary to alter the Government, I would do so on principle essentially. The right hon. Gentleman is afraid of bringing the Government of India under the authority of the Crown. What, I should like to know, would have been done if India had been conquered by the troops of the Crown? We should then never have sent some thirty men into a bye-street of London to distribute patronage and govern a great country. The Government of India would then have been made a department of the Government, with a Council and a Minister of State. But it appears that the old system of hocus-pocus is still to be carried on.

This is no question of Manchester against Essex--of town against country--of Church against Nonconformity. It is a question in which we all have an interest, and in which our children may be more deeply interested than we are ourselves. Should anything go wrong with the finances, we must bear the burden; or should the people of India by our treatment be goaded into insurrection, we must reconquer the country, or be ignominiously driven out of it. I will not be a party to a state of things which might lead to the writing of a narrative like this on the history of our relations with that empire. Let the House utterly disregard the predictions of mischief likely to result from such a change in the Government of India as that which I advocate. When the trade was thrown open, and the Company was deprived of the monopoly of carrying, they said the Chinese would poison the tea. There is nothing too outrageous or ridiculous for the Company to say in order to prevent the Legislature from placing affairs on a more honest footing. I object to the Bill, because--as the right hon. Gentleman admitted--it maintains a double Government. In the unstatesmanlike course which the right hon. Gentleman is pursuing, he will, no doubt, be especially backed by the noble Lord the Member for London. I only wish that some of the younger blood in the Cabinet might have had their way upon this question. Nothing can induce me to believe, after the evidence which is before the public, that this measure has the approbation of an united Cabinet. It is not possible that thirteen sensible gentlemen, who have any pretensions to form a Cabinet, could agree to a measure of this nature. I am more anxious than I can express that Parliament should legislate rightly in this matter. Let us act so at this juncture that it may be said of us hereafter--that whatever crimes England originally committed in conquering India, she at least made the best of her position by governing the country as wisely as possible, and left the records and traces of a humane and liberal sway.

I recollect having heard the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (Viscount Palmerston) deliver in this House one of the best speeches I ever listened to. On that occasion the noble Lord gloried in the proud name of England, and, pointing to the security with which an Englishman might travel abroad, he triumphed in the idea that his countrymen might exclaim, in the spirit of the ancient Roman, *„Civis Romanus sum“*. Let us not resemble the Romans merely in our national privileges and personal security. The Romans were great conquerors, but where they conquered, they governed wisely. The nations they conquered were impressed so indelibly with the intellectual character of their masters, that, after fourteen centuries of decadence, the traces of civilisation are still distinguishable. Why should not we act a similar part in India? There never was a more docile people, never a more tractable nation. The opportunity is present, and the power is not wanting. Let us

abandon the policy of aggression, and confine ourselves to a territory ten times the size of France, with a population four times as numerous as that of the United Kingdom. Surely that is enough to satisfy the most gluttonous appetite for glory and supremacy. Educate the people of India, govern them wisely, and gradually the distinctions of caste will disappear, and they will look upon us rather as benefactors than as conquerors. And if we desire to see Christianity, in some form, professed in that country, we shall sooner attain our object by setting the example of a high-toned Christian morality, than by any other means we can employ.

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INDIA

II.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, JUNE 24, 1858.

From Hansard.

[After the suppression of the Indian mutiny, Lord Palmerston's Government determined to introduce a Bill the object of which was to place the possessions of the East India Company under the direct authority of the Crown. This Bill was introduced by Lord Palmerston on February 12. But the Government fell a few days afterwards, on the Conspiracy Bill, and Lord Palmerston's Bill was withdrawn. On March 26 the new Government introduced their own Bill, which was known as the India Bill No. 2. The chief peculiarity of this Bill was that five members in the proposed council of eighteen should be chosen by the constituencies of the following cities:--London, Manchester, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Belfast. The scheme was unpopular, and Lord Russell proposed that it should be withdrawn, and that resolutions should be passed in a Committee of the whole House, the acceptance of which might prove a guide to the proceedings of the Government. The suggestion was accepted by Mr. Disraeli, and in consequence India Bill No. 3 was brought in, and read a second time on June 24.]

I do not rise for the purpose of opposing the second reading of this Bill--on the contrary, if any hon. Member thinks proper to divide the House upon it, I shall vote with the noble Lord. I must say, however, that there are many clauses in the Bill to which I entertain serious objections. Some of them will, I hope, be amended as the Bill passes through Committee; but if that is not the case, I can only hope that, as the Bill of 1853 is abandoned in 1858, within the next five years the House of Commons will take some further steps with regard to this question, with the view of simplifying the Government of India as carried on in England. I wish to take this opportunity of making some observations upon the general question of Indian government, which it might have been out of place to have made during the discussion of the various Resolutions which have been agreed to by the House.

I think it must have struck every hon. Member that, while two Governments have proposed great changes with regard to the government of India, no good case has really been made out for such changes in the speeches of the noble Lord and the right hon. Gentleman by whom the two India Bills have been introduced. That opinion, I know, will meet with a response from two or three hon. Gentlemen on this (the Opposition) side of the House. It occurred to me when the noble Lord at the head of the

late Government (Viscount Palmerston) introduced his Bill--and I made the observation when the present Chancellor of the Exchequer brought forward his measure--that if the House knew no more of the question than they learned from the speeches of the Ministers, they could not form any clear notion why it was proposed to overthrow the East India Company. The hon. Member for Guildford (Mr. Mangles) has expressed a similar opinion several times during the progress of these discussions. The right hon. Member for Carlisle (Sir James Graham) has also said that the East India Company was being dealt with in a manner in which animals intended for sacrifice were treated in Eastern countries and in ancient times,--they were decked with garlands when they were led out for immolation. That is true; but it does not therefore follow that the House is not quite right in the course it is taking. It must be clear that the moment the House of Commons met this Session there was only one course which the then Government could adopt with reference to this question. A feeling existed throughout the country--I believe I may say it was universal--that for a long time past the government of India had not been a good government; that grave errors--if not grievous crimes--had been committed in that country. I think the conscience of the nation had been touched on this question, and they came by a leap, as it were--by an irrepressible instinct--to the conclusion that the East India Company must be abolished, and that another and, as the nation hoped, a better government should be established for that country. There was a general impression, arising from past discussion in Parliament, that the industry of the people of India had been grievously neglected; that there was great reason for complaint with respect to the administration of justice; and that with regard to the wars entered into by the Indian Government, there was much of which the people of England had reason to be ashamed.

It has been said by some that these faults are to be attributed to the Board of Control; but I have never defended the Board of Control. I believe everything the East India Company has said of the Board of Control--to its discredit; and I believe that everything the Board of Control has said to the discredit of the East India Company to be perfectly true. There was also a general impression that the expenditure of the East India Government was excessive; and that it had been proved before more than one Committee that the taxes imposed upon the people of India were onerous to the last degree. These subjects were discussed in 1853, at which time, in my opinion, the change now proposed ought to have been effected. Subsequently the calamitous events of 1857 and 1858 occurred; and the nation came at once to the conclusion--a conclusion which I think no disinterested person could resist--that it was impossible that India and its vast population could any longer be retained under the form of government which has existed up to this period. If, then, a change was inevitable, the question was how it should be accomplished and what should be done. I think it is quite clear that the course the noble Lord has pursued is right--namely, that of insisting that during this present Session, and without delay, the foundation of all reform in the government of India should be commenced at home, because we cannot take a single step in the direction of any real and permanent improvement in the Indian Government until we have reformed what I may call the basis of that Government by changes to be effected in this country.

What, then, is the change which is proposed, and which ought to be made? For my own part, in considering these questions, I cannot altogether approve the Bill now before the House. What we want with regard to the government of India is that which in common conversation is called 'a

little more daylight.' We want more simplicity and more responsibility. I objected to the scheme originally proposed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer because it did not provide these requisites; that scheme so closely resembled the system we were about to overthrow that I could not bring myself to regard it favourably. In considering the subject before Parliament met, I asked myself this question:--'Suppose there had never been an East India Company or any such corporation,--suppose India had been conquered by the forces of the Crown, commanded by generals acting under the authority of the Crown,--how should we then have proposed to govern distant dominions of vast extent, and with a population that could scarcely be counted?' I believe such a system of government as has hitherto existed would never have been established; and if such a system had not existed I am convinced that no Minister would have proposed the plan now submitted to the House.

I think the government would have been placed in the hands of a Secretary of State, with his secretaries, clerks, and staffs of officers, or of a small Board, so small as to prevent responsibility from being diffused and divided, if not actually destroyed. I suspect that the only reason why the Country or Parliament can be disposed to approve the large Council now proposed is, that they have seen something like a Council heretofore, formerly of twenty-four, and subsequently of eighteen members, and I believe there is something like timidity on the part of the House, and probably on the part of the Government, which hinders them from making so great a change as I have suggested to the simple plan which would probably have existed had no such body as the East India Company ever been established. I am willing to admit candidly that if the government of India at home should be so greatly simplified it will be necessary that very important changes should be made in the government in India. I agree with the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) that the representatives of the Crown in India must have power as well as responsibility; that they should be enabled to deal with emergencies, and to settle the hundred or the thousand questions that must arise among 100,000,000 of people, without sending 10,000 miles to this country to ask questions which ought to be settled at once by some competent authority on the spot.

There are two modes of governing India, and the hon. Member for Leominster (Mr. Willoughby), who has been a very distinguished servant of the East India Company, has publicly expressed his views upon this question. I have been very much struck with a note attached to the published report of his speech, referring to the multifarious duties discharged by the Directors of the East India Company. That note states that--

'A despatch may be received, containing 60, or 100, or 200 cases; and the despatch, in itself voluminous, is rendered more so by collections attached to it, containing copies of all former correspondence on the subject or subjects, and of all letters written thereon by various local officers, and all papers relating thereto. There has not long since been in the Revenue Department a despatch with 16,263 pages of collections. In 1845 there was one in the same Department with 46,000 pages, and it was stated that Mr. Canning, some years since in the House of Commons, mentioned a military despatch to which were attached 13,511 pages of collections.'

The hon. Gentleman did not say in his speech that anybody at the India House ever read all these things. It was quite dear that if the

Directors were to pretend to go through a waggon-load of documents coming to Leadenhall-street every year it must be only a pretence, and if they want to persuade the House that they give attention to only one-tenth part of these papers they must think the House more credulous than it is in matters of this kind. That is one mode of governing India. It is the mode which has been adopted and the mode which has failed. If we are to have the details settled here, I am perfectly certain we can have no good government in India. I have alluded on a former occasion to a matter which occurred in a Committee upstairs. A gentleman who was examined stated that he had undertaken to brew a wholesome beer, and quite as good as that exported for the supply of the troops, somewhere in the Presidency of Madras, for one-sixth of the price paid by Government for that exported to India from England; that the experiment was completely successful; that the memorandum or record with regard to it was sent home, no doubt forming part of the thousands of pages to which reference has been made; and that it was buried in the heap in which it came, because for years nothing was heard of a proposition which would have saved the Government a very large amount annually and opened a new industry to the population and capital of India. I believe this system of government is one of delay and disappointment--one, actually, of impossibility--one which can by no means form a complete theory of government as held by any persons in the House; and that the other, the simpler system, which I wish the House to undertake, would be one of action, progress, and results, with regard to India, such as we have never yet seen and never can see until there is a complete simplification of the Indian Government in this country.

I come now to the question--and it is for this question that I have wished principally to address the House--if at any time we obtain the simplicity which I contend for with regard to the government at home, what changes will it be desirable to make in the government in India? And I would make one observation at this point, that in all the statements and arguments which I hope to use, I beg the House to believe that I use them with the greatest possible deference, with the feeling that this is a question upon which no man is at all entitled to dogmatize, that it is a vast question which we all look at as one we are scarcely capable of handling and determining. I submit my views to the House because I have considered the subject more or less for many years, and I believe I am actuated by the simple and honest desire of contributing something to the information and knowledge of Parliament with regard to its duty upon this great question.

What is it we have to complain of in India? What is it that the people of India, if they spoke by my mouth, have to complain of? They would tell the House that, as a rule, throughout almost all the Presidencies, and throughout those Presidencies most which have been longest under British rule, the cultivators of the soil, the great body of the population of India, are in a condition of great impoverishment, of great dejection, and of great suffering. I have, on former occasions, quoted to the House the report of a Committee which I obtained ten years ago, upon which sat several members of the Court of Directors; and they all agreed to report as much as I have now stated to the House--the Report being confined chiefly to the Presidencies of Bombay and Madras. If I were now submitting the case of the population of India I would say that the taxes of India are more onerous and oppressive than the taxes of any other country in the world. I think I could demonstrate that proposition to the House. I would show that industry is neglected by the Government to a greater extent probably than is the case in any other country in the world which has been for any length of time under what is

termed a civilized and Christian government. I should be able to show from the notes and memoranda of eminent men in India, of the Governor of Bengal, Mr. Halliday, for example, that there is not and never has been in any country pretending to be civilized, a condition of things to be compared with that which exists under the police administration of the province of Bengal. With regard to the courts of justice I may say the same thing. I could quote passages from books written in favour of the Company with all the bias which the strongest friends of the Company can have, in which the writers declare that, precisely in proportion as English courts of justice have extended, have perjury and all the evils which perjury introduces into the administration of justice prevailed throughout the Presidencies of India. With regard to public works, if I were speaking for the Natives of India, I would state this fact, that in a single English county there are more roads--more travelable roads--than are to be found in the whole of India; and I would say also that the single city of Manchester, in the supply of its inhabitants with the single article of water, has spent a larger sum of money than the East India Company has spent in the fourteen years from 1834 to 1848 in public works of every kind throughout the whole of its vast dominions. I would say that the real activity of the Indian Government has been an activity of conquest and annexation--of conquest and annexation which after a time has led to a fearful catastrophe which has enforced on the House an attention to the question of India, which but for that catastrophe I fear the House would not have given it.

If there were another charge to be made against the past Government of India, it would be with regard to the state of its finances. Where was there a bad Government whose finances were in good order? Where was there a really good Government whose finances were in bad order? Is there a better test in the long run of the condition of a people and the merits of a Government than the state of the finances? And yet not in our own time, but going back through all the pages of Mill or of any other History of India we find the normal condition of the finances of India has been that of deficit and bankruptcy. I maintain that if that be so, the Government is a bad Government. It has cost more to govern India than the Government has been able to extract from the population of India. The Government has not been scrupulous as to the amount of taxes or the mode in which they have been levied; but still, to carry on the government of India according to the system which has heretofore prevailed, more has been required than the Government has been able to extract by any system of taxation known to them from the population over which they have ruled. It has cost more than 30,000,000_l_ a-year to govern India, and the gross revenue being somewhere about 30,000,000_l_, and there being a deficit, the deficit has had to be made up by loans. The Government has obtained all they could from the population; it is not enough, and they have had to borrow from the population and from Europeans at a high rate of interest to make up the sum which has been found to be necessary. They have a debt of 60,000,000_l_; and it is continually increasing; they always have a loan open; and while their debt is increasing their credit has been falling, because they have not treated their creditors very honourably on one or two occasions, and chiefly, of course, on account of the calamities which have recently happened in India. There is one point with regard to taxation which I wish to explain to the House, and I hope that, in the reforms to which the noble Lord is looking forward, it will not be overlooked. I have said that the gross revenue is 30,000,000_l_. Exclusive of the opium revenue, which is not, strictly speaking, and hardly at all, a tax upon the people, I set down the taxation of the country at something like 25,000,000_l_. Hon.

Gentlemen must not compare 25,000,000 l. of taxation in India with 60,000,000 l. of taxation in England. They must bear in mind that in India they could have twelve days' labour of a man for the same sum in silver or gold which they have to pay for one day's labour of a man in England; that if, for example, this l. 25,000,000 were expended in purchasing labour, that sum would purchase twelve times as much in India as in England--that is to say, that the 25,000,000 l. would purchase as many days' labour in India as 300,000,000 l. would purchase in England. [An Hon. Member: 'How much is the labour worth?'] That is precisely what I am coming to. If the labour of a man is only worth 2 d. a-day, they could not expect as much revenue from him as if it were 2 s. a-day. That is just the point to which I wish the hon. Gentleman would turn his attention. We have in England a population which, for the sake of argument, I will call 30,000,000. We have in India a population of 150,000,000. Therefore, the population of India is five times as great as the population of England. We raise in India, reckoning by the value of labour, taxation equivalent to 300,000,000 l., which is five times the English revenue. Some one may probably say, therefore, that the taxation in India and in England appears to be about the same, and no great injury is done. But it must be borne in mind that in England we have an incalculable power of steam, of machinery, of modes of transit, roads, canals, railways, and everything which capital and human invention can bring to help the industry of the people; while in India there is nothing of the kind. In India there is scarcely a decent road, the rivers are not bridged, there are comparatively no steam engines, and none of those aids to industry that meet us at every step in Great Britain and Ireland. Suppose steam-engines, machinery, and modes of transit abolished in England, how much revenue would the Chancellor of the Exchequer obtain from the people of England? Instead of 60,000,000 l. a-year, would he get 10,000,000 l.? I doubt it very much. If the House will follow out the argument, they will come to the conclusion that the taxes of the people of India are oppressive to the last degree, and that the Government which has thus taxed them can be tolerated no longer, and must be put an end to at once and for ever. I wish to say something about the manner in which these great expenses are incurred. The extravagance of the East India Government is notorious to all. I believe there never was any other service under the sun paid at so high a rate as the exclusive Civil Service of the East India Company. Clergymen and missionaries can be got to go out to India for a moderate sum--private soldiers and officers of the army go out for a moderate remuneration--merchants are content to live in the cities of India for a percentage or profit not greatly exceeding the ordinary profits of commerce. But the Civil Service, because it is bound up with those who were raised by it and who dispense the patronage of India, receive a rate of payment which would be incredible if we did not know it to be true, and which, knowing it to be true, we must admit to be monstrous. The East India Government scatters salaries about at Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Agra, Lahore, and half a dozen other cities, which are up to the mark of those of the Prime Minister and Secretaries of State in this country. These salaries are framed upon the theory that India is a mine of inexhaustible wealth, although no one has found it to be so but the members of the Civil Service of the East India Company. The policy of the Government is at the bottom of the constant deficit. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has twice recently declared that expenditure depends upon policy. That is as true in India as in England, and it is the policy that has been pursued there which renders the revenue liable to this constantly recurring deficit.

I have come to the conclusion, which many hon. Members probably share with me, that the edifice we have reared in India is too vast. There are few men now, and least of all those connected with the East India Company, who, looking back to the policy that has been pursued, will not be willing to admit that it has not been judicious but hazardous--that territories have been annexed that had better have been left independent, and that wars have been undertaken which were as needless as they were altogether unjustifiable. The immense empire that has been conquered is too vast for management, its base is in decay, and during the last twelve months it has appeared to be tottering to its fall. Who or what is the instrument--the Cabinet, the Government, or the person--by whom this evil policy is carried on?

The greatest officer in India is the Governor-General. He is the ruler of about one-fifth--certainly more than one-sixth--of the human race. The Emperors of France and Russia are but the governors of provinces compared with the power, the dignity, and the high estate of the Governor-General of India. Now, over this officer, almost no real control is exercised. If I were to appeal to the two hon. Gentlemen who have frequently addressed the House during these debates (Colonel Sykes and Mr. Willoughby), they would probably admit that the Governor-General of India is an officer of such high position that scarcely any control can be exercised over him either in India or in England. Take the case of the Marquess of Dalhousie for example. I am not about to make an attack upon him, for the occasion is too solemn for personal controversies. But the annexation of Sattara, of the Punjab, of Nagpore, and of Oude occurred under his rule. I will not go into the case of Sattara; but one of its Princes, and one of the most magnanimous Princes that India ever produced, suffered and died most unjustly in exile, either through the mistakes or the crimes of the Government of India. This, however, was not done under the Government of Lord Dalhousie. As to the annexation of Nagpore, the House has never heard anything about it to this hour. There has been no message from the Crown or statement of the Government relative to that annexation. Hon. Members have indeed heard from India that the dresses and wardrobes of the ladies of its Court have been exposed to sale, like a bankrupt's stock, in the haberdashers' shops of Calcutta--a thing likely to incense and horrify the people of India who witnessed it.

Take, again, the case of the Burmese war. The Governor-General entered into it, and annexed the province of Pegu, and to this day there has been no treaty with the King of Burmah. If that case had been brought before the House, it is impossible that the war with Burmah could have been entered upon. I do not believe that there is one man in England who, knowing the facts, would say that this war was just or necessary in any sense. The Governor-General has an army of 300,000 men under his command; he is a long way from home; he is highly connected with the governing classes at home; there are certain reasons that make war palatable to large classes in India; and he is so powerful that he enters into these great military operations almost uncontrolled by the opinion of the Parliament and people of England. He may commit any amount of blunders or crimes against the moral law, and he will still come home loaded with dignities and in the enjoyment of pensions. Does it not become the power and character of this House to examine narrowly the origin of the misfortunes and disgraces of the grave catastrophe which has just occurred? The place of the Governor-General is too high--his power is too great--and I believe that this particular office and officer are very much responsible--of course under the Government at home--for the disasters that have taken place.

