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Relations between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies were discussed in Great Britain in the 1880s almost exclusively in terms of the imperial federationists' assumption that confederation was the only alternative to separation. The ties with Great Britain began to be questioned in the Australian Colonies in the mid-1880s when the colonies' progress towards nationhood became more marked and British policy appeared to be disregarding vital Australian interests. Only a minority in the 1880s and 1890s wanted to see an independent Australia; but the majority rejected the institution of new and more formal ties with Great Britain. They emphasised colonial powers of self-government, including the right to determine the composition of the population of Australia and the interpretation of the Commonwealth constitution, and they insisted that Australian interests, such as those in the South Pacific, must be safeguarded in British foreign policy.

The practical working relations between the Imperial and the Australian Colonial and Commonwealth Governments from 1885 to 1902, and the meeting of three Colonial Conferences in London during that period, showed that the supposed alternatives of imperial federation and separation did not exist. From 1885 onwards, the Colonial Office tried wherever possible to meet the demands of the Colonial Governments for further concessions of imperial supremacy, such as the exercise of prerogative
powers by the Governors solely on the advice of their ministers, the removal of statutory disabilities on the imposition of differential tariffs and the sanctioning of colonial legislation which might affect the foreign relations of the Crown. The Colonial Office also urged the Foreign Office to defend Australian interests in Britain's relations with other European powers in the South Pacific and in agreements with China and Japan. By means of the Agents-General, the Colonial Governments could impress their views at first hand, and more forcefully than through the Governors, on the Colonial Office.

No official attempt was made to encourage the colonies to adopt closer ties with Britain until the 1897 Colonial Conference. The strength of imperial sentiment in Great Britain and in the colonies encouraged a more determined attempt during the 1902 Conference. By that time, the Australian Colonies and the Commonwealth had shown that they recognised voluntary obligations to the Empire, such as the support they had given to British policy in the Sudan in 1885 and especially in South Africa between 1899 and 1902. They had rejected more formal political ties, inter-imperial free trade and specific commitments in imperial defence; but limited objectives and achievements, such as the naval agreements of 1887 and 1902, helped to ensure the permanence of the existing loose ties between Great Britain and Australia. At the same time, Australia's growth and development had been encouraged.
As from:
School of Historical Studies,
Macquarie University,
North Ryde,
N.S.W. 2113.

I July, 1971

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Your letter of 12 January has been forwarded to me from the University of Western Australia. As I am engaged in revising my doctoral thesis, Australia and British Imperial Policy 1885-1902, with a view to publication, I am reluctant to allow it to be used in its present form. I feel that I must therefore withhold permission for its use until my revision work is completed.

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Kathleen J. Melhuish
AUSTRALIA AND BRITISH IMPERIAL POLICY: COLONIAL AUTONOMY AND
THE IMPERIAL IDEA, 1885-1902

Kathleen J. Melhuish

Thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, May, 1965.
PREFACE

Ideas on the nature of the imperial connection in the latter decades of the nineteenth century, and on desirable policies for Great Britain and the Australian Colonies to follow, have already been examined in some detail. Among these views, those of the imperial federationists in Great Britain and of the radical groups and the Labour Parties in the Australian Colonies have been given most attention. The policies actually adopted and put into practice by the Imperial Government and the Australian Colonial Governments between 1885 and 1902 have been studied in much less detail. A study of these policies, and of the connection between government policy and the various views on policy, seemed necessary. A study of this nature is what I have attempted.

In looking at the problem of relations between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies, I have placed greater emphasis on policy, and on the mainsprings of policy, on both the imperial and the colonial side than on the various attitudes towards existing and future imperial ties. I have also tried to give more attention than has been given in the past to the initiative that sometimes came from the Australian Colonies towards the formulation of imperial policy. In addition, I have looked to some extent at relations between the Australian Colonies and the other self-governing colonies. A study of this nature seemed particularly desirable when full use could be made of the Colonial Office records, the confidential proceedings of the Colonial
Conferences of 1897 and 1902, and the records of the Australian Commonwealth and State Governments.

In comparison with official records, there is a paucity of private papers, either in existence or open for general use, of Australian statesmen, politicians and others who helped to shape Australian attitudes and the policies of the Australian Colonies. This is to be regretted because a full or even a satisfactory assessment of beliefs, intentions and personality cannot be made from public speeches and published writings. G.H. Reid and C.C. Kingston are particular cases in point. Of necessity on the British side, Chamberlain, Salisbury and others have had to be approached through official papers, biographical studies and published sources instead of through first hand use of the collections of their personal papers.

Some of the official records and the collections of other manuscript material used for this study were found in the Mitchell Library and in the Dixon Collection of the Public Library of New South Wales, the Public Library of Victoria, the Oxley Memorial Library of Queensland, the Commonwealth National Library in Canberra, the South Australian Archives and the National Archives of New Zealand. Among those to whom I am indebted for their help in locating material, I particularly wish to acknowledge the assistance given to me by Mr. H. J. Gibbney, Senior Archivist, Commonwealth National Library; Mr. M. W. Standish, National Archives, Wellington; Mr. H. Nunn, Archivist in the Public Library
of Victoria; and by Mr. J. McLellan, Archivist in the Public Library of South Australia, for requesting the Under-Secretary of the Chief Secretary's Office to make records still held by that department available to me.

In those cases where official records are still held by government authorities, I should like to acknowledge the readiness with which access to these records was granted to me by Mr. A. Mahlsted, the Official Secretary to the Governor of Victoria; Major-General G.W. Symes, C.B., M.C., the Private Secretary to the Governor of South Australia; Sir John Jungwirth, the Secretary to the Premier's Department, Melbourne; and Mr. C. C. Smith, the Director of Posts and Telegraphs, G.P.O., Sydney; and also by Professor G. Greenwood to use the Queensland Government House Papers on loan to the Department of History, University of Queensland. I should also like to thank Mr. R. B. Joyce, of the Department of History in the University of Queensland, for his assistance in obtaining access to the Chief Secretary's records which were then held by the Queensland Department of Health and Home Affairs.