Only think of a Governor-General of India writing to an Indian Prince, the ruler over many millions of men in the heart of India, 'Remember you are but as the dust under my feet' Passages like these are left out of despatches, when laid on the table of the House of Commons:--it would not do for the Parliament or the Crown, or the people of England to know that their officer addressed language like this to a Native Prince. The fact is that a Governor-General of India, unless he be such a man as is not found more than once in a century, is very liable to have his head turned, and to form ambitious views, which are mainly to be gratified by successful wars and the annexation of province after province during the period of his rule. The 'Services' are always ready to help him in these plans. I am not sure that the President of the Board of Control could not give evidence on this subject, for I have heard something of what happened when the noble Lord was in India. When the Burmese war broke out, the noble Lord could no doubt tell the House that, without inquiring into the quarrel or its causes, the press of India, which was devoted to the 'Services', and the 'Services' themselves, united in universal approbation of the course taken by the Governor-General. Justice to Pegu and Burmah and the taxes to be raised for the support of the war were forgotten, and nothing but visions of more territory and more patronage floated before the eyes of the official English in India. I contend that the power of the Governor-General is too great and the office too high to be held by the subject of any power whatsoever, and especially by any subject of the Queen of England.

I should propose, if I were in a position to offer a scheme in the shape of a Bill to the House, as an indispensable preliminary to the wise government of India in future, such as would be creditable to Parliament and advantageous to the people of India, that the office of Governor-General should be abolished. Perhaps some hon. Gentlemen may think this a very unreasonable proposition. Many people thought it unreasonable in 1853 when it was proposed to abolish the East India Company; but now Parliament and the country believe it to be highly reasonable and proper; and I am not sure that I could not bring before the House reasons to convince them that the abolition of the office of Governor-General is one of the most sensible and one of the most Conservative proposals ever brought forward in connection with the Government of India. I believe the duties of the Governor-General are far greater than any human being can adequately fulfil. He has a power omnipotent to crush anything that is good. If he so wishes, he can overbear and overrule whatever is proposed for the welfare of India, while, as to doing anything that is good, I could show that with regard to the vast countries over which he rules, he is really almost powerless to effect anything that those countries require. The hon. Gentleman behind me (Colonel Sykes) has told us there are twenty nations in India, and that there are twenty languages. Has it ever happened before that any one man governed twenty nations, speaking twenty different languages, and bound them together in one great and compact empire? [An hon. Member here made an observation.] My hon. Friend mentions a great Parthian monarch. No doubt there have been men strong in arm and in head, and of stern resolution, who have kept great empires together during their lives; but as soon as they went the way of all flesh, and descended, like the meanest of their subjects, to the tomb, the provinces they had ruled were divided into several States, and their great empires vanished. I might ask the noble Lord below me (Lord John Russell) and the noble Lord the Member for Tiverton (the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn has not as yet experience on this point), whether, when they came to appoint a Governor-General of India, they did not find it one of the most

serious and difficult duties they could be called on to perform? I do not know at this moment, and I never have known, a man competent to govern India; and if any man says he is competent, he sets himself up at a much higher value than those who are acquainted with him are likely to set him. Let the House look at the making of the laws for twenty nations speaking twenty languages. Look at the regulations of the police for twenty nations speaking twenty languages. Look at the question of public works as it affects twenty nations speaking twenty languages; where there is no municipal power and no combinations of any kind, such as facilitate the construction of public works in this country. Inevitably all those duties that devolve on every good government must be neglected by the Governor-General of India, however wise, capable, and honest he may be in the performance of his duties, because the duties laid upon him are such as no man now living or who ever lived can or could properly sustain.

It may be asked what I would substitute for the Governor-Generalship of India. Now, I do not propose to abolish the office of Governor-General of India this Session. I am not proposing any clause in the Bill, and if I were to propose one to carry out the idea I have expressed, I might be answered by the argument, that a great part of the population of India is in a state of anarchy, and that it would be most inconvenient, if not dangerous, to abolish the office of Governor-General at such a time. I do not mean to propose such a thing now; but I take this opportunity of stating my views, in the hope that when we come to 1863, we may perhaps be able to consider the question more in the light in which I am endeavouring to present it to the House. I would propose that, instead of having a Governor-General and an Indian empire, we should have neither the one nor the other. I would propose that we should have Presidencies, and not an Empire. If I were a Minister--which the House will admit is a bold figure of speech--and if the House were to agree with me--which is also an essential point--I would propose to have at least five Presidencies in India, and I would have the governments of those Presidencies perfectly equal in rank and in salary. The capitals of those Presidencies would probably be Calcutta, Madras, Bombay, Agra, and Lahore. I will take the Presidency of Madras as an illustration. Madras has a population of some 20,000,000. We all know its position on the map, and that it has the advantage of being more compact, geographically speaking, than the other Presidencies. It has a Governor and a Council. I would give to it a Governor and a Council still, but would confine all their duties to the Presidency of Madras, and I would treat it just as if Madras was the only portion of India connected with this country. I would have its finance, its taxation, its justice, and its police departments, as well as its public works and military departments, precisely the same as if it were a State having no connection with any other part of India, and recognized only as a dependency of this country. I would propose that the Government of every Presidency should correspond with the Secretary for India in England, and that there should be telegraphic communications between all the Presidencies in India, as I hope before long to see a telegraphic communication between the office of the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and every Presidency over which he presides. I shall no doubt be told that there are insuperable difficulties in the way of such an arrangement, and I shall be sure to hear of the military difficulty. Now, I do not profess to be an authority on military affairs, but I know that military men often make great mistakes. I would have the army divided, each Presidency having its own army, just as now, care being taken to have them kept distinct; and I see no danger of any confusion or misunderstanding, when an emergency arose, in having them all brought

together to carry out the views of the Government. There is one question which it is important to bear in mind, and that is with regard to the Councils in India. I think every Governor of a Presidency should have an assistant Council, but differently constituted from what they now are. I would have an open Council. The noble Lord the Member for London used some expressions the other night which I interpreted to mean that it was necessary to maintain in all its exclusiveness the system of the Civil Service in India. In that I entirely differ from the noble Lord. [Lord J. Russell here indicated dissent.] The noble Lord corrects me in that statement, and therefore I must have been mistaken. What we want is to make the Governments of the Presidencies governments for the people of the Presidencies; not governments for the civil servants of the Crown, but for the non-official mercantile classes from England who settle there, and for the 20,000,000 or 30,000,000 of Natives in each Presidency.

I should propose to do that which has been done with great advantage in Ceylon. I have received a letter from an officer who has been in the service of the East India Company, and who told me a fact which has gratified me very much. He says--

'At a public dinner at Colombo, in 1835, to the Governor, Sir Wilmot Horton, at which I was present, the best speech of the evening was made by a native nobleman of Candy, and a member of Council. It was remarkable for its appropriate expression, its sound sense, and the deliberation and ease that marked the utterance of his feelings. There was no repetition or useless phraseology or flattery, and it was admitted by all who heard him to be the soundest and neatest speech of the night.'

This was in Ceylon. It is not, of course, always the best man who can make the best speech; but if what I have read could be said of a native of Ceylon, it could be said of thousands in India. We need not go beyond the walls of this House to find a head bronzed by an Indian sun equal to the ablest heads of those who adorn its benches. And in every part of India we all know that it would be an insult to the people of India to say that it is not the same. There are thousands of persons in India who are competent to take any position to which the Government may choose to advance them. If the Governor of each Presidency were to have in his Council some of the officials of his Government, some of the non-official Europeans resident in the Presidency, and two or three at least of the intelligent Natives of the Presidency in whom the people would have some confidence, you would have begun that which will be of inestimable value hereafter--you would have begun to unite the government with the governed; and unless you do that, no government will be safe, and any hurricane may overturn it or throw it into confusion.

Now, suppose the Governor-General gone, the Presidencies established, the Governors equal in rank and dignity, and their Councils constituted in the manner I have indicated, is it not reasonable to suppose that the delay which has hitherto been one of the greatest curses of your Indian Government would be almost altogether avoided? Instead of a Governor-General living in Calcutta, or at Simla, never travelling over the whole of the country, and knowing very little about it, and that little only through other official eyes, is it not reasonable to suppose that the action of the Government would be more direct in all its duties and in every department of its service than has been the case under the system which has existed until now? Your administration of the law, marked by so much disgrace, could never have lasted so long as it has done if the

Governors of your Presidencies had been independent Governors. So with regard to matters of police, education, public works, and everything that can stimulate industry, and so with regard to your system of taxation. You would have in every Presidency a constant rivalry for good. The Governor of Madras, when his term of office expired, would be delighted to show that the people of that Presidency were contented, that the whole Presidency was advancing in civilization, that roads and all manner of useful public works were extending, that industry was becoming more and more a habit of the people, and that the exports and imports were constantly increasing. The Governors of Bombay and the rest of the Presidencies would be animated by the same spirit, and so you would have all over India, as I have said, a rivalry for good; you would have placed a check on that malignant spirit of ambition which has worked so much evil--you would have no Governor so great that you could not control him, none who might make war when he pleased; war and annexation would be greatly checked, if not entirely prevented; and I do in my conscience believe you would have laid the foundation for a better and more permanent form of government for India than has ever obtained since it came under the rule of England.

But how long does England propose to govern India? Nobody answers that question, and nobody can answer it. Be it 50, or 100, or 500 years, does any man with the smallest glimmering of common sense believe that so great a country, with its twenty different nations and its twenty languages, can ever be bound up and consolidated into one compact and enduring empire? I believe such a thing to be utterly impossible. We must fail in the attempt if ever we make it, and we are bound to look into the future with reference to that point. The Presidency of Madras, for instance, having its own Government, would in fifty years become one compact State, and every part of the Presidency would look to the city of Madras as its capital, and to the Government of Madras as its ruling power. If that were to go on for a century or more, there would be five or six Presidencies of India built up into so many compact States; and if at any future period the sovereignty of England should be withdrawn, we should leave so many Presidencies built up and firmly compacted together, each able to support its own independence and its own Government; and we should be able to say we had not left the country a prey to that anarchy and discord which I believe to be inevitable if we insist on holding those vast territories with the idea of building them up into one great empire. But I am obliged to admit that mere machinery is not sufficient in this case, either with respect to my own scheme or to that of the noble lord (Lord Stanley). We want something else than mere clerks, stationery, despatches, and so forth. We want what I shall designate as a new feeling in England, and an entirely new policy in India. We must in future have India governed, not for a handful of Englishmen, not for that Civil Service whose praises are so constantly sounded in this House. You may govern India, if you like, for the good of England, but the good of England must come through the channels of the good of India. There are but two modes of gaining anything by our connection with India. The one is by plundering the people of India, and the other by trading with them. I prefer to do it by trading with them. But in order that England may become rich by trading with India, India itself must become rich, and India can only become rich through the honest administration of justice and through entire security of life and property.

Now, as to this new policy, I will tell the House what I think the Prime Minister should do. He ought, I think, always to choose for his President of the Board of Control or his Secretary of State for India, a

man who cannot be excelled by any other man in his Cabinet, or in his party, for capacity, for honesty, for attention to his duties, and for knowledge adapted to the particular office to which he is appointed. If any Prime Minister appoint an inefficient man to such an office, he will be a traitor to the Throne of England. That officer, appointed for the qualities I have just indicated, should, with equal scrupulousness and conscientiousness, make the appointments, whether of the Governor-General, or (should that office be abolished) of the Governors of the Presidencies of India. Those appointments should not be rewards for old men simply because such men have done good service when in their prime, nor should they be rewards for mere party service, but they should be appointments given under a feeling that interests of the very highest moment, connected with this country, depend on those great offices in India being properly filled. The same principles should run throughout the whole system of government; for, unless there be a very high degree of virtue in all these appointments, and unless our great object be to govern India well and to exalt the name of England in the eyes of the whole Native population, all that we have recourse to in the way of machinery will be of very little use indeed.

I admit that this is a great work; I admit, also, that the further I go into the consideration of this question, the more I feel that it is too large for me to grapple with, and that every step we take in it should be taken as if we were men walking in the dark. We have, however, certain great principles to guide us, and by their light we may make steps in advance, if not fast, at any rate sure. But we start from an unfortunate position. We start from a platform of conquest by force of arms extending over a hundred years. There is nothing in the world worse than the sort of foundation from which we start. The greatest genius who has shed lustre on the literature of this country has said, 'There is no sure foundation set on blood;' and it may be our unhappy fate, in regard to India, to demonstrate the truth of that saying. We are always subjugators, and we must be viewed with hatred and suspicion. I say we must look at the thing as it is, if we are to see our exact position, what our duty is, and what chance there is of our retaining India and of governing it for the advantage of its people. Our difficulties have been enormously increased by the revolt. The people of India have only seen England in its worst form in that country. They have seen it in its military power, its exclusive Civil Service, and in the supremacy of a handful of foreigners. When Natives of India come to this country, they are delighted with England and with Englishmen. They find themselves treated with a kindness, a consideration, a respect, to which they were wholly strangers in their own country; and they cannot understand how it is that men who are so just, so attentive to them here, sometimes, indeed too often, appear to them in a different character in India. I remember that the Hon. Frederic Shaw, who wrote some thirty years since, stated, in his able and instructive book, that even in his time the conduct of the English in India towards the Natives was less agreeable, less kindly, less just than it had been in former years; and in 1853, before the Committee presided over by the hon. Member for Huntingdon (Mr. T. Baring), evidence was given that the feeling between the rulers and the ruled in India was becoming every year less like what could be desired. It was only the other day there appeared in a letter of 'The Times' correspondent an anecdote which illustrates what I am saying, and which I feel it necessary to read to the House. Mr. Russell, of 'The Times', says:--

'I went off to breakfast in a small mosque, which has been turned into a 'salle a manger' by some officers stationed here, and

I confess I should have eaten with more satisfaction had I not seen, as I entered the enclosure of the mosque, a native badly wounded on a charpoy, by which was sitting a woman in deep affliction. The explanation given of this scene was, that "---- [the name of the Englishman was left blank] had been licking two of his bearers (or servants), and had nearly murdered them." This was one of the servants, and, without knowing or caring to know the causes of such chastisement, I cannot but express my disgust at the severity--to call it by no harsher name--of some of our fellow-countrymen towards their domestics.'

The reading of that paragraph gave me extreme pain. People may fancy that this does not matter much; but I say it matters very much. Under any system of government you will have Englishmen scattered all over India, and conduct like that I have just described, in any district, must create ill feeling towards England, to your rule, to your supremacy; and when that feeling has become sufficiently extensive, any little accident may give fire to the train, and you may have calamities more or less serious, such as we have had during the last twelve months. You must change all this if you mean to keep India. I do not now make any comment upon the mode in which this country has been put into possession of India. I accept that possession as a fact. There we are; we do not know how to leave it, and therefore let us see if we know how to govern it. It is a problem such as, perhaps, no other nation has had to solve. Let us see whether there is enough of intelligence and virtue in England to solve the difficulty. In the first place, then, I say, let us abandon all that system of calumny against the Natives of India which has lately prevailed. Had that people not been docile, the most governable race in the world, how could you have maintained your power for 100 years? Are they not industrious, are they not intelligent, are they not--upon the evidence of the most distinguished men the Indian Service ever produced--endowed with many qualities which make them respected by all Englishmen who mix with them? I have heard that from many men of the widest experience, and have read the same in the works of some of the best writers upon India. Then let us not have these constant calumnies against such a people. Even now there are men who go about the country speaking as if such things had never been contradicted, and talking of mutilations and atrocities committed in India. The less we say about atrocities the better. Great political tumults are, I fear, never brought about or carried on without grievous acts on both sides deeply to be regretted. At least, we are in the position of invaders and conquerors--they are in the position of the invaded and the conquered. Whether I were a native of India, or of England, or of any other country, I would not the less assert the great distinction between their position and ours in that country, and I would not permit any man in my presence, without rebuke, to indulge in the calumnies and expressions of contempt which I have recently heard poured forth without measure upon the whole population of India.

There is one other point to which I wish to address myself before I sit down, and in touching upon it I address myself especially to the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and his colleagues in the Government. If I had the responsibility of administering the affairs of India, there are certain things I would do. I would, immediately after this Bill passes, issue a Proclamation in India which should reach every subject of the British Crown in that country, and be heard of in the territories of every Indian Prince or Rajah. I would offer a general amnesty. It is all very well to talk of issuing an amnesty to all who have done nothing; but who is there that has done nothing in such a state of affairs as has

prevailed during the past twelve months? If you pursue your vengeance until you have rooted out and destroyed every one of those soldiers who have revolted, when will your labour cease? If you are to punish every non-military Native of India who has given a piece of bread or a cup of water to a revolted trooper, how many Natives will escape your punishment and your vengeance? I would have a general amnesty, which should be put forth as the first great act done directly by the Queen of England in the exercise of Sovereign power over the territories of India. In this Proclamation I would promise to the Natives of India a security for their property as complete as we have here at home; and I would put an end to all those mischievous and irritating inquiries which have been going on for years in many parts of India as to the title to landed estates, by which you tell the people of that country that unless each man can show an unimpeachable title to his property for ninety years you will dispossess him. What would be the state of things here if such a regulation were adopted?

I would also proclaim to the people of India that we would hold sacred that right of adoption which has prevailed for centuries in that country. It was only the other day that I had laid before me the case of a Native Prince who has been most faithful to England during these latter trials. When he came to the throne at ten years of age he was made to sign a document, by which he agreed that if he had no children his territories should be at the disposal of the British Government, or what was called the paramount power. He has been married; he has had one son and two or three daughters; but within the last few weeks his only son has died. There is grief in the palace, and there is consternation among the people, for the fact of this agreement entered into by the boy of ten years old is well known to all the inhabitants of the country. Representations have already been made to this country in the hope that the Government will cancel that agreement, and allow the people of that State to know that the right of adoption would not be taken from their Prince in case he should have no other son. Let the Government do that, and there is not a corner of India into which that intelligence would not penetrate with the rapidity of lightning. And would not that calm the anxieties of many of those independent Princes and Rajahs who are only afraid that when these troubles are over, the English Government will recommence that system of annexation out of which I believe all these troubles have arisen?

I would tell them also in that Proclamation, that while the people of England hold that their own, the Christian religion, is true and the best for mankind, yet that it is consistent with that religion that they who profess it should hold inviolable the rights of conscience and the rights of religion in others. I would show, that whatever violent, over-zealous, and fanatical men may have said in this country, the Parliament of England, the Ministers of the Queen, and the Queen herself are resolved that upon this point no kind of wrong should be done to the millions who profess the religions held to be true in India. I would do another thing. I would establish a Court of Appeal, the Judges of which should be Judges of the highest character in India, for the settlement of those many disputes which have arisen between the Government of India and its subjects, some Native and some European. I would not suffer these questions to come upon the floor of this House. I would not forbid them by statute, but I would establish a Court which should render it unnecessary for any man in India to cross the ocean to seek for that justice which he would then be able to get in his own country without corruption or secret bargain. Then I would carry out the proposition which the noble Lord has made to-night, and which the right hon.

Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer made when he introduced his Bill, that a Commission should be issued to inquire into the question of finance. I would have other commissions, one for each Presidency, and I would tell the people of India that there should be a searching inquiry into their grievances, and that it was the interest and the will of the Queen of England that those grievances should be redressed.

Now, perhaps I may be told that I am proposing strange things, quite out of the ordinary routine of government. I admit it. We are in a position that necessitates something out of the ordinary routine. There are positions and times in the history of every country, as in the lives of individuals, when courage and action are absolute salvation; and now the Crown of England, acting by the advice of the responsible Ministers, must, in my opinion, have recourse to a great and unusual measure in order to allay the anxieties which prevail throughout the whole of India. The people of India do not like us, but they scarcely know where to turn if we left them. They are sheep literally without a shepherd. They are people whom you have subdued, and who have the highest and strongest claims upon you--claims which you cannot forget--claims which, if you do not act upon, you may rely upon it that, if there be a judgment for nations--as I believe there is--as for individuals, our children in no distant generation must pay the penalty which we have purchased by neglecting our duty to the populations of India.

I have now stated my views and opinions on this question, not at all in

a manner, I feel, equal to the question itself. I have felt the difficulty in thinking of it; I feel the difficulty in speaking of it--for there is far more in it and about it than any man, however much he may be accustomed to think upon political questions, and to discuss them, can comprise at all within the compass of a speech of ordinary length. I have described the measures which I would at once adopt for the purpose of soothing the agitation which now disturbs and menaces every part of India, and of inviting the submission of those who are now in arms against you. Now I believe--I speak in the most perfect honesty--I believe that the announcement of these measures would avail more in restoring tranquillity than the presence of an additional army, and I believe that their full and honest adoption would enable you to retain your power in India. I have sketched the form of government which I would establish in India and at home, with the view of securing perfect responsibility and an enlightened administration. I admit that these things can only be obtained in degree, but I am convinced that a Government such as that which I have sketched would be free from most of the errors and the vices that have marked and marred your past career in India. I have given much study to this great and solemn question. I entreat the House to study it not only now, during the passing of this Bill, but after the Session is over, and till we meet again next year, when in all probability there must be further legislation upon this great subject; for I believe that upon this question depends very much, for good or for evil, the future of this country of which we are citizens, and which we all regard and love so much. You have had enough of military reputation on Eastern fields; you have gathered large harvests of that commodity, be it valuable or be it worthless. I invite you to something better, and higher, and holier than that; I invite you to a glory not 'fanned by conquest's crimson wing,' but based upon the solid and lasting benefits which I believe the Parliament of England can, if it will, confer upon the countless populations of India.

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INDIA.

III.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 20, 1858.

From Hansard.

[A despatch of Lord Ellenborough, the President of the Board of Control, to Lord Canning, the Governor-General of India, had been laid before the two Houses. This document severely censured the Governor-General's policy in dealing with the talookdars of Oude. Immediate advantage was taken of this document by the Opposition, and on the 10th of May Mr. Cardwell gave notice in the Commons of a motion condemnatory of Lord Ellenborough's despatch. Lord Ellenborough retired from the Government. On May 14, however, Mr. Cardwell brought forward his motion in the House of Commons, but, after a lengthened debate, consented to withdraw it, at the earnest entreaty of many from his own side of the House.]

I am afraid I shall hardly be able to take part in this discussion in a manner becoming the magnitude of the question before us, and in any degree in accordance with the long anxiety which I have felt in regard to Indian affairs, but I happen to have been unfortunately and accidentally a good deal mixed up with these matters, and my name has frequently been mentioned in the course of debate, not only in this but in the other House of Parliament, and I am unwilling, therefore, to vote without expressing my opinion upon the matter under discussion. First, I may be allowed to explain that I think almost everything that has been said and imagined with regard to the part that I have had in bringing on this discussion has been altogether erroneous, and has no foundation whatever. There was no arrangement between the hon. Gentleman the Secretary of the Board of Control and myself with regard to the question that I thought it my duty to put to him on the subject of Lord Canning's Proclamation. I had spoken two or three weeks before the date of that question to the hon. Gentleman, because I had been informed by a respected friend of mine, Mr. Dickinson, the hon. secretary of the India Reform Society, who has very great information on Indian affairs, that he had received communications to the effect that some Proclamation of this character was in preparation and was about to be issued. I spoke to the hon. Member with regard to that report; and he told me that he had received no communication which enabled him to give me any information on the subject. I then intimated to him that in case there was anything of the kind I should certainly put a question to the Government respecting it. This was three weeks before the date of my question. Well, I read the Proclamation in The Times newspaper, the same day that every one else read it; and I came down to the House, not having seen the hon. Gentleman in the meantime. I met my hon. friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. J. B. Smith) in Westminster Hall, and he told me that having read the despatch, and knowing my intention with regard to it, he, having met the hon. Gentleman (Mr. Baillie) that evening, said to him he had no doubt that when I came down to the House I should put a question respecting it. When I came down I put a question and received an answer; both question and answer are before the House and the country. But I confess I did not anticipate that we should lose a week from the discussion of the Indian Resolutions on account of the question which I then asked the hon. Gentleman the Secretary to the Board of Control.

Now, Sir, with respect to the question before the House, I should have been content to let it end when the hon. and learned Gentleman the Solicitor-General sat down. I think, Sir, the House might have come to a vote when the Solicitor-General finished his speech. I could not but compare that speech with the speech of the right hon. Gentleman who moved the Resolution now before the House. I thought the right hon. Gentleman raked together a great many small things to make up a great case. It appeared to me that he spoke as if his manner indicated that he was not perfectly satisfied with the course he was pursuing. I think he failed to stimulate himself with the idea that he was performing a great public duty; for if he had been impressed with that idea I think his subject would have enabled him to deliver a more lively and impressive speech than that which he has made. But, Sir, I believe that every one will admit that the speech of the Solicitor-General was characterised by the closest logic and the most complete and exhaustive argument. There is scarcely a Gentleman with whom I have spoken with regard to that speech who does not admit that the hon. and learned Gentleman has seemed to have taken up the whole question, and to have given a complete answer to all serious charges brought against the Government.

This Motion is an important one in two aspects. First of all as respects the interests of parties at home--which some people, probably, think the more important of the interests concerned; and, secondly, as respects the effect which will be produced in India when this discussion, with the vote at which we arrive, reaches that country and is read there. The princes, the rajahs, and intelligent landholders, whether under the English Government or independent, will know very little about what we understand by party; and any cabal or political conspiracy here will have no influence on them. They know little of the persons who conduct and take a part in the debate in this House; and the 'loud cheers' which they will read of in our discussions Will be almost nothing to them. The question to them will be, What is the opinion of the Parliament of England as to the policy announced to India in the Proclamation?

Now, Sir, I complain of the right hon. Gentleman, and I think the House has reason to complain, that in his Resolution he endeavours to evade the real point of discussion. The noble Lord who has just sat down (Viscount Goderich) says he will not meet this matter in any such indirect manner as that proposed by the Amendment of the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn); but what can be less direct than the issue offered by the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford? This is proved by the fact that, throughout the course of this discussion, every serious argument and every serious expression has had reference to the character of the Proclamation, and not to those little matters which are mixed up in this Resolution. Nobody, I believe, defends the Proclamation in the light in which it is viewed by the Government, and censured by the Government. All that has been done is an endeavour to show that it is not rightly understood by those who censure it as announcing a policy of confiscation. In fact, in endeavouring to defend it, hon. Members insist that it does not mean something which it says it does mean, and which if any of us understand the English language it assuredly does mean. The right hon. Gentleman asks us to do that which I think is an absolute impossibility. He wants us to condemn the censure, and wishes at the same time--and I give him credit for this--that we should pronounce no approval of the thing censured. I do not think the right hon. Gentleman, though unfortunately he has been led into this movement, wishes the House to pronounce an opinion in favour of confiscation. I do not believe that any Member of this House asks us to come to a conclusion in such a way as that our decision shall be an

approval of that which the Government has condemned in the despatch. But if we affirm the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman, how is it possible for the people of India to understand our decision in any other sense than as an approval of the policy of Lord Canning's Proclamation? With regard to the publication of the Government despatch, it is not a little remarkable how men turn round and object to what they formerly were so loud in demanding. On this side of the House it has been the commonest thing to hear hon. Gentlemen say that all this secrecy on the part of the Foreign Office and the Board of Control is a cause of the greatest mischief. Assume for a moment that the publication of this despatch was injudicious--after all, it was no high crime and misdemeanour. We on this side of the House, and hon. Gentlemen below the gangway, ought to look with kindness on this failing, which, if a failing, leans to virtue's side. Then, Sir, with regard to the language of the despatch, I do not know of any Government or Minister who would not be open to censure if we chose to take up every word in a despatch. A man of firmer texture, of stronger impulse, and more indignant feelings will, on certain occasions, write in stronger terms than other men--and I confess I like those men best who write and speak so that you can really understand them. Now I say that the proposition before the House is a disingenuous one. It attempts to lead the House into a very unfortunate dilemma. I think that no judicial mind--seeing that the result of a decision in favour of this Resolution will be the establishment of the policy of the Proclamation--will fail to be convinced that we ought not to arrive at such a decision without great hesitation, and that we cannot do so without producing a very injurious effect on the minds of the people of India.

We now come to what all parties admit to be the real question--the Proclamation and the policy of confiscation announced in it. There are certain matters which I understand all sides of the House to be agreed on. They agree with the Government and the East India Company that the people of Oude are enemies but that they are not rebels [Cries of 'Yes, yes!'--'No, no!'] I thought the supporters of the Resolution of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Oxford told us that if the Government had written a judicious despatch like that of the East India Company, they would have applauded and not censured it. Well, the East India Directors--and they are likely to know, for they were connected with the commission of the Act that brought this disturbance in Oude upon us--say that the people of Oude are not rebels; that they are not to be treated as rebels; but as enemies. If so, the Government have a right to treat them according to those rules which are observed by nations which are at war with each other. Will the House accept that proposition? ['No, no!'--'Yes, yes!'] Well, if hon. Gentlemen on this side will not accept it, I hope the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount Goderich) will not include them amongst those who are in favour of clemency. I am quite sure the people of England will accept that definition--that civilised Europe will accept it; and that history--history which will record our proceedings this night, and our vote on this Resolution--will accept it. Sir, I do not see how any one claiming to be an Englishman or a Christian can by any possibility escape from condemning the policy of this Proclamation.

I now come--and on that point I will be as brief as possible--to the question. What is the meaning of confiscating the proprietary rights in the soil? We have heard from a noble Lord in 'another place' and it has been stated in the course of the debate here, that this sentence of confiscation refers only to certain unpleasant persons who are called talookdars, who are barons and robber chiefs and oppressors of the

people. This is by no means the first time that, after a great wrong has been committed, the wrongdoer has attempted to injure by calumny those upon whom the wrong has been inflicted. Lord Shaftesbury, who is a sort of leader in this great war, has told the world that this Proclamation refers only to 600 persons in the kingdom of Oude.

The kingdom of Oude has about five millions of people, or one-sixth of the population of the United Kingdom. Applied to the United Kingdom in the same rate of the population it would apply to 3,600 persons. Now, in both Houses of Parliament there are probably 700 landed proprietors. It would, therefore, be an edict of confiscation to the landed proprietors of the United Kingdom equal to five times all the landed proprietors in both Houses of Parliament. An hon. Gentleman says I am all wrong in my figures. I shall be glad to hear his figures afterwards. But that is not the fact; but if it were the fact, it would amount not to a political, but to an entire social revolution in this country. And surely, when you live in a country where you have, as in Scotland, a great province under one Member of the House of Lords, and seventy or eighty miles of territory under another, and where you have Dukes of Bedford and Dukes of Devonshire, as in England--surely, I say, we ought to be a little careful, at any rate, that we do not overturn, without just cause, the proprietary rights of the great talookdars and landowners in India. It is a known fact, which anybody may ascertain by referring to books which have been written, and to witnesses who cannot be mistaken, that this edict would apply to more than 40,000 landowners in the kingdom of Oude. And what is it that is meant by these proprietary rights? We must see what is the general course of the policy of our government in India. If you sweep away all proprietary rights in the kingdom of Oude you will have this result--that there will be nobody connected with the land but the Government of India and the humble cultivator who tills the soil. And you will have this further result, that the whole produce of the land of Oude and of the industry of its people will be divided into two most unequal portions; the larger share will go to the Government in the shape of tax, and the smaller share, which will be a handful of rice per day, will go to the cultivator of the soil. Now, this is the Indian system. It is the grand theory of the civilians, under whose advice, I very much fear, Lord Canning has unfortunately acted; and you will find in many parts of India, especially in the Presidency of Madras, that the population consists entirely of the class of cultivators, and that the Government stands over them with a screw which is perpetually turned, leaving the handful of rice per day to the ryot or the cultivator, and pouring all the rest of the produce of the soil into the Exchequer of the East India Company. Now, I believe that this Proclamation sanctions this policy; and I believe further that the Resolution which the right hon. Gentleman asks the House to adopt, sanctions this Proclamation; that it will be so read in India, and that whatever may be the influence, unfortunate as I believe it will be, of the Proclamation itself, when it is known throughout India that this--the highest court of appeal--has pronounced in favour of Lord Canning's policy, it will be one of the most unfortunate declarations that ever went forth from the Parliament of this country to the people of that empire.

Let me then for one minute--and it shall be but for one minute--ask the attention of the House to our pecuniary dealings with Oude. A friend of mine has extracted from a book on this subject two or three facts which I should like to state to the House, as we are now considering the policy of England towards that afflicted country. It is stated that, under the government of Warren Hastings, to the arrival of Lord Cornwallis in 1786, the East India Company obtained from the kingdom of

Oude, and therefore from the Exchequer of the people of Oude, the sum of 9,252,000_l_.; under Lord Cornwallis, 4,290,000_l_.; under Lord Teignmouth, 1,280,000_l_.; under Lord Wellesley, 10,358,000_l_. This includes, I ought to observe, the Doab, taken in 1801 in lieu of subsidy, the annual revenue of that district being 1,352,000_l_. Coming down to the year 1814, there was a loan of a million; in 1815 a loan of a million; in 1825 a loan of a million; in 1826 a loan of a million; in 1829 a loan of 625,000_l_.; and in 1838 a loan of 1,700,000_l_. Some of these sums, the House will observe, are loans, and in one case the loan was repaid by a portion of territory which the Company, in a very few years, under an excuse which I should not like to justify, re-annexed to themselves, and therefore the debt was virtually never repaid. The whole of these sums comes to 31,500,000_l_.; in addition to which Oude has paid vast sums in salaries, pensions, and emoluments of every kind to servants of the Company engaged in the service of the Government of Oude.

I am not going further into detail with regard to that matter; but I say that the history of our connection with the country, whose interests we are now discussing, is of a nature that ought to make us pause before we consent to any measure that shall fill up the cup of injury which we have offered to the lips of that people. After this, two years ago, we deposed the Sovereign of Oude. Everything that he had was seized--much of it was sold. Indignities were offered to his family. Their ruin was accomplished, though they were the governors of that kingdom. Some hon. Gentleman, speaking on this side of the House, has tried to persuade the House that this confiscation policy only intends that we should receive the taxes of Oude. But that is altogether a delusion. That is a statement so absurd that I am astonished that any one, even of those who support the Resolution, should offer it to the House. In 1856, when you dethroned the King of Oude, you stepped into his place, and became the recipients of all the legitimate national taxes of the kingdom of Oude; and now, having seized the 500,000_l_ a year, the revenue of that country, after a solemn treaty which contained a clause that if there were a surplus of revenue it should be paid to the credit of the kingdom of Oude; after having applied that surplus, contrary to that clause of the treaty, to the general purposes of India; you now step in and you descend below the King, to every talookdar, to every landowner, large or small, to every man who has proprietary rights in the soil, to every man, the smallest and humblest capitalist who cultivates the soil--to every one of these you say in language that cannot be mistaken--'Come down from the independence and dignity you have held. As we have done in other provinces of India we shall do here. Two-thirds of you have not been mixed up in this war; but in this general confiscation the innocent must suffer with the guilty, for such is the misfortune of war, and such is the penalty which we shall inflict upon you.' Sir, if this Proclamation be not a Proclamation of unheard-of severity, how comes it that so many persons have protested against it? Does any man believe that the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount Goderich) understands this Proclamation better than the high military authorities who have so long known India? Does he suppose that the House of Commons will take his authority upon a matter of this kind in preference to the authority of the whole united press of India? ['Oh! oh!'] Well, I dare say that hon. Members who cry 'Oh!' have not read the newspapers of India upon the subject. Some of them uphold it because they say that at one fell swoop it has done that which it took us twenty years to do in other districts of India, and destroys every man who could influence the people against the British Government. Others say that it is a Proclamation of such a character that it must cause 'war to the knife'

against the English, and that the Governor-General who issued such a Proclamation should have been prepared with a new army at his back that he might have power to enforce it.

The learned Gentleman the Attorney-General for Ireland referred in his speech the other night to what had been said by the hon. and learned Member for Devonport (Sir E. Perry) on the occasion of a question that I had put some two or three weeks ago. Now I call the House to witness whether when I put the question which brought out this despatch, and when the right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer rose in his place and gave the answer that with respect to the policy of confiscation--for that is the only thing there is any dispute about in the Proclamation--the Government disavowed it in every sense--I call the House to witness whether every Gentleman present in this part of the House did not cheer that sentiment. Of course, every man cheered it. They would not have been men; they would not have been Englishmen; they would not have been legislators; they would have been men who had never heard of what was just and right, if every instinct within them, at the instant they heard the declaration of the Government, did not compel them to an enthusiastic assent. And it was only when the fatal influence of party, and the arts which party knows how to employ, were put in motion, that hon. Gentlemen began to discover that there was something serious and something dangerous in this memorable despatch. Now, I would ask the House this question--are we prepared to sanction the policy of that despatch?

I am very sorry that I have not done what only occurred to me after this debate commenced, and after the Amendment was proposed, or I should have proposed another Amendment to the House that went expressly upon that point, because--and I speak it without the smallest reference to the influence which it may have on any party in this House--I think it of the very highest consequence that, whatever decision we come to, it should be liable to no misinterpretation when it arrives in India. Then, Sir, we have been treated to a good deal of eloquence upon the manner of the despatch; and with regard to that I must say a word or two. The noble Lord the Member for London, who sits below me, has, I think, fallen into the error of most of the speakers in favour of the Resolution; that is, of treating some of the outside circumstances of the case as if they were the case itself. I do not think, however, that he stated there was a word in the despatch which was not true, although he did express what I thought was rather an immoral sentiment for so eminent a statesman. The noble Lord told us that after a crime had been committed, men in office were never to let it be known or suspected that they thought it was a crime. [Lord John Russell: 'The hon. Gentleman is mistaken; I never said anything of the kind.'] I did not hear it myself, but I read it, and many of my friends came to the same conclusion. ['Oh! oh!'] Well, I understand, then, that he did not say it; but what he did say was, that there was a great deal of sarcasm and invective in the despatch, and he read a passage to show that such was the case. But the fact is that a great deal depends upon the reading. I could take a despatch of the noble Lord himself and read it in a manner that would perfectly astonish him. He said, if I am not mistaken, that if the House were to approve of that despatch as a proper despatch, then Lord Canning was not fit to occupy the meanest political or official situation. Indian despatches have, to my mind, never been very gentle. I recollect having read in Mill's History of British India, and in other histories also, despatches that have been sent from the President of the Board of Control, the Secret Committee, and the Court of Directors, over and over again; and I have thought that they were written in a tone

rather more authoritative and rather more dictatorial than I should have been disposed to write, or than I should have been pleased to receive. It arose from this--that in old times the magnates sitting in Leadenhall-street were writing, not to Lord Canning and men of that altitude, but to merchants and agents whom they had sent out, who were entirely dependent upon them, and to whom they could say just what they liked; and for 100 years past, as far as I have seen, their despatches have had a character for severity, and that which men call 'dictatorial,' which I think might be very well dispensed with. But that is a matter which should certainly be taken into consideration, when a large portion of this House are disposed not only to censure Lord Ellenborough, but to overturn the Government, because a despatch is not written precisely in those gentle terms which some hon. Gentlemen think to be right when inditing a letter to a Governor-General of India.

There is one other point which I must notice, and that is the supposed effect of this despatch upon the feelings of Lord Canning. I am not so intimate with Lord Canning as many Members of this House, but I have had the pleasure of his acquaintance, and have always believed that he was one of the last men who would knowingly do anything that was inhuman or unjust, and that is my opinion now. I think he is to be commiserated, as any other man would have been who happened to be in India at such a time as this; and I think we are bound also to take a lenient view even of such errors as we may think he has committed. If I had gone to India, or into any service under the State, I should expect that there would be a general disposition to give me fair play in the exercise of my office, and that no strained construction to my injury would be put upon anything which I did. Well, that is the view which I entertain with regard to Lord Canning. I have never uttered a syllable against him in public, although I think that some of his acts have been open to great objection; and I am not about to say anything against him now. I would not support a Resolution which was intended to damage Lord Canning; and I think the hon. Member for Swansea (Mr. Dillwyn) has not done wrong in offering to the House the Amendment he has placed before us. But it is just possible that Lord Canning is in the midst of circumstances which have rendered it very difficult, perhaps impossible, for him to exercise his own calm judgment on the great question which forms the subject of this Proclamation, I see in that Proclamation not so much an emanation from the humane and just mind of Lord Canning, as the offspring of that mixture of red tape and ancient tradition which is the foundation of the policy of the old civilian Council of Calcutta. But, Sir, if it were a question of hurting Lord Canning's feelings and denouncing this Proclamation, I could have no hesitation as to the choice which I should make. A man's private and personal feelings are not a matter of importance for the House when compared with the vast and permanent interests involved in the dangerous policy which we are now discussing. And I do not think the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Cardwell), the noble Lord the Member for the West Riding (Viscount Goderich), and the noble Lord the Member for London, have any right to throw themselves into something like a contortion of agony with regard to the manner of this despatch; because, as was stated to the House the other night by the learned Attorney-General for Ireland, they did not tell us much about the feelings of another public servant, acting on behalf of the Crown at a still greater distance from England, when last year they gave a vote on the China question which pronounced a most emphatic condemnation on the conduct of Sir John Bowring. Now, I like fair play. I would treat Lord Canning as I would treat Sir John Bowring; and I would treat Sir John Bowring as I would treat Lord Canning. Do not let us have in the service of the State low-caste men who may be trampled upon at pleasure,

and high-caste men whom nobody dare criticise.

I said, when I began, that this Resolution is important in reference to something else besides India; that it is important with reference to the position of parties in this House. I would ask the attention of the House for a few moments to that branch of the subject. I am afraid--and I hope I am not slandering anybody in saying it--that there is quite as much zeal for what is called 'place' as there is for the good of India in the proposition brought before us. If that despatch had been published three months ago, when we were all sitting on that side of the House, it is very probable that many Gentlemen who now speak against it would have thought it a noble despatch, containing noble sentiments, expressed in noble language. But now, Sir, there has been for the last two months a growing irritation observable, particularly in this part of the House. There has been a feeling which no ingenuity has been able to disguise--a fear that if the present Government should, by some means or other, remain in office over the Session, no small difficulty would be found in displacing it--lest, like the tree, which, when first planted, may be easily pulled up, it should by and bye strike its roots downwards and its branches outwards, and after a year or two no man would be able to get it out of the ground. Hon. Gentlemen opposite know that I differ very widely from them on many public questions, and probably at some not distant day they may find it out in some act of severe hostility; but I put it to the House, whether, out of doors, the reputation of the present Government is not, in many respects, better than the last? Take, for instance, the Gentlemen who come up from the country on various deputations to the Ministers--the judgment of these deputations, without an exception, is in favour of the manner in which they have been received by the present Ministers, and of the way in which their suggestions and requests have been treated. Now, this may be no great matter, and I do not say that it is; but I make the observation for the benefit of the Gentlemen who sit on these benches, because it is just possible that they may some time have to receive deputations again. Then take their conduct in this House. 'Oh, yes.' hon. Gentlemen may say, 'but they are a weak Government; they have not a majority, and they are obliged to be very civil.' But what I maintain is, that every Ministry ought to be very civil, and what I am prepared to assert is--and I ask every man on this side of the House if he does not agree with me, for I have heard dozens of them say it out of the House--that when the late Government were in office civility was a thing unknown.