Above all, my thanks are due to Miss M. G. Jacobs. I have benefited greatly from discussions with her on the problems of research and interpretation; and I owe much to her for the time she generously gave to careful readings as the chapters took shape. Finally, I wish to express my thanks to Professor A. G. L. Shaw for the helpful comments and suggestions I have received from him on a number of occasions.
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ABBREVIATIONS

A.G. Agent-General
C.D.C. Colonial Defence Committee
C.N.L. Commonwealth National Library, Canberra
C.O. Colonial Office
Col. Sec. Colonial Secretary (in the N.S.W. and Queensland Governments)
Col. Treas. Colonial Treasurer (in the N.S.W. and other Colonial Governments)
C.P Correspondence and Papers (in the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Dept. records)
C.S.O. Chief Secretary's Office (South Australia and Queensland)
F.O. Foreign Office
I.F.L. Imperial Federation League
L.O. Law Officers of the Crown
M.L. Mitchell Library, Sydney
P.M. Dept. Prime Minister's Dept.
P.R.O. Public Record Office, London
Proc. Minutes of Proceedings of the Colonial Conferences
R.C.I. Royal Colonial Institute
S.M.H. Sydney Morning Herald
V. and P. Votes and Proceedings (of the N.S.W., Victoria and Queensland Parliaments)

REFERENCES

For the sake of convenience, reference has been made as far as possible to the Colonial Office series of Governor's despatches etc. in the Public Record Office. Where despatches from the Governors and the drafts of replies were not found in the Colonial Office records, reference has been made to despatches from the Secretary of State and the letterbooks of Governor's despatches in the Government House Papers of the various States. Reference is then made as far as possible to the N.S.W. Government House Papers if a despatch from the Secretary of State concerned more than one colony. Similarly, for the sake of convenience, the N.S.W. Colonial Secretary's records and the Colonial Treasurer's records have been cited in preference to the records in the other States in cases of correspondence circularised among the State Premiers.
A problem of major significance in Imperial relations faced Great Britain and the self-governing colonies in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. Compatibility had to be sought between imperial and colonial interests so that the exercise of the powers of self-government need not tend towards weakening the relationship between Great Britain and the colonies. It was a dual problem rather than a single one, because it was not viewed from the same angle in the self-governing colonies as it was in Great Britain. In Great Britain the emphasis was increasingly placed on strengthening the links between the mother country and the self-governing colonies so that the centrifugal tendencies arising from colonial self-government might be overcome. The common interests and responsibilities which Great Britain and the colonies shared as parts of the Empire would then have pride of place. In the self-governing colonies the emphasis was placed on maintaining and even extending their autonomous powers. The growing external interests of the colonies also had to be safeguarded. For the imperial relationship to continue, a working balance had to be found between these two differing emphases.

As far as Canada is concerned, there is a detailed study of that Dominion's relations with Great Britain in the period 1867 to 1887. Certain aspects of Australian attitudes towards the imperial connection have also been examined; but the Australian contribution

2 H.E. Hall, England and Australia (London, 1934); C. Grimshaw, Some Aspects of Australian Attitudes to the Imperial Connection, 1900-1919 (unpublished M.A. thesis in the University of Queensland).
towards solving the problem of encouraging colonial autonomy, and with it self-reliance, and yet ensuring that common interests and feelings would still bind the self-governing colonies to the mother country still merits further study. The purpose of this study is, therefore, to examine some aspects of the relations between the Imperial Government and the Australian Colonial Governments in the period 1885 to 1902. For the most part it is a study of policy, and the varied motives on both sides which influenced the shaping of that policy.

The period 1885 to 1902 may be seen as one of the mutual challenge and response of the imperial idea, on the one hand, and Australian colonial autonomy and interests on the other. Although these years only form a part of a much longer period of development in imperial relations from about 1870, the year 1885 marks the beginning of what may be regarded as a new and important phase in relations between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies. The previous year had seen the formation of the Imperial Federation League, and by that time interest in the Empire had been fairly widely awakened in Great Britain. This interest found a strong stimulus in 1885 when the colony of New South Wales sent a small contingent of troops to assist British forces in the Sudan. At the same time, Australian colonial interests, which might diverge from imperial policy, were being strongly impressed on the Imperial Government in connection with New Guinea, the South Pacific and the naval defence of the Australian Colonies. By 1902 the solutions
to specific aspects of this broad problem in imperial relations emphasised the common as well as the diverse and sometimes seemingly contradictory elements which contributed to imperial unity. At the same time, these solutions did not lessen the powers of colonial self-government in any respect.

The term "imperialism" came into a new use in Great Britain in the late 1870s. Since then its meaning has widened and changed so much that it is now very difficult to define the word with any accuracy. In the following pages, the terms "imperialism" and "imperialist" are used solely in the sense in which the advocates of the retention and strengthening of the ties between the mother country and the self-governing colonies used them in the 1870s and 1880s. In the same context in the 1890s, the two terms acquired a nationalist tinge when the "British race" featured more and more in imperialist writings. The consolidation of the British (or Anglo-Saxon) race was then seen as a means of exercising power in world politics as a stabilising force. This restricted use of the terms "imperialism" and "imperialist" on the whole avoids any reference to more general interpretations of British imperialism. With regard to spheres of influence and new acquisitions of tropical and other non-European territories, the imperialism of Free Trade can be distinguished from that of the late Victorian period. The former was

I The Earl of Carnarvon, "Imperial Administration", in Fortnightly Review, new series vol.xxiv, I Dec., 1878, pp.751-764. Carnarvon saw "the true strength of Imperialism" in the ties which existed between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. (p.763)
an expansionist movement, but at the same time it was consolidationist because the annexation of new territory was avoided as far as possible. The latter was both an expansionist and an annexationist movement. In the 1870s and early 1880s, imperialists, in the scope of the term as applied here to those who were interested in the federation of the Empire, generally confined their interests to the British settlement colonies. Their support for the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877 is the one major exception to this generalisation. In the late 1880s and 1890s, any clear distinction between the federationists and those who advocated further acquisitions of territory is much harder to maintain.