Take another point--for it is worthy of consideration by Gentlemen on this side of the House, and I ask hon. Gentlemen who sit below the gangway especially to consider it--look at the heritage of trouble with regard to our foreign policy which the existing Government found on their accession to office. Three months of what was going on upon the Conspiracy Bill would have landed you on the very verge of a war, if not in a war, with France, and that danger has been avoided certainly by no concession which is injurious to the honour of England. Take the question which has agitated the public mind with regard to Naples. I am not going into any details; but so far as a Government could act, this Government appears to have acted with judgment. I think the noble Lord below me (Lord J. Russell) admitted that himself. I did not say that the noble Lord said anything against them. On the contrary, I rejoice to have him with me as a witness to what I am stating. With regard, then, to these questions, seeing the dilemma into which the foreign affairs of the country were brought under the last Administration, I think it is but fair, just, and generous that Members on this side of the House, at least, should take no course which wears the colour of faction, for the

purpose of throwing the present Government out of office. Whenever I join in a vote to put Gentlemen opposite out of office, it shall be for something that the country will clearly understand--something that shall offer a chance of good to some portion of the British empire--something that shall offer a chance of advancing distinctly the great principles for which we--if we are a party at all on this side of the House--profess to care.

But there is another reason. Not only is it feared that hon. Gentlemen opposite will get firm in their seats, but it is also feared that some hon. Gentlemen near me will get less firm in their alliance with the right hon. Gentlemen on this side. I have heard of mutinous meetings and discussions, and of language of the most unpardonable character uttered, as Gentlemen now say, in the heat of debate. But there was something more going on, which was traced to a meeting of independent Members recently held in Committee-room No. 11; and if a stop were not put to it, the powerful ranks on these benches might be broken up, which, if united, it was believed, would storm the Treasury benches and replace the late Government in office. I believe it was intended that a desperate effort should be made to change the state of things here before Whitsuntide. That was a resolution which had been come to long before any one knew anything about Lord Ellenborough's despatch. And the present seems to be a convenient opportunity, inasmuch as it has this in its favour, that it appears to be defending an absent servant of the Crown; that it appears to be teaching a lesson to the Government who have acted injudiciously in publishing a despatch; altogether it has that about it which makes it an excellent pretext on which hon. Gentlemen may ride into office. Now, I do not speak to Whigs in office or to those Gentlemen who have been in office and expect to be in office again; but I should like to say what I believe to be true to those Gentlemen who call themselves independent Members, who come here with no personal object to serve, not seeking place, patronage, or favour, but with an honest desire, as far as they are able, to serve their country as Members of the House of Commons. If this Resolution be carried, it is supposed that the old Government, or something very like it, will come back again. Now, there was great discontent with that old Government before it went out; yet no pledge whatever has been given that its conduct will be better or different; no new measures have been promised, no new policy has been avowed, no new men, that I have seen, have been held forth to the public very distinctly as likely to take high office in the State. There have been some things which I should think Members of this House must have felt pain at witnessing. There are newspapers in the interest of this ex-Treasury bench which have, in the most unblushing manner, published articles emanating from the pen of somebody who knew exactly what was wanted to be done. In the case of a gentleman, for example, who was engaged in Committee-room No. 11--a gentleman whom I need not mention because the House knows all the circumstances of this case, but a gentleman who took a most prominent part in the proceedings in that Committee-room--and no one is probably more indignant at what has been done than himself--those newspapers have positively fixed upon and designated him for a certain office, if the present Government go out and another comes in; another gentleman who seconded a Resolution on that occasion is also held up for an office; but they do not state exactly what his precise position is to be; and the glittering bauble of some place in the incoming Government is hung up before many hon. Gentlemen who sit around me. It is not said, 'It is for you' and 'It is for you;' but it is hung up dangling before them all, and every man is expected to covet that glittering bauble.

But this is not all. These are not the only arts which are employed. Members of this House sitting below the gangway, who have been here for years--Gentlemen of the most independent character--receive flattering and beautifully engraved cards to great parties at splendid mansions; and not later than Friday last, of all times, those invitations were scattered, if not with a more liberal, no doubt with a much more discriminating hand than they ever were before. [An hon. Member: 'Absurd!'] Of course it is very absurd; there is no doubt about that, and that is precisely why I am explaining it to the House. Why, Sir, if those cards of invitation contained a note with them, giving the exact history of what was really meant, it would say to hon. Gentlemen, 'Sir, we have measured your head, and we have gauged your soul, and we know or believe'--for I believe they do not know--'we believe that your principles which you came into Parliament to support--your character in the House--your self-respect will go for nothing if you have a miserable temptation like this held up before you.' Sir, if we could see them taking a course which is said to be taken by the celebrated horse-tamer, who appeals, as I am told, to the nobler and more intelligent instincts of the animal which he tames, then I should not complain. But they appeal to instincts which every honourable mind repudiates, and to aspirations which no hon. Gentleman on this side of the House can for a moment admit.

Well, then, if they succeed, what sort of a Government shall we have? I am as anxious for a Liberal Government as any man in this House, but I cannot believe that, in the present position of things on this side of the House, a Liberal and solid Government can be formed. We are told, and the whole country has been in a state of expectation and wonder upon it, that two eminent statesmen have actually dined together; and I am very glad to hear that men engaged in the strife of politics can dine together without personal hostility. I say nothing of the viands that were eaten. I say nothing of the beverage that was in the 'loving cup' that went round. One of our oldest and greatest poets has told us that--

'Nepenthe is a drink of soverayne grace.'

He says that it was devised by the gods to subdue contention, and subject the passions; but that it was given only to the aged and the wise, who were prepared by it to take their places with ancient heroes in a higher sphere. But that could not have been the contents of the 'loving cup' in this instance, for these aged statesmen are still determined to cling to this world, and to mix, as heretofore, with all the vigour and the fire of youth in the turmoil and contention of public life. But does the fact of this dinner point to reconciliation, and to a firm and liberal administration? I believe that any such Government would be the worst of all coalitions. I believe that it would be built upon insincerity, and I suspect it would be of no advantage to the country. Therefore I am not anxious to see such a Government attempted.

I ask the House, then, are they prepared to overthrow the existing Government on the question which the right hon. Gentleman has brought before us--a question which he has put in such ambiguous terms? Are they willing in overthrowing that Government to avow the policy of this Proclamation for India? Are they willing to throw the country into all the turmoil of a general election--a general election at a moment when the people are but just slowly recovering from the effects of the most tremendous commercial panic that this country ever passed through? Are they willing to delay all legislation for India till next year, and all legislation on the subject of Parliamentary reform till the year after

that? Are they willing, above all, to take the responsibility which will attach to them if they avow the policy contained in this Proclamation?

I confess, Sir, I am terrified for the future of India when I look at the indiscriminate slaughter which is now going on there. I have seen a letter, written, I believe, by a missionary, lately inserted in a most respectable weekly newspaper published in London, in which the writer estimates that 10,000 men have been put to death by hanging alone. I ask you, whether you approve of having in India such expressions as these, which I have taken this day from a Calcutta newspaper, and which undoubtedly you will be held to approve if you do anything which can be charged with a confirmation of the tenor of this Proclamation. Here is an extract from The Englishman, which, speaking of the men of the disarmed regiments, who amount to some 20,000 or 30,000, or even 40,000 men, says:--

'There is no necessity to bring every Sepoy to a court-martial, and convict him of mutinous intentions before putting him down as guilty. We do not advocate extreme or harsh measures, nor are we of those who would drench the land with blood; but we have no hesitation in saying, that, were the Government to order the execution of all these Sepoys, they would be legally and morally justified in doing so. There would be no injustice done.'

No injustice would be done! I ask the House to consider that these men have committed no offence; their military functions were suspended because it was thought they were likely to be tempted to commit an offence, and therefore their arms were taken from them; and now an Englishman--one of your own countrymen--writing in a newspaper published in Calcutta, utters sentiments so atrocious as those which I have just read to the House. I believe the whole of India is now trembling under the action of volcanic fires; and we shall be guilty of the greatest recklessness, and I will say of great crime against the Monarchy of England, if we do anything by which we shall own this Proclamation. I am asked on this question to overturn Her Majesty's Government. The policy adopted by the Government on this subject is the policy that was cheered by hon. Members on this side when it was first announced. It is a policy of mercy and conciliation. False--may I not say?--or blundering leaders of this party would induce us, contrary to all our associations and all our principles, to support an opposite policy. I am willing to avow that I am in favour of justice and conciliation--of the law of justice and of kindness. Justice and mercy are the supreme attributes of the perfection which we call Deity, but all men everywhere comprehend them; there is no speech nor language in which their voice is not heard, and they cannot be vainly exercised with regard to the docile and intelligent millions of India. You have had the choice. You have tried the sword. It has broken; it now rests broken in your grasp; and you stand humbled and rebuked. You stand humbled and rebuked before the eyes of civilized Europe. You may have another chance. You may, by possibility, have another opportunity of governing India. If you have, I beseech you to make the best use of it. Do not let us pursue such a policy as many men in India, and some in England, have advocated, but which hereafter you will have to regret, which can end only, as I believe, in something approaching to the ruin of this country, and which must, if it be persisted in, involve our name and nation in everlasting disgrace.

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INDIA.

IV.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, AUGUST 1, 1859.

From Hansard.

[On August 1 Sir Charles Wood made his financial statement on India to the House of Commons. One of his proposals was that the Government should be empowered to raise 5,000,000 l. in the United Kingdom in order to meet the demands of the present year. The Loan Bill passed through both Houses.]

I have so often addressed the House upon the question of India that I feel some hesitation in asking a portion of the time of the Committee this evening. But notwithstanding an observation of the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for India that he does not see anything gloomy in the future of India, I confess that to my view the question assumes yearly a greater magnitude, and I may say a greater peril. I think, therefore, that having given some attention to this subject in years past, I may be permitted to bring my share, be its value more or less, to the attempt which we are now making to confront this great evil. When we recollect how insufficient are the statements which he has from India, the right hon. Gentleman has given us as clear an account of the finances of India as it was possible for him to do, and looking at them in the most favourable point of view we come to this conclusion:--We have what we have had for twenty years, only more rapidly accumulating, deficit on deficit and debt on debt.

The right hon. Gentleman told the Committee that when he left the Government of India, I think in 1855, everything was in a most satisfactory condition. Well, it did happen in that year, perhaps by some of that kind of management which I have observed occasionally in Indian finance, that the deficit was brought down to a sum not exceeding 150,000 l. [Sir C. Wood: 'There was a surplus of 400,000 l.'] The deficit, I believe, before the mutiny was 143,000 l. But, if the right hon. Gentleman will allow me to take the three years preceding the mutiny, I think that will give a much fairer idea of the real state of the case, and it is not the least use shutting our eyes to the real state of the case, because some day or other it will find us out, or we shall find it out. The real state of the case in the three years preceding the mutiny, 1855, 1856 and 1857, ending the 30th of April, is a deficit of 2,823,000 l., being an average not very far short of 1,000,000 l. a-year. That is the state of things immediately after the right hon. Gentleman left office. I do not in the least find fault with him. He did not make the deficit, but I merely state this to show that things are not at the moment in that favourable state which the right hon. Gentleman would induce the Committee to believe. Keeping our attention to that period, there is another point of view, which is also very important. It appears to me that any Government must be an excessively bad Government which cannot defray its expenses out of the taxes which it levies on its people. We know, and every one has for years known, that in India there is a source of revenue, not from taxes levied on the people, but from opium, and which is very like the revenue derived by the Peruvian Government from guano. If we turn to those three years and see what relation the expenditure of the Government had to taxes levied on the people of India, we shall find, though we may hear that the taxes are not so much as we imagine, or that the people are extremely poor, or that the Government is very extravagant--we shall find that the sum levied for the sale of opium and transit was no less than 10,500,000 l., and if we add that to the 2,800,000 l., we get a

sum of 13,300,000 l., which is the exact sum which the Government of India cost in those three years over and above what was raised from the people by actual taxation. I say that this is a state of things which ought to cause alarm, because we know, and we find it stated in the last despatches, that the income derived from opium is of a precarious character, and from the variation of climate in India, or from a variation of policy in the Chinese Government, that revenue may suddenly either be very much impaired or be cut off altogether.

The right hon. Gentleman brings us to the condition in which we are now, and it may be stated in the fewest possible words to be this,—that the debt of India has been constantly rising, and that it amounts now to 100,000,000 l. sterling. [“No, no!”] The right hon. Gentleman said 95,000,000 l., but he said there would be 5,000,000 l. next year, and I will undertake to say that it is fair to argue on the basis that the debt of India at this moment is about 100,000,000 l., that there is a deficit of 12,000,000 l. this year, and that there may be expected to be a deficit of 10,000,000 l. next year. It is not to be wondered at that it should be difficult to borrow money on Indian account.

I am not surprised at the hon. Member for Kendal (Mr. Glyn) being so lively in the House to-night, and other hon. Gentlemen connected with the City, who, I understand, have been impressing on the Secretary of State the fact that money cannot be had in the City for the purpose for which he wants it. I do not wonder that it is difficult to raise money on Indian account. I should think it extraordinary if it could be borrowed without a high rate of interest. That it can be borrowed at all can only arise from the fact that England, whatever disasters she gets into, generally contrives, by the blood of her soldiers or by the taxation of her people, to scramble through her difficulties, and to maintain before the world, though by enormous sacrifices, a character for good faith which is scarcely held by any other country in the world. With regard to the question of an Imperial guarantee, I take an opposite view from the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) on that particular point, though I agree with what he said as to certain expenses thrown on the Indian Government.

Last year I referred to the enormous expense of the Affghan war—about 15,000,000 l.—the whole of which ought to have been thrown on the taxation of the people of England, because it was a war commanded by the English Cabinet, for objects supposed to be English, but which, in my opinion, were of no advantage either to England or India. It was most unjust that this enormous burden should have been thrown upon the finances of the Indian Government. But I do not oppose an Imperial guarantee because I particularly sympathize with the English taxpayers in this matter. I think the English taxpayers have generally neglected all the affairs of India, and might be left to pay for it. But there was no justice in imposing on the unfortunate millions of India the burden of a policy with which they had nothing to do, and which could not bring any one of them a single handful of rice more—it did bring them rather less than more—than they would have eaten without it. But I object to an Imperial guarantee on this ground,—if we let the Services of India, after exhausting the resources of India, put their hands into the pockets of the English people, the people of England having no control over the Indian expenditure, it is impossible to say to what lengths of unimagined extravagance they would go; and in endeavouring to save India may we not go far towards ruining England?

But look at this question of Indian finance from another point of view. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) and the right hon. Gentleman the Secretary for India have both referred to the enormous amount of the whole taxation of India taken by the Military Service. I believe it has been shown that at this moment almost, if not altogether, the whole of the net revenue of India is being absorbed by the Military Service of that empire; that not a farthing is left out of the whole net revenue of India to pay the expenses of the civil government or the public creditor. If we leave out the opium duty, perhaps we shall see how far the Military Service bears on the taxation of India; we shall see that more than its net amount is absorbed by the Military Service. That is a state of things that has never existed in any other country or among any other people, for any considerable period, without bringing that country to anarchy and ruin. We have been told by the Governor-General that the great bulk of the revenue of India is not elastic; that with regard to the land-tax there has been for a long period no increase in it; that, on the contrary, that large source of income has decreased. He tells us, further, that the army cannot, at present, be largely reduced with safety. If so, what is the end to which we must come? Either the Government of India must come to an end, or England itself must become tributary to India. Seeing that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has within the last fortnight asked 70,000,000 l. of the English taxpayer for the expenses of the English Government, to ask nine or ten millions more for the government of India would certainly cause great dissatisfaction in this country. The picture is, to my mind, an alarming one, notwithstanding the cheerful view taken of it by the Secretary for India; and it has filled many besides myself with dismay.

Now, looking round for modes of escape from this position, I believe they exist, if we had the courage to adopt them. An hon. Friend has asked me, 'Is there nobody to tell the House of Commons the truth on this matter?' I might ask why he has not done it himself. I suppose he is afraid of being thought rash; but his advice is, that the Government should re-establish the independence of the Punjab, recall the Ameers of Scinde, restore the Government of the King of Oude, giving to it the dependency of Nagpore. I confess, whether it be rash or not, that I think it would be wise to restore the Government of the Punjab and to give independence to that province which is called Scinde, because as no revenue is received from that part of the country in excess of the expense which its retention causes to this country, we should endeavour to bring our dominions in India within a reasonable and manageable compass. No policy can be more lunatic than the policy of annexation we have pursued of late years in India, and the calamity we are now meeting is the natural and inevitable consequence of the folly we have committed. It is not easy for great generals and statesmen who have been made earls and marquesses and had bronze statues put up in their honour in our public squares--it is not easy for the statesmen who have done all this to turn round and reverse it all; they have not the moral courage to do it; it might be an act of peril; it might appear a descent from the summit of empire and be wrongly construed throughout the world. But as a question of finance and good government we should, a few years hence, admit that it was a sound policy. But I will not pursue this subject, for I may fairly take it for granted that the House of Commons and the Government of England are not likely to take such a course till we are reduced to some extremity even greater than that which now meets us.

But there is another course that may fairly be recommended. It is to take India as it is, the empire with all your annexations as it stands,

and to see if it is not possible to do something better with it than you have done before, and to give it a chance in future years of redeeming not only the character of the Government but its financial and legislative position. The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) says there cannot be any great diminution in the expenditure for the Civil Service of India; but I do not in the least agree with the Secretary for India when he says that the gentlemen of the Civil Service in that country are not overpaid. Every one knows that they are overpaid; except some very high-salaried bishops of whom we have heard, no men are so grossly overpaid as the officials of the Civil Service in India. The proof of this may be found everywhere. Look at the Island of Ceylon; there the duties are as arduous and the climate as unfavourable as in India; yet the Government does not pay its officials there more than one-half or two-thirds of the salaries they are paid in India. There are in India itself many hundreds of Europeans, the officers of the Indian army, all the Indian clergy, and missionaries; there are also English merchants, carrying on their business at rates of profit not much exceeding the profits made in this country. But the Civil Service of the Indian Government, like everything privileged and exclusive, is a pampered body; and, notwithstanding it has produced some few able men who have worthily done their duty, I do not think the Civil Service of India deserves the loud praise we have so frequently heard awarded to it by speakers in this House. Now if you could reduce the expense of the Civil Service by any considerable amount, the best thing you could do with the money would be to increase the establishment by sending a greater number of competent persons as magistrates, collectors, and officials into the distant provinces, and thereby double the facilities for good government in those districts. If you could reduce the income of the Civil Service one half, you could for the same money have a more efficient Service throughout India than at present. You might not save money, but you would get a more complete Service for it.

But the military question the House of Commons will certainly have to take in hand; though Secretaries for India are afraid to grapple with it, I am not astonished that they feel some hesitation in doing so, for from every one connected with the Military Service they would hear the strongest objections to reducing the number of the troops. But let me ask the Committee to consider what it has just heard. Before the Revolt the European troops in India numbered 45,000 and the Native troops 250,000; now the 45,000 European troops are 110,000, and the 250,000 Native soldiers are raised to 300,000. What was it that we heard during the Indian mutiny; what was the cause of all the letters that appeared in the newspapers? Every man said that the great evil was having a Native army far larger than was required. That has been the source of peril, and that was the real cause of the mutiny. Now we have even a larger portion of this most perilous element than we had before. The authorities of India do not appear to have learnt anything from the mutiny, or they have learnt that all that was said in this House and in this country was untrue, because they have 50,000 more Native troops than they had before the mutiny. Therefore, the mode of argument appears to be this:--A Native army was the cause of the mutiny, the cause of all our perils, and now it is necessary to have more of it; and, as that is the perilous element, of course 45,000 troops are not sufficient to keep them in check; therefore, you have at present 110,000; and certain officers who were examined, and the Commissioners who reported, recommended that you should always have at least 80,000 Europeans there. If we are only to have one body of troops to watch another, it seems to me there can be no hope of any diminution of our military force, nor any real reduction in our expenditure. Why is it that you require all this

army? Let me ask the Committee to look at the matter as sensible men of business. The Revolt, which has been such a terrible affair, has been suppressed. It was suppressed mainly by the 45,000 men in India, and not by the 110,000 you have succeeded in placing there at a later period. More than that, there is not at the present moment any alarming amount of dissatisfaction in India, or at least the dissatisfied are dispirited, and have lost all hope of resisting the power of England, and must for a long period, I think, remain wholly dispirited. At the same time, you have disarmed the people over a vast province. There are millions of people in India, a great number of whom were previously in possession of arms, who do not now possess a single weapon. I have seen in the last accounts, only a day or two since, a statement that not less than 1,400 forts in the kingdom of Oude alone have been destroyed, and we know that many more have been destroyed in other parts. There is at this moment no power for combined organized armed resistance against you, except that which is in the Native army, which the Indian Government has been building up of late to a greater extent than ever.

The noble Lord (Lord Stanley) spoke of one point--the great importance of which I admit--the want of confidence and sympathy that must have arisen between the two races in consequence of the transactions of the last two years. The shock of revolt must have created great suspicion and hatred and fear, and there is nothing out of which panic grows so easily as out of those conditions. I believe that is the case in India, and perhaps there are indications of something of the kind at home. There is a panic, therefore, and neither the Governor-General nor the Civil Service nor military officers can make up their minds that they are safe, recollecting the transactions of the past two years, in having a less military force than we now have in India. But if you ask those gentlemen they will never say they have enough. There are admirals here, as we know, who are perfectly wild about ships, with whom arithmetic on such a question goes for nothing. They would show you in the clearest possible manner that you have not ships enough. So also, although I am glad to find not to the same extent, as to troops. Some one said the other night, in answer to an hon. Gentleman, about an increased force of a particular kind, 'There is nothing like leather' and it is so. I say naval officers and military officers are not the men to whom the Chancellor of the Exchequer should depute the great and solemn duty of determining what amount shall be expended for military purposes. There is not a country in the world that would not have been bankrupt long since, and plunged into irretrievable ruin, if the military authorities had been allowed to determine the amount of military force to be kept up, and the amount of revenue to be devoted to that purpose.

I have another objection to this great army, and I now come to the question of policy, which, I am sorry to say for India, has not been touched upon. I do not think this is a question to be merely settled by a very clever manner of giving the figures of the case. Those figures depend upon the course you intend to pursue, upon the policy which the Government intends to adopt, in that country. With this great army two things are certain--we can have no reform of any kind in the Government of India, nor an improved conduct on the part of the English in India towards the Natives of India. With a power like this--110,000 English troops, with an English regiment within an hour's reach of each civil servant, you will find that the supremacy of the conquering race will be displayed in the most offensive manner.

Everybody connected with India--the hon. Member for Devonport (Sir Erskine Perry), the hon. Member for Aberdeen (Colonel Sykes)--all who

are connected with India, know well that when the English were feeble in India, when they had not a great army in the field or a great revenue to support it, every Englishman treated the Natives by whom he was surrounded rather with the feeling that he was an intruder in the country, and that it was not only proper but absolutely necessary to deal in a conciliatory and just manner with the great body of the Natives of India; but precisely as our power increased the conduct of our countrymen changed, and I find in the excellent book of Mr. Shore that thirty years ago he describes this as the very source of the growing ill feeling between the races in India. It has grown from that time to this, until we have an irritation and animosity which in our time, it may be, we shall see very little removed, and which may perhaps never be wholly allayed. A Government, then, with this vast army, must always be in a difficulty. Lord Canning--lord anybody else--cannot turn his attention to anything but this wearing, exasperating question of how money is to be got for the next quarter to pay this army. He cannot turn his attention in any way to reforms, and I am convinced that this House must insist upon the Government reducing its army, whatever be the risk. A large army will render it impossible for you to hold the country, for you will have a constantly increasing debt, and anarchy must inevitably overwhelm you in the end. A small army, a moderate, conciliatory, and just Government, with the finances in a prosperous condition;--and I know not but that this country may possess for generations and centuries a share, and a large share, in the government of those vast territories which it has conquered.

As to measures of reduction, I admit that it is of little use attempting them unless they are accompanied by other changes. Here I have a charge to bring against the Indian Government. I did hope when the noble Lord spoke to-night that he would have told us something which I am sure he must have known; that there is no such thing as a real Government in India at all; that there is no responsibility either to a public opinion there, or to a public opinion at home; and that therefore we cannot expect a better policy or happier results. Let hon. Gentlemen imagine a Government like that in India, over which the payers of the taxes have not the slightest control; for the great body of the people in India have, as we all know, no control in any way over the Government. Neither is there any independent English opinion that has any control over the Government, the only opinions being those of the Government itself, or those of the Military and Civil Services, and chiefly of the latter. They are not the payers of taxes; they are the spenders and the enjoyers of the taxes, and therefore the Government in India is in the most unfortunate position possible for the fulfilment of the great duties that must devolve upon every wise and just Government. The Civil Service, being privileged, is arrogant, and I had almost said tyrannous, as any one may see who reads the Indian papers, which mainly represent the opinion of that Service and the Military Service, which, as everywhere else where it is not checked by the resolution of the taxpayers and civilians, is clamorous and insatiable for greater expenditure. The Governor-General himself,--and I do not make any attack upon Lord Canning, although I could conceive a Governor-General more suited to his great and difficult position,--he is a creature of these very Services.

I now ask the noble Lord to remember a case which happened during the time he held office, and if the Committee will allow me, for the sake of illustration, to refer to it, I do not think it will be any waste of time. Hon. Gentlemen will recollect that during the last year, my hon. Friend the Member for Stockport (Mr. J. B. Smith), who has paid great

attention to Indian subjects, put a question to the noble Lord relating to the annexation of a small territory called Dhar. What has been the course of events in relation to that case? The news of the annexation reached this country on the 20th of March last year. Upon the 23rd the question was put in this House, when the hon. Member for Inverness (Mr. Baillie), then Under-Secretary, replied, that the Government had just been informed of it by the Governor-General, and that he was solely responsible for the act, the Government here having had no previous communication upon it. Upon the 11th of June the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) announced to the House, in answer to a question, that he had disallowed the annexation of Dhar. The despatch disallowing it has since been laid upon the table. It is dated June 22, and it asks for information from the Governor-General. In India they assumed this unfortunate Rajah to be guilty of misdemeanour, because his troops had revolted, and the noble Lord in his despatch said, as I think very sensibly, 'If we cannot keep our own troops, what argument is it for overturning the independence of the territory of Dhar, seeing that the Rajah himself has been faithful towards us, but his troops have rebelled?' The noble Lord asked for further information. In the preceding April the Ranee, the mother or step-mother of the Rajah, a mere boy of thirteen, sent two memorials to the Governor-General, one by post, and the other through the local British officer, remonstrating against the annexation, and proving, as far as she could, that the Rajah had not been guilty of any wrong against us. This memorial was not acknowledged until August, when the Secretary for the Government of India desired the Ranee to forward the memorial through the Governor-General's agent in Central India. In April these papers were laid upon the table of the House with one exception. The Ranee's memorial was not included in those papers.

Now, when those papers were laid before the House, why was not that memorial, relating to the annexed territory, sent home and printed with the other papers, so that hon. Members of this House might have read it? The letter of the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) was dated the 22nd of June, 1858, and to this hour it has never been answered. The noble Lord's despatch disallowed the annexation; it condemned it, and asked for information. From the date of that despatch to this present 1st of August, 1859, there has not come any official information from the Governor-General as to what he has done, or any answer to the noble Lord's despatch, although sixteen months have elapsed. I say it is not fitting that the Secretary of State for India should be treated with utter disregard, if not with something like contempt, by any great satrap who happens to be sent out to govern any of the provinces of this country. This very case shows, that in the midst of the terrible hurricane of the mutiny, the thirst for annexation was unslaked. At the very moment, or just before, that the Queen issued her gracious Proclamation here, the Government in India annexed the territory of this Rajah, a boy of thirteen years of age, manifesting at the same time an utter disregard of the Government at home and the just sentiments, if they could have been ascertained, of the whole body of the people of this country. And this must be so as long as you have a Government like that of Calcutta. Procrastination is its very nature.

The noble Lord opposite (Lord Stanley) did an excellent thing. He did honour to himself by appointing a man of a new sort as Governor of Madras. I have not much acquaintance with Sir C. Trevelyan, but I believe him to be a very intelligent man and very earnest for the good of India. But he finds that at Madras he is like a man who is manacled, as all the Governors are. He is able to do almost nothing. But he has a

spirit above being the passive instrument for doing nothing in the hands of the Governor-General, and he has been disposed to make several changes which have looked exceedingly heterodox to those who are connected with the old Government of India, and which have shocked the nerves of the fifteen old gentlemen who meet in Leadenhall-street, and their brethren in India. I find that among the changes endeavoured to be effected by Sir C. Trevelyan, the following are enumerated:--He has endeavoured to conciliate the Natives by abolishing certain ceremonial distinctions which were supposed to degrade them when visiting the Government House; he has shown that personal courtesy to them which appears to be too much neglected in India; he has conspicuously rewarded those who have rendered services to the State; he has made one of the Natives his aide-de-camp; he has endeavoured to improve the land tenure, to effect a settlement of the Enam, and to abolish the impress of cattle and carts. He has also abolished three-fourths, or perhaps more, of the paper work of the public servants. He also began the great task of judicial reform, than which none is more urgently pressing. But what is said of Sir C. Trevelyan for instituting these reforms? He has raised a hornets' nest about him. Those who surround the Governor-General at Calcutta say, 'We might as well have the Governors of the Presidencies independent, if they are to do as they like without consulting the Governor-General as has been done in past times' The *Friend of India* is a journal not particularly scrupulous in supporting the Calcutta Government, but it has a horror of any Government of India except that of the Governor-General and the few individuals who surround him. A writer in the *Friend of India* says:--

'Sir C. Trevelyan relies doubtless on Lord Stanley, and we do not dream of denying that the Secretary of State has provocation enough to excuse the unusual course he seems obliged to pursue. To send a reform to Calcutta is, at present, simply to lay it aside. It will probably not even be answered for two years, certainly not carried in five. Even when sanctioned, it will have to pass through a crucible through which no plan can escape entire. That weary waiting for Calcutta, of which all men, from Lord Stanley to the people of Singapore, now bitterly complain, may well tempt the Secretary to carry on his plans by the first mode offered to his hand.'

Here are only a dozen lines from a long article, and there are other articles in the same paper to the same purport. I think, then, that I am justified in condemning any Secretary for India who contents himself with giving us the figures necessary to show the state of the finances, which any clerk in the office could have done, and abstains from going into the questions of the government of India and that policy upon which alone you can base any solid hope of an improvement in the condition of that country.

There is another point I would mention. The Governor-General of India goes out knowing little or nothing of India. I know exactly what he does when he is appointed. He shuts himself up to study the first volumes of Mr. Mill's *History of India*, and he reads through this laborious work without nearly so much effect in making him a good Governor-General as a man might ignorantly suppose. He goes to India, a country of twenty nations, speaking twenty languages. He knows none of those nations, and he has not a glimmer of the grammar and pronunciation or meaning of those languages. He is surrounded by half-a-dozen or a dozen gentlemen who have been from fifteen to forty years in that country, and who have scrambled from the moderate but sure allowance with which they began in

the Service to the positions they now occupy. He knows nothing of the country or the people, and they are really unknown to the Government of India. To this hour the present Governor-General has not travelled through any considerable portion of the territory of India. If he did, he would have to pay an increased insurance upon his life for travelling through a country in which there are very few roads and no bridges at all. Observe the position, then, in which the Governor-General is placed. He is surrounded by an official circle, he breathes an official air, and everything is dim or dark beyond it. You lay duties upon him which are utterly beyond the mental or bodily strength of any man who ever existed, and which he cannot therefore adequately perform.

Turning from the Governor-General to the Civil Service, see how short the period is in which your servants in that country remain in any particular office. You are constantly criticising the bad customs of the United States, where every postmaster and many other officers lose their situations, and where others are appointed whenever a new President is elected. You never make blunders like the United States, and you will therefore be surprised at a statement given in evidence by Mr. Underbill, the Secretary of the Baptist Missionary Society. He says that in certain districts in Bengal there are three or four Englishmen to 1,000,000 inhabitants, and that the magistrates are perpetually moving about. I have here the names of several gentlemen cited. Mr. Henry Lushington went to India in 1821, and remained till 1842. During these twenty-one years he filled twenty-one different offices; he went to Europe twice, being absent from India not less than four and a quarter years. Upon an average, therefore, he held his twenty-one offices not more than nine months each. Mr. J. P. Grant was Governor of Bengal. That was so good a place that he remained stationary in it. But he went to India in 1828 and remained there until 1841. In those thirteen years he held twenty-four different situations, being an average of less than six months for each. Mr. Charles Grant--and I may say that Grant is a name which for three or four generations has been found everywhere in India,-- he was in India from 1829 to 1842, and in those thirteen years he filled seventeen offices, being an average of only eight months for each office. Mr. Halliday, Governor of Bengal, went to India in 1825, and remained until 1843. In those eighteen years he held twenty-one offices, and he did not become stationary until he was accredited to the lucrative and great office of Governor of Bengal.

I think these facts show that there is something in the arrangements of the Indian Government which makes it no Government at all, except for the purpose of raising money and spending taxes. It is no Government for watching over the people and conferring upon them those blessings which we try to silence our consciences by believing the British Government is established in India to promote. What can a Governor-General do with such a Council, and with servants who are ever changing in all the departments? I am not stating my own opinion, but what is proved by the blue-books. Mr. Halliday stated that the police of Bengal were more feared than the thieves and dacoits. But how is this Government, so occupied and so embarrassed, to be expected to put the police on a satisfactory footing? With regard to justice, I might appeal to any gentleman who has been in India whether, for the most part, the Judges in the Company's Courts are not without training, and if they are without training, whether they will not probably be without law. The delay is something of which we can have no conception, even with our experience of the Court of Chancery in this country. Perjury and wrong are universal wherever the Courts of the Company's Service have been established in India. Of their taxation we hear enough to-night. It is

clumsy and unscientific. In their finance there is such confusion that the Government proposes to send out somebody, not to raise revenue, not to spend it, but somebody who will be able to tell you how it is raised and spent, for that is what you want to know. They have no system of book-keeping whatever. The Secretary of State gives us a statement of revenue and expenditure up to the 30th of April, 1858, sixteen months back, and even for the year preceding he can only furnish what he calls an 'estimate.' Would any other Legislative Assembly in the whole world, except this, tolerate such a state of things? I did try myself several years ago to get a statement of the accounts up to a later period; but I found it was of no use. They ought to be brought up to a later period; the thing is quite within the range of possibility; it is simply not done because there is no proper system of book-keeping, and no one responsible for not doing it.

You have no Government in India; you have no financial statement; you have no system of book-keeping; no responsibility; and everything goes to confusion and ruin because there is such a Government, or no Government, and the English House of Commons has not taken the pains to reform these things. The Secretary of State to-night points to the increase in the English trade. In that trade I am myself interested, and I am delighted to see that increase; but it should be borne in mind that just now it is not a natural increase, and therefore not certain to be permanent. If you are spending so many millions in railroads and in carrying on war--that is, 22,000,000_l_. for your armaments in India instead of 12,000,000_l_.--is not that likely to make a great difference in your power to import more largely from this country? Do not we know that when the Government of the day was pouring English treasure into the Crimea the trade with the Levant was most materially increased? And, therefore, I say it will be a delusion for the right hon. Gentleman to expect that the extraordinary increase which has taken place within the last three years will go on in future in the same proportion.

Now, the point which I wish to bring before the Committee and the Government is this, because it is on this that I rely mainly--I think I may say almost entirely--for any improvement in the future of India. It would be impertinent to take up the time of the Committee by merely cavilling at what other people have said, and pointing out their errors and blunders, if I had no hope of being able to suggest any improvement in the existing state of things. I believe a great improvement may be made, and by a gradual progress that will dislocate nothing. I dare say it may disappoint some individuals, but where it will disappoint one man in India it will please a thousand. What you want is to de-centralize your Government. I hold it to be manifestly impossible to govern 150,000,000 of persons, composing twenty different nations, speaking as many different languages, by a man who knows nothing of India, assisted by half-a-dozen councillors belonging to a privileged order, many of whom have had very little experience in India, except within narrow limits, and whose experience never involved the consideration and settlement of great questions of statesman ship. If you could have an independent Government in India for every 30,000,000 of its people, I do not hesitate to say, though we are so many thousand miles away, that there are Englishmen who, settling down among those 20,000,000 of people, would be able to conduct the Government of that particular province on conditions wholly different and immeasurably better than anything in the way of administration which we have ever seen in India.

If I were Secretary of State for India,--but as I am not, I will

recommend the right hon. Gentleman to do that which I would do myself, or I would not hold his office for one month; because, to hold office and come before the House Session after Session with a gloomy statement, and with no kind of case to show that you are doing anything for India, or that you are justified in holding possession of it at all, is nothing but to receive a salary and to hold a dignity without any adequate notion of the high responsibility attaching to them. I am not blaming the right hon. Gentleman in particular; he is only doing what all his predecessors before him have done. There has been no real improvement since I have sat in Parliament in the government of India, and I believe the Bill of last year is not one whit better for purposes of administration than any that has gone before. But I would suggest to the right hon. Gentleman, whether it would not be a good thing to bring in a Bill to extend and define the powers of the Governors of the various Presidencies in India? I do not ask the right hon. Gentleman to turn out the fifteen gentlemen who assist him in Leadenhall-street to vegetate on their pensions, but I ask him to go to India and to take the Presidency of Madras for an instance. Let arrangements be made by which that Presidency shall be in a position to correspond directly with him in this country, and let every one connected with that Government of Madras feel that, with regard to the interests and the people of that Presidency, they will be responsible for their protection. At present there is no sort of tie between the governors and the governed. Why is it that we should not do for Madras what has been done for the Island of Ceylon? I am not about to set up the Council of Ceylon as a model institution—it is far from that; but I will tell you what it is, and you will see that it would not be a difficult thing to make the change I propose. The other day I asked a gentleman holding an office in the Government, and who had lived some years in Ceylon, what was the state of the Council? He said it was composed of sixteen members, of whom six were non-official and independent, and the Governor had always a majority. He added that at the present moment in that Council there was one gentleman, a pure Cingalese by birth and blood, another a Brahmin, another a half-caste, whose father was a Dutchman and whose mother was a Native, and three others who were either English merchants or planters. The Council has not much prestige, and therefore it is not easy to induce merchants in the interior to be members and to undertake its moderate duties; but the result is that this Cingalese, this Brahmin, this half-caste, and these three Englishmen, although they cannot out-vote Sir H. Ward, the Governor, are able to discuss questions of public interest in the eye and the ear of the public, and to tell what the independent population want, and so to form a representation of public opinion in the Council, which I will undertake to say, although so inefficient, is yet of high importance in the satisfactory government of that island. Why is it that we can have nothing like this in the Councils of Madras or Bombay? It would be an easy thing to do, and I believe that an Act of Parliament which would do it would lay the foundation of the greatest reform that has yet taken place in India. At present all the Governors are in fetters; and I see that blame has been imputed to Sir Charles Trevelyan for endeavouring to break through those fetters. No doubt an attempt will be made to have him recalled, but I hope that the right hon. Gentleman, while he moderates the ardour of the Governor so far as to prevent a rebellion among the civilians, will support him honestly and faithfully in all those changes which the right hon. Gentleman knows as well as I do are essential to the improvement of the government of that country.

There is yet another question, and that is, what is to be done with regard to the people of India on the subject of education, and

especially with reference to the matter of religious instruction? I beg the right hon. Gentleman to be cautious how he takes the advice of any gentleman in this country, who may ask him to make changes in the established order of things there by appearing in the slightest degree to attempt to overthrow the caste and religion of the Natives of India. I have here an extract from a letter written by a gentleman who was present at one of the ceremonies of reading the Queen's Proclamation in November last. He says:--

'Not less than 7,000 Natives of all ranks and conditions and religions flocked to the esplanade at Tellicherry, where there was no show but the parading of a company of Sepoys, who fired a _feu de joie_ very badly, to hear the Queen's Proclamation read. All who heard, all who heard not, manifested the deepest interest in it. The pledged inviolability of their religion and their lands spread like wildfire through the crowd, and was soon in every man's mouth. Their satisfaction was unbounded.... I mentioned that I went to Tellicherry to hear the Queen's Proclamation read. We have since had it read here (Anjarakandy). You will see an account of what took place on the occasion in the accompanying copy of an official report I addressed to the assistant-magistrate. What I have described understates the feeling manifested by the people. They were all eyes and ears, listening breathlessly to what was being read. You will observe that convening them for any public purpose whatever, except here, was a thing unknown, and would have been a thing scouted under the Company's Government. Here I always assemble them, communicate everything they ought to know and hear, and talk it over with them. But a Queen's Proclamation is not an every-day affair, so they came in crowds, and I will venture to say that there is not another place in the Queen's India where it was so clearly explained to them or so thoroughly understood. But the impartial toleration of their religion and caste was the be-all and end-all of their comments, praise, and individual satisfaction. One Mafitta said, "They had had scores of proclamations upon every conceivable subject, but never one so wise and sensible as this."

The East India Company was a wonderful Company for writing despatches. There was nothing so Christian as their doctrine, nothing so unchristian as their conduct. That Proclamation has in it the basis of all you should aim at in future in India--a regard to the sacredness of their property, and the sacredness of their religion, and an extension to them of as regular and full justice as is shown to your own countrymen. Depend upon it these Natives of India can comprehend this as well as we comprehend it; and, if you treat them as we are treated, and as they ought to be treated, you will not require 400,000 men to help you to govern a people who are notoriously among the most industrious and most peaceable to be found on the face of the earth. There has lately been an act done by the noble Lord (Lord Stanley) to which I must allude. Why he did it I do not know. I am sure the noble Lord did not mean to do an act of injustice--though very great injustice has been done. A question was put the other night about a Native of India who had come to this country to qualify himself for entering into competition for employment in the Civil Service of his country. I have seen that young gentleman, and conversed with him; and when I state his case, it will be seen whether he has been treated well or wisely, though the regulation under which he has suffered may have been made without any reference to him individually. He arrived in this country in June, 1856, and remained

preparing himself for competition for two years and a-half till December, 1858, when a new regulation came out, which made twenty-two instead of twenty-three years of age the period for entering the Civil Service. He might have been ready for competition in July, 1860, but he could not be ready in July, 1859. Under these circumstances he would be past the age of twenty-two before he could be able to present himself for examination. The consequence is, that he has been obliged to turn himself to another channel for employment. His father is an assistant-builder in the Government dockyard of Bombay, and has been in England. There was great interest excited among the Natives when the young man left India to come to England, and there is great disappointment among his friends at the result. He has been laughed at for trusting the Government, and it is said that while Government go on changing their regulations in this way no faith can be put in them. Now this is the first case of this kind that has happened. This young gentleman (or his father) has expended 1,500 l. in coming here and in endeavouring to get the best education, solely with a view to be suited for the Civil Service. If he had entered into that Civil Service a great thing would have been accomplished. The result would have been that the House and the Secretary for India would have seen that it was very unjust, while the son of any one here could pursue his studies at home and enter into competition for the Civil Service, that the sons of the Natives of India who wish to enter into the service of their own country must come thousands of miles at great expense, and live apart from their families for years, before they are able to accomplish their object, and the result must have been that you would have established in some city in India the same mode of examination that you have established here. You must have been led to do that which would have enabled young men in India to offer themselves for the Civil Service of their country on as favourable terms as could be done in England. I am sure the noble Lord never had the slightest idea of the regulation having reference to this young man, or of injuring him; yet it has been done, and what has occurred leads to the conclusion that either somebody very deep in these matters has been at the bottom of this change, or that some combination of unfortunate circumstances has been at work, by which that which we have all so much at heart has been retarded. If the noble Lord had struck out this regulation, or made a new one, by which this young man could have had a chance of going home as a servant of the Civil Service, the fact would have been worth many regiments of soldiers in India.