The term "anti-imperialism" is similarly used with an equally restricted meaning. Its use is confined to those who opposed any moves towards strengthening the ties between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. The term "separationists", as used by the imperialists for those they regarded as their opponents, is adopted for the sake of convenience to indicate those who desired or saw no alternative to the eventual and inevitable separation of the self-governing colonies from the mother country.

"Colonial nationalism" is another term which is a convenient one to use, but difficult to define satisfactorily. Over the past half century or so, it has been used in connection with colonies which had a population entirely or predominantly of European origin, and then to describe the awakening of national feeling among non-

I There are also some individual exceptions, e.g. F.P.Labillière, an Anglo-Australian, favoured further British annexation in the Pacific.
European peoples who were subject to a European Power. Any defini-
tion of colonial nationalism must, therefore, be related to a
specific time and place.

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the
growth of new national attributes in the self-governing colonies
affected attitudes towards the imperial connection. The senior
permanent officials in the Colonial Office and their political
chiefs were aware of some of the possible effects of this develop-
ment on imperial relations. Sir Robert Herbert and Sir John And-
erson, among the permanent officials, and Sir Henry Holland and
particularly Joseph Chamberlain, among the Secretaries of State
for the Colonies, showed the keenest appreciation of the possible
force of the new colonial nationalisms. They saw that the appear-
ance of "Young Australia", as they sometimes lightly termed it,
might well affect relations between Great Britain and the Austra-
lian Colonies.

It was not until 1905 that the term "colonial nationalism"
came into common use. In that year Richard Jebb published his
"Studies in Colonial Nationalism". As a result of observations
made during his visits to Canada, Australia and New Zealand
between 1899 and 1902, Jebb claimed that he was showing a new
appreciation of certain elements, and particularly of the role of
colonial nationalism, in the relationship between Great Britain
and the self-governing colonies. With the possible exception of

I R. Jebb, Studies in Colonial Nationalism (London, 1905), preface
pp. vii-viii.
Flora Shaw's publication of the impressions she had gained during her visits to the colonies in 1892-3, the novelty of Jebb's contribution among publicists need not be disputed. What may be questioned are his strictures on the "official Imperialists" for showing no awareness of the significance of colonial nationalism.

In its application to relations between Great Britain and Australia, the growth of national awareness had its most marked effect on colonial insistence that the powers of self-government must be maintained intact, and, if possible, extended through the removal of the remaining limitations on colonial freedom of action. Between 1885 and 1902 the myth of Colonial Office interference in the internal affairs of a self-governing colony died hard in Australia and among the critics of the Colonial Office in Great Britain. Because the Governors were Imperial officers as well as the Queen's representatives in the structure of responsible government, their functions and the methods of their appointment still appeared in some ways as limitations on freedom from Imperial interference in the internal affairs of the Australian Colonies. In practice, Imperial interference was much more apparent than real. The most obvious means of Imperial interference was through the reservation or disallowance of colonial Bills. From the 1870s onwards, these powers were used cautiously and with increasing reluctance. Secretaries of State and officials in the Colonial Office more and more

1 These were published in The Times in the latter months of 1892 and the early part of 1893.
2 R.Jebb, _op.cit._ pp.vii,79-82,84.
saw reservation as a means whereby a compromise might be worked out with the colonial governments, and the grounds for Imperial objections to a Bill removed.

In the 1870s the Imperial Government removed one of the two remaining limitations on the independent action of the Australian Colonies. This was a limitation on their control of tariffs. Already some of them had introduced a protective tariff, and now the disability which prevented them from imposing differential duties was removed. In consequence, the Australian Colonies were no longer bound to Great Britain's free trade system. By the end of the 1870s they could decide whether or not to adhere to new commercial treaties entered into by Great Britain. On the other hand, the imposition of differential duties by a colonial government might conflict with Imperial treaty obligations to foreign Powers. A colony might, therefore, impinge on the most strongly and longest held of Imperial limitations on colonial independence of action. This was the conduct of relations with foreign Powers.

From the 1870s onwards, the Australian Colonies increasingly insisted that what they regarded as their vital interests must be safeguarded. This opened the way to a possible clash between colonial interests and Imperial interests in Great Britain's relations with foreign Powers. After Australian federations was achieved, the Imperial Government's responsibility for the foreign relations of the Empire was the sole remaining limitation on Australian autonomy.

The removal of this disability was not complete until 1895 when the Australian Colonies were free to make differential tariff agreements outside their own group and New Zealand.
The power to regulate Australia's external affairs was among those which the States handed over to the Commonwealth; but this did not necessarily imply that the Australian Commonwealth, any more than Canada, thereby demanded to share in the responsibility of framing Imperial policy. By 1902 the new Australian Commonwealth Government had not claimed so extensive a right as this; but it, like the separate Australian Colonial Governments before federation, maintained that Imperial foreign policy should take cognizance of certain vital Australian interests. Neither by 1902 did it necessarily follow that increasing interest in securing Australia's defence against other Powers would lead to Australian participation in a closely-knit system of Imperial defence.

Australia's progress towards assuming some of the attributes of national identity must be seen as an important element in the pattern of imperial relations between 1885 and 1902. At the same time, relations between Great Britain and Australia must be set against the background of the imperial federation movement with its emphasis on closer imperial unity.

In the 1880s the most enthusiastic, visionary and irresponsible of the imperial federationists were not influential or important political figures. Liberal and Conservative politicians who supported the imperial federation movement in the 1880s were cautious. They restrained the more impatient imperial federationists who wanted Great Britain to take the initiative to set up a closely-knit imperial structure. The cautious, who were so much more aware
of all the political difficulties and dangers, wanted the colonies to move step by step towards closer relations with Great Britain. The impatient imperial federationists proved over-hasty in 1892-3, and as a movement Imperial federation appeared to collapse.