In speaking on this subject I have nothing new to offer to the attention of the House. I have propounded the very same theories and remedies years ago. They are not my remedies and theories. I am not the inventor of local government for India; but the more I have considered the subject--the more I have discussed it with the Members of this House and with gentlemen connected with India--the more I am convinced that you will not make a single step towards the improvement of India unless you change your whole system of government--unless you give to each Presidency a government with more independent powers than are now possessed by it. What would be thought if the whole of Europe was under one governor, who knew only the language of the Feejee Islands, and that his subordinates were like himself, only more intelligent than the inhabitants of the Feejee Islands are supposed to be? You set a governor over 150,000,000 of human beings, in a climate where the European cannot do the work he has to do so well as here, where neither the moral nor physical strength of the individual is equal to what it is at home,--and you do not even always furnish the most powerful men for the office;--you seem to think that the atmosphere will be always calm and the sea always smooth. And so the government of India goes on; there are

promises without number of beneficial changes, but we never heard that India is much better or worse than before. Now, that is not the way to do justice to a great empire like India. If there had been a better government in India, the late disturbances among your own troops would not have happened; and I own I tremble when I reflect that every post may bring us, in the present temper of the European troops in India, some dire intelligence of acts which they may have committed, because they may think that this is a convenient opportunity for pressing some great claim of their own.

I beg the Committee to consider this matter, notwithstanding that the right hon. Gentleman is not disposed to take a gloomy view of the state of India. Look at your responsibilities. India is ruled by Englishmen, but remember that in that unfortunate country you have destroyed every form of government but your own; that you have cast the thrones of the Natives to the ground. Princely families, once the rulers of India, are now either houseless wanderers in the land they once called their own, or are pensioners on the bounty of those strangers by whom their fortunes have been overthrown. They who were noble and gentle for ages are now merged in the common mass of the people. All over those vast regions there are countless millions, helpless and defenceless, deprived of their natural leaders and their ancient chiefs, looking with only some small ray of hope to that omnipresent and irresistible Power by which they have been subjected. I appeal to you on behalf of that people. I have besought your mercy and your justice for many a year past; and if I speak to you earnestly now, it is because the object for which I plead is dear to my heart. Is it not possible to touch a chord in the hearts of Englishmen, to raise them to a sense of the miseries inflicted on that unhappy country by the crimes and the blunders of our rulers here? If you have steeled your hearts against the Natives, if nothing can stir you to sympathy with their miseries, at least have pity upon your own countrymen. Rely upon it the state of things which now exists in India must, before long, become most serious. I hope that you will not show to the world that, although your fathers conquered the country, you have not the ability to govern it.

You had better disencumber yourselves of the fatal gift of empire than that the present generation should be punished for the sins of the past. I speak in condemnatory language, because I believe it to be deserved. I hope that no future historian will have to say that the arms of England in India were irresistible, and that an ancient empire fell before their victorious progress,—yet that finally India was avenged, because the power of her conqueror was broken by the intolerable burdens and evils which she cast upon her victim, and that this wrong was accomplished by a waste of human life and a waste of wealth which England, with all her power, was unable to bear.

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INDIA.

V.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 19, 1861.

From Hansard.

[Mr. Dunlop brought forward a motion to inquire into the discrepancies between certain sets of documents, relating to the Afghan war of 1837-8.

It appeared that some passages in the despatches of Sir Alexander Burnes had been mutilated, in order to make it appear that he advised a policy which he really condemned. Mr. Dunlop moved for a Committee to inquire into this alleged mutilation of despatches presented to the House. The motion was negatived.]

When the noble Lord rose, I observed, from his countenance and from his language, that he seemed to be suffering from the passion of anger. [Viscount Palmerston: 'Not much.'] 'Not much,' the noble Lord says. I admit that in the course of his speech he calmed down; but he was so far led from what I think was a fair course as to charge the hon. and learned Gentleman who introduced this Motion with making a violent and vituperative speech, and he spoke of 'that vocabulary of abuse of which the hon. Gentleman appeared to be master.' Now, I will undertake to say that I am only speaking the opinion of every Gentleman in the House who heard the speech which introduced this question, when I say that there has rarely been delivered here on any subject a speech more strictly logical, more judicially calm, and more admirable than that which we have heard to-night from the hon. and learned Member for Greenock. But the fact is the noble Lord felt himself hit.

The noble Lord is on his trial in this case; and on that account I expect that at the conclusion of the debate he will not feel himself at liberty to object to the appointment of this Committee. After a few sentences the noble Lord touched upon the case of Sir Alexander Burnes, and he made a very faint denial of the misrepresentations which are charged against the Government of that day in the case of that gentleman. But he went on to say that, after all, these things were of no importance; that what was in, or what was left out, was unimportant. But I should like to ask the noble Lord what was the object of the minute and ingenious, and I will say unmatched care which was taken in mutilating the despatches of a gentleman whose opinions were of no importance and whose writings could not make the slightest difference either to the question or to the opinions of any person concerned? The noble Lord, too, has stooped to conduct which, if I were not in this House, I might describe in language which I could not possibly use here without being told that I was transgressing the line usually observed in discussions in this assembly. The noble Lord has stooped so low as to heap insult, throughout the whole of his speech, upon the memory of a man who died in the execution of what he believed to be his public duty--a duty which was thrust upon him by the mad and obstinate policy of the noble Lord; and whilst his blood cries to Heaven against that policy, the noble Lord, during a three-quarters of an hour's speech in this House, has scarcely ceased to heap insult on his memory.

What the noble Lord told us throughout his speech was that Sir Alexander Burnes was a man of the greatest simplicity of character. I could not, however complimentary I were disposed to be, retort that upon the noble Lord. He says that Sir Alexander Burnes--of whom he spoke throughout in the most contemptuous manner--an eminent political agent at the Court of Dost Mahommed, was beguiled by the treachery of that Asiatic ruler; that he took everything for truth which he heard, and that, in point of fact, he was utterly unfit for the position which he held at Cabul. But although the noble Lord had these despatches before him, and knew all the feelings of Sir Alexander Burnes, he still continued Sir Alexander Burnes there. He was there two years after these despatches were written, in that most perilous year when not only himself but the whole army--subjects of the Queen--fell victims to the policy of the noble Lord. Now, I must tell the noble Lord what my hon. and learned Friend,

the Member for Greenock, did not discuss, and what the Committee is not to do--because every Member who heard the speech of the hon. and learned Member for Greenock, and those who listened to the speech of the noble Lord, must have seen that from the first the noble Lord evaded the whole question. He endeavoured to lead the House to believe that my hon. and learned Friend was going into some antiquarian researches about the policy of the English or the Indian Government twenty years ago, and that it was proposed to have a Committee to dig up all the particulars of our supposed peril from the designs of Russia at that time. But the fact is that my hon. and learned Friend had no such intention; and there was no man in the House more cognizant of that fact than the noble Lord when he ingeniously endeavoured to convey a contrary impression to the House.

It is not proposed to go into the policy of the war. And there is another question that it is not proposed to go into. It is not proposed to inquire whether Sir Alexander Burnes or Lord Auckland was Governor-General. We know that Lord Auckland was Governor-General; but we know that a Governor-General who may be many hundreds, or in India, perhaps, 2,000 miles away from the place where particular events are transpiring, must rely to a considerable extent on the information he receives from the political agent who is on the spot. If this be so, clearly what Sir Alexander Burnes thought, and what he said, and what he wrote, is of some importance. At least, if the House of Commons has any evidence placed before it, the noble Lord will agree that in a great question like this--I am not speaking of the present time, but of the time when these events happened--it is of first-rate importance that the House should have evidence not on one side only, but on both sides. There is another thing we do not propose to inquire into, and that is the policy of Russia at that time. I cannot very well understand the course which the noble Lord has taken on this point; for I find that about twelve months after the writing of these very despatches, the mutilation of which is now complained of, the noble Lord made a reply to the Russian Minister who had declared that there was nothing whatever hostile to England in the instructions which were furnished to Vicovich. He says--

'There has not existed the smallest design hostile to the English Government, nor the smallest idea of endangering the tranquillity of the British possessions in India.'

The noble Lord, in reply to that, on the 20th December, 1838, just a year after the writing of these despatches by Sir Alexander Burnes, said:--

'Her Majesty's Government accept as entirely satisfactory the declaration of the Russian Government that it does not harbour any designs hostile to the interests of Great Britain in India.'

I may leave that question there, because I can assure the noble Lord that my hon. and learned Friend has not the smallest intention--I judge so, at least, from his speech--of bringing anybody before the Committee to attack or defend the policy of the Government in the war which then unhappily took place. Nor do I suppose it is intended to arraign anybody for a policy that sacrificed at least 20,000 human lives--20,000 lives of the subjects of the Queen of England. Nor is it intended to inquire how far the loss of more than 15,000,000_l_. sterling by that policy has affected for all future time the finances and the circumstances of the Government of India. These are crimes--the whole of that policy is a crime--of a nature never to be answered for. No man can

accurately measure it. No Committee of this House could adequately punish those who were the perpetrators of it. No, Sir, my hon. and learned Friend has not the slightest idea of going back twenty years for the purpose of bringing the noble Lord, or any one else who may be guilty of that great crime, to the bar of public opinion by this Committee.

But it is worth while that the House should know whether the Government in whom it placed confidence at that time, and in whom the Queen placed confidence--whether that Government was worthy of their confidence, and whether any members of the Government of that day are members of the Government at this day. It is worth while knowing whether there was and is a man in high position in the Government here or in India who had so low a sense of honour and of right that he could offer to this House mutilated, false, forged despatches and opinions of a public servant, who lost his life in the public service. Conceive any man at this moment in India engaged, as many have been during the last three years, in perilous services--conceive that any man should know that to-morrow, or next week, or any time this year, he may lay his bones in that distant land, and that six months afterwards there may be laid on the table of this House by the noble Lord at the head of the Government, or by the Secretary of State for India, letters or despatches of his from which passages have been cut out, and into which passages have been inserted, in which words have been so twisted as wholly to divert and distort his meaning, and to give to him a meaning, it may be, utterly the contrary to that which his original despatch intended to convey. I cannot conceive any anticipation more painful or more bitter, more likely to eat into the heart of any man engaged in the service of his country in a distant land.

It is admitted, and the noble Lord has not flatly denied it--he cannot deny it--he knows it as well as the hon. and learned Member for Greenock--he knows it as well as the very man whose hand did the evil--he knows there have been garbling, mutilation, practically and essentially falsehood and forgery, in these despatches which have been laid before the House. Why was it refused to give the original despatches when they were asked for in 1842 by the hon. Member for Inverness-shire (Mr. H. Baillie), and when they were asked for at a later period by the hon. Member for Sheffield (Mr. Hadfield)? Why was it that the originals were so consistently withheld? That they have been given now I suppose is because those who were guilty of the outrage on the faith of Parliament thought, as twenty years had elapsed, that nobody would give himself the trouble to go into the question, and that no man would be so earnest as my hon. Friend the Member for Greenock in bringing the question before the notice of Parliament.

My hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield (Mr. Hadfield) informs me that it was the noble Lord the Member for King's Lynn (Lord Stanley) who consented to the production of the original despatches when he was in office. I was not aware of that fact; but I am free here to tender him my thanks for the course which he took. I am sure he is the last man whom any one would suspect of being mixed up in any transaction of this kind, except with a view to give the House and the country full information with regard to it. I say, then, avoiding all the long speech of the noble Lord, that the object of the Committee is to find out who did this evil thing--who placed upon the table of the House information which was knowingly false, and despatches that were actually forged--because if you add to or detract from, or so change a coin, or note, or deed, as to make any of them bear a meaning contrary to its original and

intended meaning, of course you are guilty of such an act as I have described, and that is precisely what somebody has done in the despatches which we are now discussing. I say an odious offence has been committed against the House, and against the truth; and what we want to know is, who did it?

Now, will the noble Lord be candid enough--he does not think there is anything wrong--he says there is not much--it is very trifling--that Sir Alexander Burnes's opinions are not worth much--supposing it to be so--for the sake of argument, let me grant it; but if it is a matter of no importance, will the noble Lord be so candid as to tell us who did it? When Lord Broughton was examined before the Official Salaries Committee some years ago, he, as the noble Lord is aware, said that he took upon himself as President of the Board of Control at the time the entire responsibility of the Affghan war. The noble Lord now at the head of the Government was then a member of the India Board, and so I believe was the noble Lord the Member for the City of London. But the noble Lord at the head of the Government was also Secretary for Foreign Affairs. Now, I do not think I am wrong in supposing that this question lies between the noble Lord the Prime Minister and Lord Broughton, once a Member of this House. This thing was not done by some subordinate who cannot be found out.

My hon. and learned Friend says it has been done with marvellous care, and even with so much ability that it must have been done by a man of genius. Of course there are men of genius in very objectionable walks of life; but we know that the noble Lord at the head of the Government is a man of genius; if he had not been, he would not have sat on that bench for the last fifty years. And we know that Lord Broughton is a man of many and varied accomplishments. And once more I ask the noble Lord to tell us who did it? He knows who did it. Was it his own right-hand, or was it Lord Broughton's right-hand, or was it some clever secretary in the Foreign Office or in the India Office who did this work? I say the House has a right to know. We want to know that. We want to drag the delinquent before the public. This we want to know, because we wish to deter other Ministers from committing the like offence; and we want to know it for that which most of all is necessary--to vindicate the character and honour of Parliament. Nothing can sink Parliament to a lower state of degradation and baseness than that it should permit Ministers of the Crown to lay upon the table, upon questions involving the sacrifice of 20,000,000 l. of money and 20,000 lives, documents which are not true--which slander our public servants, and which slander them most basely when they are dead and are not here to answer. I do not believe that the Gentlemen of England in this House--upon that side of the House or upon this--will ever consent to sit down with a case proved so clearly as this is without directing the omnipotent power and eye of Parliament into the matter. I say, seeing the charge, seeing that the noble Lord was at the head of the Foreign Office at the time, that the policy of the Affghan war was always considered to be his, that the responsibility of this act must rest between him and Lord Broughton,--I should not like to hold the opinion, and I do not hold the opinion, that the noble Lord will object to a Committee to inquire into a matter in which he is himself so directly concerned.

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CANADA.

I.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 13, 1865.

From Hansard.

[Delivered during the debate on Colonel Jervois' Report on the Defences of Canada.]

I am not sure that I should have addressed the House on this occasion but for the observations which have been made by the noble Lord. I think he has been perhaps a little more frank in his declarations on this occasion, and in pointing out the real thing which I suspect is passing in his mind, and in the minds of very many Members of the House who have made no statement of their own opinions during this debate. I hope the debate will be useful, although I am obliged to say, while I admit the importance of the question that has been brought before us, that I think it is one of some delicacy. That it is important is clear, because it refers to the possibility of war between this country and the United States, and its delicacy arises from this--that it is very difficult to discuss this question without saying things which tend rather in the direction of war than in the direction of peace.

The difficulty which is now before us is this--that there is an extensive colony or dependency of this country lying adjacent to the United States, and if there be a war party in the United States--a party hostile to this country--that circumstance affords to it a very strong temptation to enter without much hesitation into a war with England, because it may feel that through Canada it can inflict a great humiliation upon this country. And at the same time it is perfectly well known to all intelligent men, especially to the statesmen and public men of the United States--it is as well known to them as it is to us--that there is no power whatever in this United Kingdom to defend successfully the territory of Canada against the power of the United States. Now we ought to know that, in order to put ourselves right upon this question, and that we may not talk folly and be called upon hereafter to act folly. The noble Lord at the head of the Government--or the Government, at any rate is responsible for having compelled this discussion; because if a Vote is to be asked for during this Session--and it is only the beginning of other Votes--it is clearly the duty of the House to bring the subject under discussion. I think the Vote now is particularly inopportune for many reasons, but especially as we have heard from the Governor-General of Canada that they are about, in the North-American Provinces, to call into existence a new nationality; and I, for one, shall certainly object to the taxes of this country being heedlessly expended in behalf of any nationality but our own.

Now, what I should like to ask the House is this--first of all, will Canada attack the States? Clearly not. Next, will the States attack Canada--I am keeping out of view England altogether? Clearly not. There is not a man in the United States, probably, whose voice or whose opinion would have the smallest influence in that country, who would recommend or desire that an attack should be made by the United States upon Canada with a view to its forcible annexation to the Union. There have been lately, as we know, dangers on the frontier. The Canadian people have been no wiser than some Members of this House--or than a great many men amongst the richer classes in this country. And when the refugees from the South--I am not speaking now of respectable and honourable men from the South, many of whom have left that country during these troubles, and for whom I feel the greatest commiseration,

but I mean the ruffians from the South--who in large numbers have entered Canada and have employed themselves there in a course of policy likely to embroil us with the United States--I say that the people of Canada have treated these men with far too much consideration. They expressed very openly opinions hostile to the United States, whose power lay close to them.

I will not go into a detail of that which we are all sufficiently well acquainted with--the seizing of American ships on the Lakes, the raid into the State of Vermont, the robbing of a bank, the killing of a man in his own shop, the stealing of horses in open day, and another transaction of which we have very strong proof, that men of this class actually conspired to set fire to the largest cities of the Union. All these things have taken place and the Canadian Government made scarcely any sign. I believe that an application was made to the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office nearly a year ago, that he should stimulate the Canadian Government to some steps to avoid the dangers that have since arisen; but with that sort of negligence which has been so much seen here, nothing was done until the American Government and people, aroused by the nature of these transactions, showed that they were no longer about to put up with them. Then the Canadian Government and people took a little notice. Now, Lord Monck, the Governor-General of Canada--about whose appointment I have heard some people complain, saying that he was a mere follower of the noble Lord at the head of the Government, who lost his election and was therefore sent out to govern a province--Lord Monck, I am bound to say, from all I have heard from Canada, has conducted himself in a manner very serviceable to the colony, and with the greatest possible propriety as representing the Sovereign there. Lord Monck has been all along favourable to the United States, and I believe his Cabinet has also. I know that at least the most important newspaper there has always been favourable to the North. Still nothing was done; but the moment these troubles arose then everything was done. Volunteers have been sent to the frontier; the trial of the raiders has been proceeded with, and possibly they will be surrendered; and the Canadian Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed a vote in their House of Parliament to restore to the persons at St. Albans, who were robbed by the raiders, the 50,000 dollars that were taken from them.

And what is the state of things now? There is the greatest possible calm on the frontier. The United States have not a word to say against Canada. The Canadian people have found that they were in the wrong and have now returned to their right mind. There is not a man in Canada at this moment, I believe, who has any idea that the United States Government has the smallest notion of attacking them, now or at any future time, on account of anything that has transpired between the United States and Canada during these trials. But if there comes a war in which Canada shall suffer and be made a victim, it will be a war got up between the Government of Washington and the Government of London. And it becomes us to inquire whether that is at all probable. Is there anybody in this House in favour of such a war? I notice with general delight--and I was not a false prophet when I said some time ago that some day it would be so--I say I notice with delight the changed tone manifested here with regard to these American questions. Even the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Lord Robert Cecil) can speak without anger, and without any of that ill feeling which I am sorry to say on past occasions he has manifested in discussing these questions.

Now, I believe there are no men out of Bedlam--or at least who ought to

be out of it--and I suspect there are very few men in Bedlam, who are in favour of our going to war with the United States. And in taking this view I am not arguing that it is because we see the vast naval and military power and apparently inexhaustible resources of that country. I will not assume that you or my countrymen have come to the conclusion that it is better for us not to make war with America, because you and they find her with a strength that you did not even suspect: I will say that it is upon higher grounds that we are all against a war with the United States. Our history for the last 200 years, and further back, is a record of calamitous, and for the most part, unnecessary wars. We have had enough of whatever a nation can gain by military successes and military glory. I will not turn to the disasters that might follow to our commerce nor to the wide-spread ruin that might be occasioned. I will say that we are a wiser and a better people than we were in these respects, and that we should regard a war with the United States as even a greater crime, if needlessly entered into, than war with almost any other country in the world.

Looking at our Government, we have preserved, with a good many blunders--one or two of which I shall comment upon by-and-by--neutrality during this great struggle. We have had it stated in this House, and we have had a Motion in this House, that the blockade was ineffective and ought to be broken. Men of various classes, some of them agents of the Richmond conspiracy--persons, it is said, of influence from France--all these are reported to have brought their influence to bear on the noble Lord at the head of the Government and his colleagues, with a view of inducing them to take part in this quarrel, and all this has failed to break our neutrality. Therefore, I should say, we may clearly come to the conclusion that England is not in favour of war; and if there should be any act of war, or any aggression whatever, out of which Canada will suffer, I believe honestly that it will not come from this country. That is a matter which gives me great satisfaction, and I believe the House will agree with me that I am not misstating the case.

Now let us ask, Is the United States for war? I know the noble Lord the Member for Stamford (Lord Robert Cecil) has a lurking idea that there is some danger from that quarter; I am not at all certain that it does not prevail in other minds, and in many minds not so acute as that with which the noble Lord is gifted. If we had at the Bar of the House, Lord Russell as representing the English Government, and Mr. Adams as the representative of the Government of President Lincoln, and if we were to ask their opinion, they would tell us that which the Secretary for the Colonies has this night told us--that the relations between the two countries, so far as it is possible to discover them, are perfectly amicable; and I know from the communications between the Minister of the United States and our Minister for Foreign Affairs that they have been growing more and more amicable for many months past. Now, I take the liberty of expressing this opinion--that there has never been an administration in the United States since the time of the Revolutionary War, up to this hour, more entirely favourable to peace with all foreign countries, and more especially favourable to peace with England, than the Government of which President Lincoln is the head. I will undertake to say that the most exact investigator of what has taken place will not be able to point to a single word he--President Lincoln--has said, or a single line he has written, or a single act he has done, since his first accession to power, that betrays anger against this country, or any of that vindictive feeling which some persons here may imagine to inflame the breasts of the President and his Cabinet.