Between 1895 and 1902 the most persistent and persuasive of the protagonists of imperial unity included Joseph Chamberlain, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Chamberlain increasingly became a man in a hurry. In 1902 an official attempt was made to invite the colonies to establish closer political, naval and military ties with Great Britain. These would form the basis of a new imperial structure.

This is one paradox which has to be faced in the following pages. From it there follows another. On the vital question of closer imperial unity, official policy in Great Britain and the Australian Colonies appeared to be going in completely opposite directions in many respects by 1902, and yet there was no longer any likelihood that Australia might leave the Empire.

The period between 1885 and 1902 falls into three clearly-marked divisions. In the first period, between 1885 and 1887, the bases of imperial unity were questioned and examined in Great Britain and in the Australian Colonies. In Great Britain, attention was focussed on ways of securing closer unity between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. In the Australian Colonies, the discussion was far less theoretical. It was closely connected with improving the naval defence of the colonies and with safe-
guarding Australian interests in the Pacific. The Colonial Conference of 1887 provided a means of consultation on imperial and colonial interests. It also offered a way whereby the Imperial and the Australian Colonial Governments avoided having to face the issues of imperial federation or separation.

During the second period, between 1887 and 1895, the Imperial and the Australian Colonial Governments continued to build on the foundations laid at the 1887 Colonial Conference. Some decisions taken during these years arose from matters which had been discussed at the Conference. Others were either old problems in a different form or entirely new matters arising from the growth and development of the Australian Colonies. The decisions taken on a number of disparate subjects had little or no relevance to each other; but they were of great significance in the whole pattern of relations between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies. In this period also, the widely separated self-governing colonies showed interest in establishing direct relations with each other.

During the third period, from Chamberlain's appointment as Secretary of State for the Colonies until after the Colonial Conference of 1902, the bases of imperial unity were re-examined. Chamberlain's concept of Empire led him to take the initiative in inviting the self-governing colonies to assume closer political or commercial ties with Great Britain and to participate in imperial defence. The Australian Commonwealth's rejection of closer formal ties was determined by the decisions already taken by the separate colonies.
PART I
THE DEBATE ON THE BASES OF IMPERIAL UNITY: FIRST PHASE, 1885-1887

CHAPTER I
A PROBLEM OF EMPIRE: SEPARATION OR CONSOLIDATION

After his resignation from the Permanent Under-Secretaryship of State for the Colonies in 1871, Lord Blachford wrote:

"I had always believed, and the belief has so confirmed and consolidated, that I can hardly believe the possibility of anyone thinking the contrary, that the destiny of our colonies is independence; and that, in this point of view, the function of the Colonial Office is to secure that our connection, while it lasts, shall be as profitable to both parties, and our separation, when it comes, as amicable as possible. This opinion is founded first on the general principle that a spirited nation - and a colony becomes a nation - will not submit to be governed in all its internal affairs by a distant government, and that nations remote have no such common interests as will bind them permanently together in foreign policy with all its details and mutations..."

These words form a succinct statement of the belief of those in Great Britain and the self-governing colonies who, like Lord Blachford, could see no alternative to the eventual separation of the settlement colonies from the mother country. It was assumed

I Letters of Lord Blachford, ed. G.E. Marindin (London, 1896), pp. 299-300. Blachford (as Sir Frederic Rogers) had been Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies from 1860 to 1871 when the so-called anti-imperialist attitude was most pervasive in loosening the ties between the mother country and the self-governing colonies.
that, on the analogy of the United States of America, colonial autonomy and self-reliance would preclude a colony, which had grown into a nation, from remaining a dependency; and, further, that the distance of those colonies from the mother country would hinder and possibly prevent the maintenance of common interests strong enough to form the basis of a comprehensive imperial policy. Because of their belief in the incompatibility of common imperial interests and colonial self-government, statesmen of both Liberal and Conservative Governments in the 1850s and 1860s, as well as the permanent officials of the Colonial Office, regarded some form of separation as inevitable in the near or distant future; but this did not necessarily mean that they would welcome separation or work actively towards that end. Once the colonies had been freed from the control of the Colonial Office, separation seemed the only possible outcome. As Lord Blachford put it: "The question is not whether the useful and interesting tie which at present connects us can last forever - or even for very long - but whether that transitional relation will be longest and most beneficially preserved by tightening or relaxing it. Hitherto we have proceeded on the principle of relaxation, and by so doing we are admitted, I believe, to have gained more in mutual contentment than we have lost in authority."

Indeed, it has been suggested that a less literal understanding of the term "separation" is possible in the sense of "emancipation from the irksome control of the Colonial Office". C.A. Bodelsen, *Studies in Mid-Victorian Imperialism* (London, 1960 reprint), p. 58.

2 G.E. Marindin, *op. cit.* p. 425 (from an article by Blachford which appeared in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 Jan., 1885).
The 1850s and 1860s were the decades when Britain adopted a policy of Free Trade and conferred self-government on her colonies in Canada, Australia and New Zealand. They were also the decades when expenditure overseas was closely watched. In the 1870s the self-governing colonies were made responsible for their own military defence. Further, the policy of Free Trade fostered an anti-annexationist attitude in Great Britain because her industrial and commercial supremacy secured for her the desired world-wide rewards without the necessity of annexation except as a last resort. Where the self-governing colonies were concerned, again on the analogy of the United States, there was no reason to suppose that in a world dominated by British Free Trade the existing commercial and financial connections with Canada, the Australian Colonies and New Zealand would not remain as profitable to Great Britain after separation as before.

The belief in the eventual separation of the settlement colonies from the mother country was held most widely in Great Bri-


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<td>1888-89</td>
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tain and the self-governing colonies in the 1860s and to a lessening degree in the 1870s. It was a counsel of despair, or an acceptance with equanimity of an inevitable outcome, rather than an expectation that was greatly to be desired. Those who saw no alternative to eventual separation, and the minority, which included John Bright and Goldwin Smith, who wanted to see the self-governing colonies become independent states, came to be termed "separationists" by those who opposed such a contingency. As a result of the form assumed by the agitation in the 1870s and 1880s against the disintegration of the Empire, the Liberals came to be regarded in Great Britain and the self-governing colonies as the party favouring the immediate or the eventual separation of the mother country and the self-governing colonies. Irish Home Rule and the split in the Liberal Party in 1886 appeared to be further proof of this. In practice, and during the 1880s in particular, there was little difference between Liberal and Conservative policy towards the self-governing colonies. Continuity in colonial policy preceded Rosebery's enunciation of a similar practice in foreign policy by more than a decade. Both parties based their policy on retrenchment and the devolution of responsibility from the Imperial to the Colonial Governments. Carnarvon's policy in South Africa was not really a deviation from this policy. He intended that the annexation of the Transvaal should be followed by a South African federation. In this way Great Britain's commitments would only have

2 Ibid. p. 61.
been temporarily increased. The one outstanding exception to this bi-partisan attitude towards the self-governing colonies appeared to be during the "Midlothian" election campaign of 1880 when the Conservatives were supporting expansionist policies; but this in itself is misleading because these policies were not primarily concerned with the self-governing colonies.

During the 1870s an opposing view to that of the "separationists" gained ground: that the unity of the Empire should not only be maintained, but should also be further consolidated, possibly in some form of political federation. This point of view gained in strength during the 1880s, and after 1886 it had the support of those who opposed Irish Home Rule. After Disraeli's Crystal Palace speech in 1872, the Conservatives came to be regarded as the imperialist party; but imperialists were to be found in both parties, although perhaps there was a greater number of extreme imperialist propagandists, including some ex-colonists, in the Conservative ranks.

As a result of these opposing views, the problem of the self-governing colonies within the Empire appeared to take the form of clear alternatives of separation or consolidation. Certainly both sides had able and forceful advocates; but this in itself is misleading. The imperialists were opposing an assumption and not a growing idea or a movement such as they were starting themselves. It is also easy to overlook the probability that the great majority in Great Britain and the colonies were indifferent to the whole problem. Further, although the Imperial and Colonial Governments
were aware of the alternatives which appeared to have been posed, they seemed reluctant to take the initiative to move irrevocably in the direction of one extreme or the other. The argument between these two extremes had certainly not been resolved by 1885. It continued to hinge on the two factors of common imperial interests and colonial autonomy, and on the different emphasis which was placed on both in Great Britain and the self-governing colonies.

The retention of the self-governing colonies within the Empire held more than a mere sentimental interest for the imperialists. It was very closely connected with Great Britain's changing position in world politics and economics from the 1870s onwards as well as with political, social and economic conditions within Great Britain herself. The Free Traders of the Manchester School had believed that the British policy of Free Trade would eventually be adopted throughout the world as its advantages were realised. Their optimism and cosmopolitanism were perhaps justified in a period when Europe was free of major conflicts; but during the 1870s it became apparent that other Powers were not going to follow the British example. Great Britain's pre-eminent position in some of her traditional markets was challenged by other Powers such as Germany and the United States. The latter was already building up manufacturing industries behind a protective tariff, and in 1879-1880 the German Empire adopted a tariff which was designed to protect German industry as well as agriculture. The first signs of the seriousness of this trade competition were noted during the
depression which affected British industries in the early 1870s; but it was not until at least a decade later that the full effects of competition from Germany and the United States in world markets were felt. A renewed interest in emigration was an outcome of this concern. Emigration was seen as a means of relieving the distress which in part was a result of the growing European and American competition in manufactures.

In the 1870s attacks on Free Trade did not form part of the imperialist agitation. Only a few imperialist writers in the 1870s, such as Jehu Mathews, appreciated that the imposition of protectionist tariffs by other European Powers and by the United States might endanger Great Britain's commercial supremacy. An important imperialist argument was that the self-governing colonies might remain more valuable markets for British manufactures as part of the British Empire than if they became independent. This reasoning was partly behind the increasing interest in the 1870s and 1880s in the resources of the colonies. It is significant also that from about Memorial to the Queen from the Working Men of London (1870). The men behind this petition were at the same time active in the early imperialist agitation in connection with the Cannon street Meetings.

In 1881 a scheme for State-aided emigration, proposed by a Colonisation Committee of both Houses of Parliament, was forwarded by the Colonial Office to the colonies for comment. (Knutsford's Circular Despatch of 31 May,1881. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers) The suggested scheme drew no response from the Australian Colonies. 2 The Fair Trade League was not founded until 1881, and then the name "Fair Trade" was carefully chosen so as to avoid its supporters being attacked as protectionists by the Free Traders.

3 Jehu Mathews, A colonist on the Colonial Question (London,1872), p.52. Mathews was a Canadian.

4 This was one of the motives for the foundation of the Colonial Society in 1869 and the Imperial Institute in 1887.
I875 onwards there was an appreciable increase in British investment in the self-governing colonies. More funds had become available for investment, and there were increasing opportunities in the colonies as a result of their economic development. At the same time there was a lessening of economic opportunity for investment in France and Germany; but India within the Empire and the South American republics outside the Empire also absorbed vastly increasing amounts.

The consolidation of national States in Europe, especially Germany, and the preoccupation with power politics which became increasingly marked by the 1880s, were important influences on the thought of some imperialists in Great Britain. The achievement of a federal German Empire in 1871, as well as the preservation of the federal union of the United States in the 1860s and the uninterrupted development of that country since then, caused a large number

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>Australasia</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>£20 mill. (1870)</td>
<td>£73 mill.</td>
<td>£16 mill. (incl. rest of Empire with the exception of India)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>£133 mill.</td>
<td>£200 mill.</td>
<td>£34 mill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>£240 mill.</td>
<td>£285 mill.</td>
<td>£35 mill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>£389 mill.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>£306 mill.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>£373 mill.</td>
<td>£380 mill.</td>
<td>£351 mill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1913</td>
<td>£515 mill.</td>
<td>£415 mill.</td>
<td>£370 mill.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1870 about ⅓ of foreign investment was within the Empire; in 1885 about ⅓ was within the Empire. This proportion was the same in 1911, although Canada was replacing Australia and New Zealand as the leading borrower. (A.K.Cairncross, op.cit. pp.183-4)


3 ibid. pp.183,185; and S.B.Saul, op.cit. p.67 for 1913 figures.
of the more vocal imperialists to turn towards a federal solution of the problem of establishing a closer political link between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. The rapid development of quick communications within the Empire, especially fast steamship lines, mail services and telegraphic cables, led imperialists to overlook the problem of the differences in outlook which resulted from the vast distances separating the groups of self-governing colonies. They did not, therefore, appreciate the basic difference between the problems which had been solved successfully in the federations of the United States and Germany, and those which would have to be solved in a federated British Empire.