Then if Canada is not for war, if England is not for war, and if the United States are not for war, whence is the war to come? That is what I should like to ask. I wish the noble Lord the Member for Stamford had been a little more frank. I should like to ask whence comes the anxiety, which undoubtedly to some extent prevails? It may be assumed even that the Government is not wholly free from it; for they have shown it in an almost ludicrous manner by proposing a vote of 50,000_1_. It is said the newspapers have got into a sort of panic. They can do that any night between the hours of six and twelve o'clock, when they write their articles. They are either very courageous or very panic-stricken.

It is said that 'the City' joins in this feeling. We know what 'the City' means--the right hon. Gentleman alluded to it to-night. It means that the people who deal in shares--though that does not describe the whole of them--'the moneyed interest' of the City, are alarmed. Well, I never knew the City to be right. Men who are deep in great monetary transactions, and who are steeped to the lips sometimes in perilous speculations, are not able to take broad and dispassionate views of political questions of this nature.

As to the newspapers, I agree with my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) when, referring to one of them in particular, he intimated that he thought its course was indicated by a wish to cover its own confusion. Surely, after four years' uninterrupted publication of lies with regard to America, I should think it has done pretty much to destroy its influence on foreign questions for ever.

But there is a much higher authority--that is the authority of the Peers. I do not know why we should be so much restricted with regard to the House of Lords in this House. I think I have observed that in their place they are not so squeamish as to what they say about us. It appeared to me that in this debate the right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) felt it necessary to get up and endeavour to defend his chief. Now, if I were to give advice to the hon. Gentlemen opposite, it would be this--for while stating that during the last four years many noble Lords in the other House have said foolish things, I think I should be uncandid if I did not say that you also have said foolish things--learn from the example set you by the right hon. Gentleman. He, with a thoughtfulness and statesmanship which you do not all acknowledge, he did not say a word from that bench likely to create difficulty with the United States. I think his chief and his followers might learn something from his example.

But I have discovered one reason why in that other place mistakes of this nature are so often made. Not long ago there was a great panic raised, very much by what was said in another place about France. Now an attempt is made there to create a panic upon this question. In the hall of the Reform Club there is affixed to the wall a paper which gives a telegraphic account of what is being done in this House every night, and what is also being done in the other House, and I find almost every night from the beginning of the Session that the only words that have appeared on the side which is devoted to a record of the proceedings of the House of Lords are these, 'Lords adjourned.' The noble Lord at the head of the Government is responsible for much of this. He has brought this House into nearly the same condition. We do very little, and they do absolutely nothing. All of us in our younger days, I am quite sure, were taught by those who had the care of us a verse which was intended to inculcate the virtue of industry. One couplet was to this effect--

'Satan still some mischief finds
For idle hands to do.'

And I do not believe that men, however high in station, are exempt from that unfortunate effect which arises to all of us from a course of continued idleness. But I should like to ask this House in a most serious mood, what is the reason that any man in this country has now more anxiety with regard to the preservation of peace with the United States than he had a few years ago? Is there not a consciousness in our heart of hearts that we have not during the last five years behaved generously to our neighbours? Do not we feel in some sort a pricking of conscience, and are we not sensible that conscience tends to make us cowards at this particular juncture?

I shall not review the past transactions with anger, but with feelings of sorrow; for I maintain, and I think history will bear out what I say, that there is no generous and high-minded Englishman who can look back upon the transactions of the last four years without a feeling of sorrow at the course we have pursued on some important occasions. As I am wishful to speak with a view to a better state of feeling, both in this country and in the United States, I shall take the liberty, if the House will permit me for a few minutes, to refer to two or three of these transactions, where, I think, though perhaps we were not in the main greatly wrong, yet in some circumstances we were so far unfortunate as to have created an irritation which at this moment we wish did not exist. The hon. Member for Horsham (Mr. Seymour Fitzgerald) referred to the course taken by the Government with regard to the acknowledgment of the belligerent rights of the South. Now I have never been one to condemn the Government for acknowledging those belligerent rights, except upon this ground—I think it might be logically contended that it might possibly have become necessary to take that step—but I do think the time and manner in which it was done were most unfortunate, and could not but produce very evil effects.

Going back nearly four years, we recollect what occurred when the news arrived of the first shot having been fired at Fort Sumter. That, I think, was about the 12th of April. Immediately after that time it was announced that a new Minister was coming to this country. Mr. Dallas had intimated to the Government that as he did not represent the new President he would rather not undertake anything of importance; but that his successor was on his way and would arrive on such a day. When a man leaves New York on a given day you can calculate to about twelve hours when he will be in London. Mr. Adams, I think, arrived in London about the 13th of May, and when he opened his newspaper next morning he found the Proclamation of neutrality, acknowledging the belligerent rights of the South. I say that the proper course to have taken would have been to have waited till Mr. Adams arrived here, and to have discussed the matter with him in a friendly manner, explaining the ground upon which the English Government had felt themselves bound to issue that Proclamation, and representing that it was not done in any manner as an unfriendly act towards the United States Government. But no precaution whatever was taken; it was done with unfriendly haste; and it had this effect, that it gave comfort and courage to the conspiracy at Montgomery and at Richmond, and caused great grief and irritation amongst that portion of the people of America who were most strongly desirous of maintaining friendly relations between their country and England.

To illustrate this point allow me to suppose a great revolt had taken place in Ireland, and that we had sent over within a fortnight of the

occurrence of such an unfortunate event a new Minister to Washington, and that on the morning after arriving there he had found, that without consulting him, the Government had taken a hasty step by which the belligerent rights of the insurgents had been acknowledged, and by which comfort and support had been given them. I ask any man whether, under such circumstances, the feeling throughout the whole of Great Britain, and in the mind of every man anxious to preserve the unity of Great Britain and Ireland, would not necessarily be one of irritation and exasperation against the United States?

I will not argue this matter further--to do so would be simply to depreciate the intellect of the hon. Gentlemen listening to me. Seven or eight months afterwards there happened another transaction of a very different but unfortunate nature--that is the transaction arising out of the seizure of two Southern envoys on board an English ship--the Trent. I recollect making a speech down at Rochdale about the time of that occurrence. It was a speech entirely in favour of the United States Government and people--but I did not then undertake, as I do not undertake now, in the slightest degree to defend the seizure of those two envoys. I said that although precedents for such an action might possibly be found to have occurred in what I will call some of the evil days in our history, at any rate it was opposed to the maxims and principles of the United States Government, and was, as I thought, a bad act--an act which should not have been done. Well, I do not complain of the demand that those men should be given up; but I do complain of the manner in which that demand was made, and the menaces by which it was accompanied. I think it was wrong and unstatesman-like that at the moment we heard of the seizure, when there was not the least foundation for supposing that the United States Government were aware of the act, or had in the slightest degree sanctioned it, as we since well know they did not, that we should immediately get ships ready, and send off troops, and incite the organs of the press--who are always too ready to inflame the passions of the people to frenzy--to prepare their minds for war.

But that was not all; because before the United States had heard a word of the matter from this country their Secretary of State had written to Mr. Adams a despatch, which was communicated to our Government, and in which it was stated that the transaction had not been done by any orders of theirs, and that therefore, as far as they and we were concerned, it was a pure accident, which they should consider with the most friendly disposition towards this country. How came it that this despatch was never published for the information of the people of this country? How happened it that, during one whole month the flame of war was fanned by the newspapers, particularly by those supposed to be devoted to the Government, and that one of those newspapers, supposed to be peculiarly devoted to the Prime Minister, had the audacity--I do not know whence it obtained its instructions--to deny that any such despatch had been received? Now, Sir, I am of opinion that it is not possible to maintain amicable relations with any great country--I think it is not possible to do so with any little one--unless Governments will manage these transactions in what I will call a more courteous and more honourable manner. I happen to know--for I received a letter from the United States, from one of the most eminent men in that country, dated only two days before those men were given up, in which the writer said--that the real difficulty in the course of the President was that the menaces of the English Government had made it almost impossible for them to concede; and that the question they asked themselves was whether the English Government was intending to seek a cause of quarrel or not. And

I am sure the noble Lord at the head of the Government, if such a demand had been made upon him with courtesy and fairness, as should be between friendly nations, would have been more disposed to concede, and would have found it much more easy to concede, than if the demand had been accompanied by menaces such as his Government offered to the Government of the United States. Now the House will observe that I am not condemning the Government of this country on the main point of what they did. I am only condemning them because they did not do what they had to do in that manner which would be most likely to remove difficulties and preserve a friendly feeling between the two nations.

Then I come to the last thing I shall mention--to the question of the ships which have been preying upon the commerce of the United States. I shall confine myself to that one vessel, the Alabama. She was built in this country; all her munitions of war were from this country; almost every man on board her was a subject of Her Majesty. She sailed from one of our chief ports. She is known to have been built by a firm in which a Member of this House was, and I presume is, interested. Now, Sir, I do not complain--I know that once, when I referred to this question two years ago, when my hon. Friend the Member for Bradford brought it forward in this House, the hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Laird) was excessively angry--I do not complain that the Member for Birkenhead has struck up a friendship with Captain Semmes, who may probably be described, as another sailor once was of similar pursuits, as being 'the mildest mannered man that ever scuttled ship.' Therefore, I do not complain of a man who has an acquaintance with that notorious person, and I do not complain, and did not then, that the Member for Birkenhead looks admiringly upon the greatest example which men have ever seen of the greatest crime which men have ever committed. I do not complain even that he should applaud that which is founded upon a gigantic traffic in living flesh and blood--a traffic into which no subject of this realm can enter without being deemed a felon in the eyes of our law and punished as such. But what I do complain of is this, that the hon. Gentleman the Member for Birkenhead, a magistrate of a county, a deputy-lieutenant--whatever that may be--a representative of a constituency, and having a seat in this ancient and honourable Assembly--that he should, as I believe he did, if concerned in the building of this ship, break the law of his country, by driving us into an infraction of International Law, and treating with undeserved disrespect the Proclamation of neutrality of the Queen.

I have another complaint to make, and in allusion to that hon. Member. It is within your recollection that when on a former occasion he made that speech and defended his course, he declared that he would rather be the builder of a dozen Alabamas than do something which nobody has done. That language was received with repeated cheering from the Opposition side of the House. Well, Sir, I undertake to say that that was at least a most unfortunate circumstance, and I beg to tell the hon. Gentleman that at the end of last Session, when the great debate took place on the question of Denmark, there were many men on this side of the House who had no objection whatever to see the present Government turned out of office, for they had many grounds of complaint against them, but they felt it impossible that they should take the responsibility of bringing into office the right hon. Member for Buckinghamshire or the party who could utter such cheers on such a subject as that.

Turning from the Member for Birkenhead to the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office, he, who in the case of the acknowledgment of

belligerent rights had proceeded with such remarkable celerity, such undue and unfriendly haste, amply compensated for it when he came to the question of the Alabama, by his slowness of procedure. And this is a strange circumstance, which even the noble Lord's Colleagues have never been able to explain, that although he sent orders to Cork to stop the Alabama if she arrived there, he allowed her afterwards, when she had gone out of the jurisdiction of the Crown in these islands, to go into a dozen or a score of ports belonging to this country in different parts of the world. It seems to me that this is rather a special instance of that feebleness of purpose and of action on the part of the noble Lord which I regret to say has on many occasions done much to mar what would otherwise be a great political career. I will not detain the House on the question of the rams. The hon. Member for Birkenhead, or the firm or the family, or whoever the people are at Birkenhead who do these things, this firm at Birkenhead, after they had seen the peril into which the country was drifting on account of the Alabama, proceeded most audaciously to build those two rams; and it was only at the very last moment, when on the eve of a war with the

United States on account of those rams, that the Government happily had the courage to seize them, and thus the last danger was averted.

I suppose there are some shipowners here. I know there are many in London--there are many in Liverpool--what would be the feeling in this country if they suffered in this way from ships built in the United States? There is a shipowner in New York, Mr. Lowe, a member of the Chamber of Commerce of New York. He had three large ships destroyed by the Alabama; and the George Griswold, which came to this country freighted with a heavy cargo of provisions of various kinds for the suffering people of Lancashire, was destroyed on her return passage, and the ship that destroyed it may have been, and I believe was, built by these patriotic shipbuilders of Birkenhead. These are things that must rankle in the breast of a country which is subjected to such losses and indignities. Even to-day I see in the newspapers that a vessel that went out from this country has destroyed ten or eleven ships between the Cape of Good Hope and Australia. I have thought it unnecessary to bring continually American questions before the House, as some Gentlemen have done during the last two or three Sessions. They should have asked a few questions in regard to these ships; but no, they asked no question upon these points. They asked questions upon every point on which they thought they might embarrass the Government and make the great difficulties of the Government greater in all their transactions with the United States.

But the Members of the Government have not been wise. I hope it will not be thought that I am unnecessarily critical if I say that Governments are not generally very wise. Two years ago the noble Lord at the head of the Government and the Attorney-General addressed the House. I asked the noble Lord--I do not often ask him for anything--to speak, if only for five minutes, words of generosity and sympathy to the Government and people of the United States. He did not do it. Perhaps I was foolish to expect it. The Attorney-General made a most able speech. It was the only time that I have listened to him, ever since I have known him in this House, with pain, for I thought his speech was full of bad morals and bad law. I am quite certain that he even gave an account of the facts of the case which was not as ingenuous and fair as the House had a right to expect from him. Next Session the noble Lord and the Attorney-General turned quite round. They had a different story about the same transaction, and gradually, as the aspect of things was changed on the

other side of the Atlantic, there has been a gradual return to good sense and fairness, not only on the part of Members upon the Treasury Bench, but on that of other Members of the House.

Now, Sir, I would not willingly say a word that would wound either the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office or the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because I do not know amongst the official statesmen of this country two men for whom I have greater sympathy or more respect; but I have to complain of them. I do not know why it is that they both go down to Newcastle--a town in which I feel a great interest--and there give forth words of offence and unwisdom. I know that what the noble Lord said was all very smart, but really it was not true, and I have not much respect for a thing that is merely smart and is not true. The Chancellor of the Exchequer made a statement too. The papers made it appear that he did it with exultation; but that is a mistake. But he made a statement, and though I do not know what will be in his Budget, I know his wishes in regard to that statement--namely, that he had never made it.

Those Gentlemen, bear in mind, sit, as it were, on a hill; they are not obscure men, making speeches in a public-house or even at a respectable mechanics' institution; they are men whose voice is heard wherever the English language is known. And knowing that, and knowing what effect their speeches will have, especially in Lancashire, where men are in trade, and where profits and losses are affected by the words of statesmen, they use the language of which I complain; and beyond this, for I can conceive some idea of the irritation those statements must have caused in the United States. I might refer to the indiscriminating abuse of the hon. and learned Gentleman the Member for Sheffield; and I may add to that the unsleeping ill-will of the noble Lord the Member for Stamford. I am not sure that these two Members of the House are in the least degree converted yet. I think I heard the hon. Member for Sheffield utter to-night some ejaculation that looked as if he retained all his old sentiments. [Mr. Roebuck: 'Exactly.'] I am sorry it is so. I did expect that these things would be regretted and repented of; and I must express my hope that if any one of you who have been thus ungenerous shall ever fall into trouble of any kind that you will find your friends more kind and more just than you have been to your fellow-countrymen--for I will still call them so--at the other side of the Atlantic. And as to the press, Sir, I think it is unnecessary to say much about that, because every night those unfortunate writers are now endeavouring to back out of everything they have been saying; and I can only hope that their power for evil in future will be greatly lessened by the stupendous exhibition of ignorance and folly which they have made to the world.

Now, Sir, having made this statement, I suppose the noble Lord the Member for Stamford, if he were to get up after me, would say: 'Well, if all this be true--if we have done all these injurious things, if we have created all this irritation in the United States--will it not be likely that this irritation will provoke a desire for vengeance, and that the chances of war are greatly increased by it?' I do not know whether the chances of war are increased, but I will say that not only is war not certain, but it is to the last degree improbable.

But, Sir, there is another side to this question. All England is not included in the rather general condemnation which I have thought it my duty to express. There is another side. Looking to our own population, what have the millions been saying and doing--the millions you are so much afraid of?--especially the noble Lord the Member for Stamford, who

objects to the transference of power to those millions from those who now hold it, and, from his position, naturally objects. I beg leave to tell the House that, taking the counties of Lancashire and Yorkshire--your great counties of population--the millions of men there, whose industry has not only created but sustains the fabric of your national power, have had no kind of sympathy with the views which I have been condemning. They have been more generous and more wise; they have shown that magnanimity and love of freedom are not extinct. And, speaking of the county from which I come--the county of many sorrows, whose griefs have hung like a dark cloud over almost every heart during the last three years--all the attempts which the agents of the Confederacy have made there by money, by printing, by platform speeches, by agitation, have utterly failed to get from that population one expression of sympathy with the American insurrection. And, Sir, if the bond of union and friendship between England and America shall remain unbroken, we shall not have to thank the wealthy and the cultivated, but those laborious millions whom statesmen and historians too frequently take little account of. They know a little of the United States, which Gentlemen opposite and some on this side the House do not appear to know. They know that every man of them would be better off on the American continent, if he chose to go there, and would be welcome to every right and privilege that the people there are in possession of. They know further that every man may have from the United States Government a free gift of 160 acres of the most fertile land in the world. [A laugh.] I do not understand that laugh, but the gift, under the Homestead Act of America, of 160 acres of land is a great deal for a man who has no land. I can tell you that the Homestead Act and the liberality of the American Government have had a great effect upon the population of the North of England, and I can tell you further--that the labouring population of this country--the artisans and the mechanics--will never join heartily in any policy which is intended to estrange the people of the United States from the people of the United Kingdom.

But, Sir, we have other securities for peace which are not less than these, and I find them in the character of the Government and people of the American Union. I think the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Buckinghamshire (Mr. Disraeli) referred to what must reasonably be supposed to happen in case this rebellion should be put down--that when a nation is exhausted it will not rush rashly into a new struggle. The loss of life has been great, the loss of treasure enormous. Happily for them, this life and this treasure have not been sacrificed to keep a Bourbon on the throne of France, or to keep the Turks in Europe; the sacrifice was for an object which every man could comprehend, which every man could examine by the light of his own intelligence and his own conscience; for if these men have given their lives and their possessions, it was for the attainment of a great end, the maintenance of the unity and integrity of a great country. History in future time must be written in a different spirit from all history in the past, if it should express any condemnation of that people. Mr. Lincoln, who is now for the second time President of the United States, was elected exclusively by what was termed the Republican party. He is now elected by what may be called the Great Union party of the nation. But Mr. Lincoln's party has always been for peace. That party in the North has never carried on any war of aggression, and has never desired one. I speak of the North only, the Free States. And let the House remember that in that country landed property, property of all kind, is more universally distributed than in any other nation, that instruction and school education are also more widely diffused there than amongst any other people. I say, they have never carried on hitherto a war for

aggrandizement or for vengeance, and I believe they will not begin one now.

Canada, I think the noble Lord will admit, is a very tempting bait, not indeed for the purpose of annexation, but for the purpose of humiliating this country. I agree with hon. Gentlemen who have said that it would be discreditable to England, in the light of her past history, that she should leave any portion of her Empire which she could defend, undefended. But still it is admitted--and I think the speech of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Calne (Mr. Lowe) produced a great effect upon those who heard it--the House admitted that in case of war with the United States, Canada could not be defended by any power on land or at sea which this country could raise or spare for that purpose. I am very sorry, not that we cannot defend Canada, but that any portion of the dominions of the British Crown is in such circumstances as to tempt evil-disposed people to attack it with the view of humiliating us, because I believe that transactions which humiliate a Government and a nation are not only disagreeable, but a great national harm.

But, now, is there a war party in the United States? I believe there is such a party. It is that party which was a war party eighty years ago. It is the party represented by hon. Gentlemen who sit on that bench--the Irish party. They who are hostile to this country in the United States are those who were recently malcontent subjects of the right hon. Gentleman the Member for Tamworth. It is these, and such as these, to whom the noble Lord at the head of the Government offers only such consolation as that of telling them that 'the rights of the tenants are the wrongs of the landlords,' who constitute the only war party in the United States; and it was the war party there in the days of Lord North. But the real power of the United States does not rest on that class. American mobs--and, excepting some portion of the population of New York, I would not apply the language even to them--for the sake of forcing their Congress and their Executive to a particular course, are altogether unknown. The real mob in your sense, is that party of chivalrous gentlemen in the South, who have received, I am sorry to say, so much sympathy from some persons in this country and in this House. But the real power depends upon another class--the landowners throughout the country, and there are millions of them. In this last election for President of the United States, I was told by a citizen of New York, who was most active in the election, that in the State of New York alone 100,000 Irish votes were given, as he expressed it, solidly--that is, in one mass--for General M'Clellan, and that not more than 2,000 were given for President Lincoln. You see the preponderance of that party in the city of New York, and that is the feeling amongst them throughout the State of New York; but, throughout the whole of the United States, it is merely a small per-centage, which has no sensible effect upon the constitution of Congress, or upon legislation or government.