Some imperialists believed that to a certain degree power was to be equated with the extent of national territory, and that States such as Russia and the United States of America would therefore exercise predominant power at some future time. Only "Greater Britain", a unified and consolidated British Empire, would be able to hold its own with such Powers. To a certain extent, this idea explains Disraeli's imperialism in the later 1870s, and in the 1880s it was an important element in Sir Charles Dilke's belief in imperialism and in his emphasis on the extent and power of the Anglo-Saxon race. Yet this element did not have an important place in British imperialist ideas before the mid-1880s, and it was only in the 1890s that British imperialism took on some features comparable

with those in the more aggressive nationalism of some of the major European States. Further, with the exception of the annexation of the Transvaal in 1877, it was not until 1884–1885 and after that these and other developments caused a further expansion of the British Empire to be undertaken, however unwillingly, by successive British Governments.

With the rivalry of powerful industrial and nationalist States in Europe, there came some realisation in Great Britain of a potential military as well as a commercial threat to certain parts of the British Empire, but more especially to British trading and other interests in territories which as yet had not been annexed by any European Power. But here again, although these possible dangers began to be realised in the 1870s, and especially by the setting up of a Royal Commission on Imperial Defence in 1879, it was not until the 1880s that they became unmistakable. The first danger to be realised was that militarism influenced the policy of some European Powers, and of Germany in particular, and that the British Empire could no longer remain almost without defences, other than the British Navy, in a world of hostile and rival Great Powers. In addition to this, there was the realisation that these same Powers were looking beyond Europe for markets for the manufacturing industries which had developed behind their protective tariffs and for sources of raw materials to be used in those industries. By the end of the 1880s, the commercial rivalry of Great Britain, France and Germany was a significant factor in Africa,
the Far East and the South Pacific. The United States also was concerned in the development of further commercial relations with China and Japan. The Australian Colonies had much interest in this commercial rivalry as it affected the South Pacific. Linked with both the danger of commercial competition and of a major war was Britain's dependence on foreign food supplies. Though a few early imperialists gave as a reason for the retention of the self-governing colonies their potentialities in ensuring Great Britain's food supplies, this was not fully developed until the later 1880s and 1890s.

Apart from leading politicians, such as Disraeli and Carnarvon, who took up the imperialist cause, the main impetus in the 1870s and early 1880s for propagating imperialist ideas came from men who had colonial connections and interests. The latter, with others who advocated further consolidation, formed pressure groups

1 Proportion of British imports of foodstuffs and raw materials from the Empire:— (Source: W. Schlote, op. cit. p. 99)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Foodstuffs</th>
<th>Raw materials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>17.5%</td>
<td>27.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
<td>31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3 Among them were Edward Wilson, former owner of the Melbourne Argus, Frederick Young, Captain J. C. R. Colomb, Francis Labillière, and William Westgarth, an ex-colonist from Victoria.
to raise interest in the retention of the self-governing colonies within the Empire and in drawing tighter the bonds of Empire. By the 1880s, imperialists were concentrating on three interlocked problems - the political relations of the mother country and the self-governing colonies, the defence and communications of the Empire, and, to a lesser extent, the commerce of the Empire. It was because most imperialists regarded the problems of political unity and imperial defence as having preponderant importance that consolidation, or imperial federation as it came to be called, was seen as the only alternative to disintegration.

The term "imperial federation" had a wide range of connotation. It could mean little more than the retention of the self-governing colonies within the Empire with only a loose tie of loyalty to bind them to the mother country. This was the most usual implication when the term was used by a Canadian or an Australian colonist who called himself an imperial federationist; but generally speaking very few or no imperial federationists in England would have agreed that relations between the mother country and the self-governing colonies should continue in their present rather ill-defined state.

Moderate imperial federationists in Great Britain would have supported W.E. Forster's opinion that imperial federation conveyed "the notion that ultimately, hereafter, there must be a union, in some form or another, of England and her colonies, on terms of perfect equality to the Colonies as well as to England". The vague-

ness of the term imperial federation itself, and what imperial federationists really meant when they spoke of "equality" between the mother country and the self-governing colonies, widened its appeal. By the 1880s several responsible statesmen and other public figures, including W.E. Forster, Lord Rosebery, Lord Carnarvon, the Duke of Manchester, W.H. Smith, Edward Stanhope and Sir Henry Holland, were to be numbered among imperial federationists. Although they might accept the premise of seeking closer unity, they were very cautious in putting forward definite schemes to bind the mother country and the colonies closely together; but some moderate imperial federationists went so far as to support the creation of a colonial Council of Advice.

To the extremists, imperial federation meant much more than an "aspiration after union". In 1871 Edward Jenkins defined imperial federation as "the doctrine of a legislative union, in the form of a confederation of each subordinate self-governing community which is now included within the British Empire". Other extremists envisaged the setting up of a rigid form of federation with a federal parliament and a central imperial executive. In these schemes equality between the mother country and the self-governing colonies appeared to be much diluted, or else the subordinate or dependent nature of the colonies was unequivocally stated.

From about 1871 onwards innumerable schemes, including elaborate constitutions, were put forward either as more or less immediate

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1 W.H. Smith, ibid. p.35.
3

With regard to these in the IREAS on Imperial control of certain

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United (London, 1926)

7

The Strengthen or Imperial

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Provision for schemes of several

8

A larger number of schemes are

6

A conference held at the Westminster Palace Hotel on 19

1

One of the earliest schemes for a future Federation of the

2

Determined to maintain the Mother Country and the Self-

The provision and schemes for meeting the problem of

3

Be some sort of representation in Imperial councils, those

4

As a word, to contribute to the Imperials for second, that if the colonies were

5

By a common Imperial Parliament, a common Imperial interest, such as forest, port, questions of

6

Determined to a certain extent in the IREAS; first, that subjects

7

Concerning on two questions, one of which had developed to

8

The appointment of poppy as a remedy for great danger in the

9

Problem of how to make provision for a Federation of the Imperial was the

10

Federation in a similar move at some future time, at the heart of

11

end processes towards a complete Federation for a truly
governing colonies may be divided broadly into those which aimed at providing a form of imperial executive or a consultative body, and those which had the more ambitious project of setting up an imperial legislature and executive. The most extreme suggestion for colonial participation in the policy making of the Empire was that colonial ministers should be appointed to the imperial Cabinet; but this did not gain much support for the difficulties were only too apparent. Other suggestions which had a much longer history, and gained quite wide as well as influential support, were for various forms of a Council of Advice or an Imperial Council to be either separate from or a Committee of the Privy Council.

The idea of a colonial Council of Advice was based on the belief that it was difficult for the Colonial Office to obtain

I e.g. R.A. Macfie in the House of Commons in moving for a Select Committee on Imperial Relations, 28 Feb., 1873, Hansard 3 Ser. vol. cccxiv, p. 1105; Thomas Hare at the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science Conference (1869), Transactions, p. 102-105; William Westgarth to Sir Henry Parkes, 12 May, 1884, Parkes Correspondence, A 70 Autograph Letters of Notable Australians, p. 221-2, (Mitchell Library).

2 e.g. Earl Grey suggested that the Committee of the Privy Council for Trade and Plantations should be revived. "How Shall We Retain the Colonies?" in Nineteenth Century vol. 5 (1879), pp. 935-954; and an interview with Grey published in the Pall Mall Gazette, 9 Jan., 1885. Sir George Bowen suggested a Colonial Council with powers analogous to those of the India Council. Substance of a Letter from Sir George Bowen to a Member of Parliament on the Proposed Federation of the British Empire (Hong Kong, 1885), p. 3. Others who supported the formation of a Council of Advice included: the Duke of Manchester at the Inaugural Dinner of the Colonial Society, Procs. R.C.I. (1869), p. 31; R.A. Macfie at N.A.P.S.S. Conference (1869), Transactions, p. 119; and Macfie also suggested that a Council of Advice might have legislative and executive powers, ibid. pp. 179-180; Sir Bartle Frere in the National Review Sept., 1885; W.E. Forster at the Imperial Federation League Conference, 29 July, 1884, Report, p. 28; and the Marquis of Lorne, Imperial Federation (London, 1885).
sufficient information about the colonies, and, therefore, the knowledge of ex-Governors and ex-colonists in England should be utilised. To some extent governing and business circles in the Australian Colonies saw some value in this provided such information was obtained unofficially. Although there were some exceptions, colonial opposition was generally against the formation of an official council. From the late 1870s onwards, some of the advocates of a Council of Advice showed their awareness of certain recent developments when they suggested that the Agents-General of the self-governing colonies should be members; but they overlooked the fact that the Agents-General already had access to the Colonial Office to express colonial views individually or collectively.

Some of those who advocated a Council of Advice did not see the giving of information and advice as its sole purpose. Responsibility would remain with the Imperial Government to secure any unity of action between the mother country and the colonies. A Council of Advice would be the means whereby imperial authority in the colonies might be strengthened in order to retain the connection between Great Britain and her dependencies. The creation of a Council of Advice was also to be a first step towards an imperial federation in which powers would be divided between the Imperial

I e.g. Sydney Morning Herald, editorial 5 Oct., 1869.
2 e.g. Melbourne Argus, editorial 29 Sept., 1869, in support of an official council. It must be remembered that Edward Wilson, the former owner of the paper, was active in colonial circles in London.
3 e.g. Earl Grey, "How Shall We Retain the Colonies?" in Nineteenth Century vol. 5 (1879), pp. 952, 953-4; Sir G.Bowen, op.cit.
and local Parliaments on the basis of "Imperium" and "Libertas".

Many imperial federationists believed that in a federal structure a clear division could be made between imperial powers and colonial, local or internal powers. Defence and foreign policy had been two of the powers reserved to the Imperial Government in the Acts which had created self-governing colonies in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, as well as in the British North America Act of 1867. These would remain imperial powers. A federal budget and control of tariffs would also be imperial subjects. Through such a federation, the colonies would enter upon a joint responsibility for an imperial foreign policy, as well as for establishing trade and defence upon an imperial basis. An imperial federation would therefore probably include, to use two very convenient terms, a zollverein and a kriegsverein.

Schemes for a federal constitution included a unicameral or a bicameral federal parliament. This would either be separate from the House of Commons, which would then become a local parliament, or the House of Commons would be enlarged to become a federal parliament. Lord Rosebery favoured colonial representatives in the

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1 Sir G. Bowen, _op. cit._ pp. 9–10, 11–12. Bowen had had wide experience as a colonial Governor, including terms of office in Victoria, Queensland and New Zealand. He reiterated his ideas on a Council of Advice in an address to the Royal Colonial Institute on 15 June, 1886. _Procs. R.C.I._ (1885–6), vol. 17, p. 286.

2 e.g. Jehu Mathews, _A Colonist on the Colonial Question_ (London, 1872), pp. 95, 174–5. In practice since the 1870s, when the imperial garrisons had been withdrawn (excluding Halifax and Esquimalt in Canada), these colonies had taken over responsibility for their military defence.

3 e.g. _ibid._ pp. 81–92, 199.
House of Lords because the financial control of the House of Commons would not then be affected. In certain schemes, colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament would be based upon federations of groups of colonies, such as the existing Dominion of Canada, the future federation of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, and of Cape Colony and Natal. Imperial federationists generally regarded any further achievement of intercolonial federation as a step towards imperial federation. At the top of any of these federal structures there would be an imperial executive.