My hon. Friend the Member for Bradford (Mr. W. E. Forster) referred to a point which I suppose has really been the cause of this debate, and that is the temper of the United States in making certain demands upon our Government. I asked a question the other night after the noble Lord had asked a question upon the subject--I asked whether we had not claims against them. I understand that claims were made upon us by the United States amounting to 300,000_l_ or 400,000_l_. I am afraid that we have claims against them, amounting probably to as much as that. If any man thinks he has a right to go to law with another, and that other has an answer to his claim, the case must be heard. And so between two great nations and two free Governments. If one has claims against

the other, and the other has counter claims, clearly nothing can be more fair than that those claims should be courteously and honestly considered. It is quite absurd to suppose that the English Government and the Government at Washington can have a question about half a million of money which they cannot amicably settle. The noble Lord, I believe, thinks it is not a question for arbitration, but that it is a question of principle. Well, all questions of property almost are questions of law, and you go to a lawyer and settle them if you can. In this case it would be surely as easy to have the matter settled by some impartial person as it was to ask the Senate or other authority at Hamburg to settle a question between this country and the Empire of Brazil. Our most perfect security is, that as the war in America draws to a close--if it should happily soon draw to a close--we shall become more generous to them, and their Government and people will probably become less irritated towards us. And when the passions have cooled down, I am quite sure that Mr. Seward on that side and Earl Russell on this, Mr. Adams here and Sir Frederick Bruce there, will be able, without much difficulty, to settle this, which is, after all, an unimportant matter, as a question of accounts between the two nations.

I have only one more observation to make, and it is this--I suspect the root of all the unfortunate circumstances that have occurred is the feeling of jealousy which we have cherished with regard to the American nation. It was very much shown at the beginning of this war, when a Member whom I will not name, for I am sure his wish is that his name should not be mentioned in connection with it now, spoke of the bursting of the bubble republic. I recollect that Lord John Russell, as he then was speaking from that bench, turned round and rebuked him in language which was worthy of his name, and character, and position. I beg to tell that Gentleman, and anybody else who talks about a bubble republic, that I have a strong suspicion he will see that a great many bubbles will burst before that. Why should we fear a great nation on the American continent? Some people fear that, should America become a great nation, she will be arrogant and aggressive. It does not follow that it should be so. The character of a nation does not depend altogether upon its size, but upon the instruction, the civilization, and the morals of its people. You fancy the supremacy of the sea will pass away from you; and the noble Lord, who has had much experience, and is supposed to be wiser on the subject than any other man in the House, will say that 'Rule Britannia' may become obsolete. Well, inasmuch as the supremacy of the seas means arrogance and the assumption of a dictatorial power on the part of this country, the sooner that becomes obsolete the better. I do not believe that it is for the advantage of this country, or of any country in the world, that any one nation should pride itself upon what is termed the supremacy of the sea; and I hope the time is coming--I believe the hour is hastening--when we shall find that law and justice will guide the councils and will direct the policy of the Christian nations of the world. Nature will not be baffled because we are jealous of the United States--the decrees of Providence will not be overthrown by aught we can do.

The population of the United States is now not less than 35,000,000. When the next Parliament of England has lived to the age which this has lived to, that population will be 40,000,000, and you may calculate the increase at the rate of rather more than 1,000,000 of persons per year. Who is to gainsay it? Will constant snarling at a great republic alter this state of things, or swell us up in these islands to 40,000,000 or 50,000,000, or bring them down to our 30,000,000? Hon. Members and the country at large should consider these facts, and learn from them that

it is the interest of the nations to be at one--and for us to be in perfect courtesy and amity with the great English nation on the other side of the Atlantic. I am sure that the longer that nation exists the less will our people be disposed to sustain you in any needless hostility against them or jealousy of them. And I am the more convinced of this from what I have seen of the conduct of the people in the north of England during the last four years. I believe, on the other hand, that the American people, when this excitement is over, will be willing, so far as aggressive acts against us are concerned, to bury in oblivion transactions which have given them much pain, and that they will make the allowance which they may fairly make, that the people of this country--even those high in rank and distinguished in culture--have had a very inadequate knowledge of the real state of the events which have taken place in that country since the beginning of the war.

It is on record that when the author of The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire was about to begin his great work, David Hume wrote a letter to him urging him not to employ the French but the English tongue, 'because' he said, 'our establishments in America promise superior stability and duration to the English language.' How far that promise has been in part fulfilled we who are living now can see; but how far it will be more largely and more completely fulfilled in after times we must leave after times to tell. I believe that in the centuries which are to come it will be the greatest pride and the highest renown of England that from her loins have sprung a hundred millions--it may be two hundred millions--of men who dwell and prosper on that continent which the grand old Genoese gave to Europe. Sir, if the sentiments which I have uttered shall become the sentiments of the Parliament and people of the United Kingdom--if the moderation which I have described shall mark the course of the Government and of the people of the United States--then, notwithstanding some present irritation and some present distrust--and I have faith both in us and in them--I believe that these two great commonwealths will march abreast, the parents and the guardians of freedom and justice, wheresoever their language shall be spoken and their power shall extend.

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CANADA.

II.

THE CANADIAN FORTIFICATIONS.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 23, 1865.

I shall ask the attention of the House for only a few moments. If the hon. Member (Mr. Bentinck) divides, I shall go into the same lobby with him. I am afraid that, in making that announcement, I shall excite some little alarm in the mind of the hon. Gentleman. I wish therefore to say, that I shall not in going into the lobby agree with him in many of the statements he has made. The right hon. Gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) said, that he approached the military question with great diffidence, and I was very glad to see any signs of diffidence in that quarter. After that explanation, he asked the House with a triumphant air whether there is any difficulty in defending a frontier of one thousand or fifteen hundred miles, and whether the practicability of doing so is a new doctrine in warfare. But one thousand or fifteen hundred miles of frontier to defend at the centre of your power, is one thing; but at three thousand or four thousand miles from the centre, it is an entirely

different thing. I venture to say, that there is not a man in this House, or a sensible man out of it, who, apart from the consideration of this vote, or some special circumstances attending it, believes that the people of this country could attempt a successful defence of the frontier of Canada against the whole power of the United States. I said the other night, that I hoped we should not now talk folly, and hereafter, in the endeavour to be consistent, act folly. We all know perfectly well that we are talking folly when we say that the Government of this country would send either ships or men to make an effectual defence of Canada against the power of the United States, supposing war to break out. Understand, I am not in the least a believer in the probability of war, but I will discuss the question for one moment as if war were possible. I suppose some men in this House think it probable. But if it be possible or probable, and if you have to look this difficulty in the face, there is no extrication from it but in the neutrality or independence of Canada.

I agree with those Members who say that it is the duty of a great empire to defend every portion of it. I admit that as a general proposition, though hon. Gentlemen opposite, and some on this side, do not apply that rule to the United States. But, admitting that rule, and supposing that we are at all points unprepared for such a catastrophe, may we not, as reasonable men, look ahead, and try if it be not possible to escape from it? [An hon. Member: 'Run away?'] No, not by running away, though there are many circumstances in which brave men run away; and you may get into difficulty on this Canadian question, which may make you look back and wish that you had run away a good time ago. I object to this vote on a ground which, I believe, has not been raised by any Member in the present discussion. I am not going to say that the expenditure of fifty thousand pounds is a matter of great consequence to this country, that the expenditure of this money in the proposed way will be taken as a menace by the United States. I do not think that this can be fairly said; for whether building fortifications at Quebec be useless or not, such a proceeding is not likely to enable the Canadians to overrun the State of New York. The United States, I think, will have no right to complain of this expenditure. The utmost it can do will be to show them that some persons, and perhaps the Government of this country, have some little distrust of them, and so far it may do injury. I complain of the expenditure and the policy announced by the Colonial Secretary, on a ground which I thought ought to have been urged by the noble Lord the Member for Wick, who is a sort of half-Canadian. He made a speech which I listened to with great pleasure, and told the House what some of us, perhaps, did not know before; but if I had been connected, as he is, with Canada, I would have addressed the House from a Canadian point of view.

What is it that the Member for Oxford says? He states, in reference to the expenditure for the proposed fortifications, that, though a portion of the expenditure is to be borne by us, the main portion is to be borne by Canada; but I venture to tell him, that, if there shall be any occasion to defend Canada at all, it will not arise from anything Canada does, but from what England does; and therefore I protest against the doctrine that the Cabinet in London may get into difficulties, and ultimately into war, with the Cabinet at Washington; that because Canada lies adjacent to the United States, and may consequently become a great battle-field, this United Kingdom has a right to call on Canada for the main portion of that expenditure. Who has asked you to spend fifty thousand pounds, and the hundreds of thousands which may be supposed to follow, but which perhaps Parliament may be indisposed hereafter to

grant? What is the proportion which Canada is to bear? If we are to spend two hundred thousand pounds at Quebec, is Canada to spend four hundred thousand pounds at Montreal? If Canada is to spend double whatever we may spend, is it not obvious that every Canadian will ask himself--what is the advantage of the connection between Canada and England?

Every Canadian knows perfectly well, and nobody better than the noble Lord the Member for Wick, that there is no more prospect of a war between Canada and the United States alone, than between the Empire of France and the Isle of Man. If that is so, why should the Canadians be taxed beyond all reason, as the Colonial Secretary proposes to tax them, for a policy not Canadian, and for a calamity which, if ever it occurs, must occur from some transactions between England and the United States? There are Gentlemen here who know a good deal of Canada, and I see behind me one who knows perfectly well what is the condition of the Canadian finances. We complain that Canada levies higher duties on British manufactures than the United States did before the present war, and much higher than France does. But when we complain to Canada of this, and say it is very unpleasant usage from a part of our empire, the Canadians reply that their expenditure is so much, and their debt, with the interest on it, so much, that they are obliged to levy these heavy duties. If the Canadian finances are in the unfortunate position described; if the credit of Canada is not very good in the market of this country; if you see what are the difficulties of the Canadians during a period of peace; consider what will be their difficulties if the doctrine of the Colonial Secretary be carried out, which is that whatever expenditure is necessary for the defence of Canada, though we bear a portion, the main part must be borne by Canada.

We must then come to this inevitable conclusion. Every Canadian will say, 'We are close alongside of a great nation; our parent state is three thousand miles away; there are litigious, and there may be even warlike, people in both nations, and they may occasion the calamity of a great war; we are peaceable people, having no foreign politics, happily; we may be involved in war, and while the cities of Great Britain are not touched by a single shell, nor one of its fields ravaged, there is not a city or a village in this Canada in which we live which will not be liable to the ravages of war on the part of our powerful neighbour.' Therefore the Canadians will say, unless they are unlike all other Englishmen (who appear to have more sense the farther they go from their own country), that it would be better for Canada to be disentangled from the politics of England, and to assume the position of an independent state.

I suspect from what has been stated by official Gentlemen in the present Government and in previous Governments, that there is no objection to the independence of Canada whenever Canada may wish it. I have been glad to hear those statements, because I think they mark an extraordinary progress in sound opinions in this country. I recollect the noble Lord at the head of the Foreign Office on one occasion being very angry with me, he said I wished to make a great empire less; but a great empire, territorially, may be lessened without its power and authority in the world being diminished. I believe if Canada now, by a friendly separation from this country, became an independent state, choosing its own form of government--monarchical, if it liked a monarchy, or republican, if it preferred a republic--it would not be less friendly to England, and its tariff would not be more adverse to our manufactures than it is now. In the case of a war with America, Canada would then be

a neutral country; and the population would be in a state of greater security. Not that I think there is any fear of war, but the Government admit that it may occur by their attempt to obtain money for these fortifications. I object, therefore, to this vote, not on that account, nor even because it causes some distrust, or may cause it, in the United States; but I object to it mainly because I think we are commencing a policy which we shall either have to abandon, because Canada will not submit to it, or else which will bring upon Canada a burden in the shape of fortification expenditure that will make her more and more dissatisfied with this country, and that will lead rapidly to her separation from us. I do not object to that separation in the least; I believe it would be better for us and better for her. But I think that, of all the misfortunes which could happen between us and Canada, this would be the greatest, that her separation should take place after a period of irritation and estrangement, and that we should have on that continent to meet another element in some degree hostile to this country.

I am sorry, Sir, that the noble Lord at the head of the Government, and his colleagues, have taken this course; but it appears to me to be wonderfully like almost everything which the Government does. It is a Government apparently of two parts, the one part pulling one way and the other part pulling another, and the result generally is something which does not please anybody, or produce any good effect in any direction. They now propose a scheme which has just enough in it to create distrust and irritation, enough to make it in some degree injurious, and they do not do enough to accomplish any of the objects for which, according to their statements, the proposition is made. Somebody asked the other night whether the Administration was to rule, or the House of Commons. Well, I suspect from the course of the debates, that on this occasion the Administration will be allowed to rule. We are accustomed to say that the Government suggests a thing on its own responsibility, and therefore we will allow them to do it. But the fact is, that the Government knows no more of this matter than any other dozen gentlemen in this House. They are not a bit more competent to form an opinion upon it. They throw it down on the table, and ask us to discuss and vote it.

I should be happy to find the House, disregarding all the intimations that war is likely, anxious not to urge Canada into incurring an expenditure which she will not bear, and which, if she will not bear, must end in one of two things--either in throwing the whole burden upon us, or in breaking up, perhaps suddenly and in anger, the connection between us and that colony, and in making our future relations with her most unsatisfactory. I do not place much reliance on the speech of the right honourable Member for Buckinghamshire, not because he cannot judge of the question just as well as I or any one of us can do, but because I notice that in matters of this kind Gentlemen on that (the Opposition) bench, whatever may have been their animosities towards the Gentlemen on this (the Treasury) bench on other questions, shake hands. They may tell you that they have no connection with the House over the way, but the fact is, their connection is most intimate. And if the right honourable Member for Buckinghamshire were now sitting on the Treasury bench, and the noble Viscount were sitting opposite to him, the noble Viscount, I have no doubt, would give him the very same support that he now receives from the right hon. Gentleman.

This seems to me a question so plain, so much on the surface, appealing so much to our common sense, having in it such great issues for the future, that I am persuaded it is the duty of the House of Commons on

this occasion to take the matter out of the hands of the executive Government, and to determine that, with regard to the future policy of Canada, we will not ourselves expend the money of the English tax-payers, and not force upon the tax-payers of Canada a burden which, I am satisfied, they will not long continue to bear.

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CANADA.

III.

THE CANADIAN CONFEDERATION SCHEME.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEBRUARY 28, 1867.

Although this measure has not excited much interest in the House or in the country, yet it appears to me to be of such very great importance that it should be treated rather differently, or that the House should be treated rather differently in respect to it. I have never before known of any great measure affecting any large portion of the empire or its population which has been brought in and attempted to be hurried through Parliament in the manner in which this bill is being dealt with. The importance of it is much greater to the inhabitants of those provinces than it is to us. It is on that account alone that it might be expected we should examine it closely, and see that we commit no error in passing it.

The right hon. Gentleman has not offered us, on one point, an explanation which I think he will be bound to make. This bill does not include the whole of the British North American Provinces. I presume the two left out have been left out because it is quite clear they did not wish to come in. [Mr. Adderley: 'I am glad I can inform the hon. Gentleman that they are, one of them at least, on the point of coming in.'] Yes; the reason of their being left out is because they were not willing to come in. They may hereafter become willing, and if so the bill will admit them by a provision which appears reasonable. But the province of Nova Scotia is also unwilling to come in, and it is assumed that because some time ago the Legislature of that province voted a resolution partly in favour of some such course, therefore the population is in favour of it.

For my part, I do not believe in the propriety or wisdom of the Legislature voting on a great question of this nature with reference to the Legislature of Nova Scotia, if the people of Nova Scotia have never had the question directly put to them. I have heard there is at present in London a petition complaining of the hasty proceeding of Parliament, and asking for delay, signed by 31,000 adult males of the province of Nova Scotia, and that that petition is in reality signed by at least half of all the male inhabitants of that province. So far as I know, the petition does not protest absolutely against union, but against the manner in which it is being carried out by this scheme and bill, and the hasty measures of the Colonial Office. Now, whether the scheme be a good or bad one, scarcely anything can be more foolish, looking to the future, than that any of the provinces should be dragged into it, either perforce, by the pressure of the Colonial Office, or by any hasty action on the part of Parliament, in the hope of producing a result which probably the populations of those provinces may not wish to see brought about.

I understand that the general election for the Legislature of Nova Scotia, according to the constitution of that colony, will take place in the month of May or June next; that this question has never been fairly placed before the people of that province at an election, and that it has never been discussed and decided by the people; and seeing that only three months or not so much will elapse before there will be an opportunity of ascertaining the opinions of the population of Nova Scotia, I think it is at least a hazardous proceeding to pass this bill through Parliament, binding Nova Scotia, until the clear opinion of that province has been ascertained. If, at a time like this, when you are proposing a union which we all hope is to last for ever, you create a little sore, it will in all probability become a great sore in a short time, and it may be that the intentions of Parliament will be almost entirely frustrated by the haste with which this measure is being pushed forward.

The right hon. Gentleman the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I think, in the early part of the evening, in answer to a question from this side, spoke of this matter as one of extreme urgency. Well, I cannot discover any urgency in the matter at all. What is urgent is this, that when done it ought to be done wisely, and with the full and free consent of all those populations who are to be bound by this Act and interested in its results. Unless the good-will of those populations is secured, in all probability the Act itself will be a misfortune rather than a blessing to the provinces to which it refers.

The right hon. Gentleman amused me in one part of his speech. He spoke of the filial piety--rather a curious term--of these provinces, and their great anxiety to make everything suit the ideas of this country; and this was said particularly with reference to the proposition for a Senate selected, not elected, for life, by the Governor-General of Canada. He said they were extremely anxious to follow as far as possible the institutions of the mother country. I have not the smallest objection to any people on the face of the earth following our institutions if they like them. Institutions which suit one country, as we all know, are not very likely to suit every other country. With regard to this particular case, the right hon. Gentleman said it is to be observed that Canada has had a nominated council, and has changed it for an elected one, and that surely they had a right if they pleased to go back from an elected council to a nominated council. Well, nobody denies that, but nobody pretends that the people of Canada prefer a nominated council to an elected council. And all the wisdom of the wise men to whom the right hon. gentleman the member for Oxford has referred in such glowing terms, unless the experience of present and past times goes for nothing, is but folly if they have come to the conclusion that a nominated council on that continent must be better than an elected council. Still, if they wish it, I should not interfere and try to prevent it. But I venture to say that the clause enabling the Governor-General and his Cabinet to put seventy men in that council for life inserts into the whole scheme the germ of a malady which will spread, and which before very long will require an alteration of this Act and of the constitution of this new Confederation.

But the right hon. Gentleman went on to say that with regard to the representative assembly--which, I suppose, is to be called according to his phrase the House of Commons--they have adopted a very different plan. There they have not followed the course of this country. They have established their House of Representatives directly upon the basis of population. They have adopted the system which prevails in the United

States, which upon every ten years' summing up of the census in that country the number of members may be changed, and is by law changed in the different States and districts as the rate of population may have changed. Therefore, in that respect his friends in Canada have not adopted the principle which prevails in this country, but that which prevails in the United States. I believe they have done that which is right, and which they have a right to do, and which is inevitable there. I regret very much that they have not adopted another system with regard to their council or senate, because I am satisfied--I have not a particle of doubt with regard to it that we run a great danger of making this Act work ill almost from the beginning.

They have the example of thirty-six States in the United States, in which the Senate is elected, and no man, however sanguine, can hope that seventy-two stereotyped provincial peers in Canada will work harmoniously with a body elected upon a system so wide and so general as that which prevails in the States of the American Union. There is one point about which the right hon. Gentleman said nothing, and which I think is so very important that the Member for Oxford, his predecessor in office, might have told us something about it. We know that Canada is a great country, and we know that the population is, or very soon will be, something like 4,000,000, and we may hope that, united under one government, the province may be more capable of defence. But what is intended with regard to the question of defence? Is everything to be done for the province? Is it intended to garrison its fortresses by English troops? At the present moment there are, I believe, in the province 12,000 or 15,000 men.

There are persons in this country, and there are some also in the North American provinces, who are ill-natured enough to say that not a little of the loyalty that is said to prevail in Canada has its price. I think it is natural and reasonable to hope that there is in that country a very strong attachment to this country. But if they are to be constantly applying to us for guarantees for railways, and for grants for fortresses, and for works of defence, then I think it would be far better for them and for us--cheaper for us and less demoralising for them--that they should become an independent State, and maintain their own fortresses, fight their own cause, and build up their own future without relying upon us. And when we know, as everybody knows, that the population of Canada is in a much better position as regards the comforts of home, than is the great bulk of the population of this country, I say the time has come when it ought to be clearly understood that the taxes of England are no longer to go across the ocean to defray expenses of any kind within the Confederation which is about to be formed.

The right hon. Gentleman has never been an advocate for great expenditure in the colonies by the mother country. On the contrary, he has been one of the members of this House who have distinguished themselves by what I will call an honest system for the mother country, and what I believe is a wise system for the colonies. But I think that when a measure of this kind is being passed, having such stupendous results upon the condition and the future population of these great colonies, we have a right to ask that there should be some consideration for the revenue and for the taxpayers of this country. In discussing this Bill with the delegates from the provinces, I think it was the duty of the Colonial Secretary to have gone fairly into this question, and, if possible, to have arranged it to the advantage of the colony and the mother country.

I believe there is no delusion greater than this--that there is any party in the United States that wishes to commit any aggression upon Canada, or to annex Canada by force to the United States. There is not a part of the world, in my opinion, that runs less risk of aggression than Canada, except with regard to that foolish and impotent attempt of certain discontented not-long-ago subjects of the Queen, who have left this country. America has no idea of anything of the kind. No American statesman, no American political party, dreams for a moment of an aggression upon Canada, or of annexing Canada by force. And therefore, every farthing that

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