In most federal schemes India and the Crown Colonies were clearly distinguished from the self-governing colonies. These parts of the Empire were the sole responsibility of Great Britain and not of Great Britain and the self-governing colonies. If they were granted any representation in a federal parliament, it would be done by means of nomination and not by election. As a further reason against Indian participation in any future federation of the Empire, Lord Salisbury pointed out that representation by population would lead to Asiatic preponderance.

The four main principles of federation, to which many imperial federationists in Great Britain would have agreed in whole or in part, were:

3 Salisbury to Sir Henry Parkes, 23 Dec., 1889, in reply to a letter from Parkes in which he suggested a form of Imperial Council. Parkes Correspondence A 928, pp.910-916, (Mitchell Library).
part, were:

"I. Equitable combination for the maintenance of common interests and defence of common rights.

2. Equitable representation in an efficient Imperial Parliament.

3. Equitable system of taxation to raise Imperial revenue.

4. Equitable guarantee of all existing rights of provincial self-government, including control of fiscal policies."

In any federation based on these principles, the self-governing colonies would share both the rights and the responsibilities of Empire with the mother country; and, most important of all, they would share in the framing of an imperial foreign policy. Although the imperial federationists might use the terms "equitable" and "equality", it is obvious that through weight of representation in an imperial parliament the over-all supremacy of the United Kingdom would be retained in framing foreign, defence and trade policies. Despite denials by imperial federationists that they sought to interfere with colonial self-government, fear of this and the fact of United Kingdom predominance provided the grounds for colonial dislike and opposition to all such schemes of imperial federation.

Imperial federationists thought that colonial autonomy could be safeguarded by defining the powers of local government. To a large extent the use of the term "equality" by imperial federa-
tionalists in describing relations between the self-governing colonies and the mother country was limited to the similar local powers which would be enjoyed by the United Kingdom Parliament and the Colonial Parliaments in a federated Empire. When so many schemes suggested the handing over to a federal authority of two powers, defence and tariff policy, which the self-governing colonies already enjoyed, it is difficult to see how Rosebery could convince himself that any "proper scheme of federation would lead, not to a diminution of local self-government, but rather to an increase of local self-government". Viscount Bury, one of the early imperialists, was much more realistic when he said that the mother country had nothing more to concede to the colonies: any change in imperial relations must mean separation or a concession by the colonies of some part of their autonomy.

There is no escaping the fact that the imperial federationists were sincerely concerned over the question that the colonies should be given a share in the councils of the Empire; but in many schemes for a legislative body in which the colonies would be represented there was also another element, that of bringing back under imperial control certain powers which had been surrendered to the self-governing colonies. In particular, they wanted to ensure the maintenance of Free Trade and secure colonial contribu-

2 House of Commons, 26 April, 1870. Hansard 3 Ser. vol. cc, p. 1855.
tions to imperial defence. This may be linked with Disraeli's regret that imperial powers over tariffs and colonial waste lands had not been retained when self-government was granted.

Imperial federationists and others continued to describe the imperial link as "a silken and elastic bond... rather than a severe and rigid chain"; but they did not look to see how the elasticity of the ties could be retained in a close and formal federal structure. They had little real knowledge of the working of a federal system and its centripetal tendencies. This is not surprising. Despite the care with which the Australian federal constitution was drawn up so as to safeguard the rights and powers of the States, they have been encroached upon steadily. The experience of Australia, with that of the United States over a longer period, has proved that as time passes more and more powers must of necessity be assumed by the federal authority.

If any of the schemes for a Council of Advice or a federal structure were ever to be realised, the British and colonial public would first have to be educated with regard to the value of the mother country and the self-governing colonies to each other, as well as to the need for closer formal ties. The imperialists recognised the need for means of propagating their ideas in addition to the medium of the periodicals whose influence in Victorian England


2 Lord Carnarvon in Contemporary Review vol. xlv, Jan., 1884, p. II.
can hardly be over-estimated. As well as the conferences of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science and the congresses of the Chambers of Commerce which had already provided them with a platform, two bodies were specially created by means of which imperialists could put the problem of the Empire before the British and colonial public. These were the Royal Colonial Institute and later the Imperial Federation League.

The Royal Colonial Institute was originally intended to be a non-party, social and academic body for the study of colonial and Indian problems. It numbered many eminent men among its fellows, and a slow but steady increase in membership testified to the increasing interest in imperial matters. Yet it appears unlikely that the influence of the Institute would have extended beyond upper and middle class circles, and even then it probably only reached those who were already interested in the Empire for one reason or another. From the very first year of its existence, the question of the relations between the mother country and the self-governing colonies was the problem which was discussed most often. As these discussions on the problem of imperial unity came increasingly to the fore after 1875, the Institute became a centre of

1 The Colonial Society was formed in 1869 and became the Royal Colonial Institute in 1870.
3 Membership increased by about 100 a year in the 1870s. In 1882 there were 1563 fellows (624 resident and 939 non-resident), and in 1886 there were 3005 fellows. A Folsom, The Royal Empire Society (London, 1933), p.68. In 1876 there were 103 non-resident fellows from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, including 35 from New Zealand, 15 from N.S.W. and 12 from Victoria; by 1877-8 the numbers in N.S.W. had
imperial federationist propaganda where an active group of imperialists, a number of them ex-colonists, could put their views before an influential public. Prominent colonial speakers, including the High Commissioner for Canada and the Agents-General of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, also addressed meeting of the Institute.

On occasions the Royal Colonial Institute took more active and practical steps to urge government action in accordance with its ideas of what imperial policy should be. In 1874 members of the Institute were active in favour of British annexation of Fiji, but not officially as a body. Of greater importance were the three attempts of the Institute as a body to draw the attention of the Colonial Office to the dangers of foreign occupation and to urge the need for British annexation of New Guinea. Although on these occasions the Institute failed to stir the Imperial Government to action, it is unlikely that its representations were entirely disregarded by governing circles when they were put forward by a non-party body and by men as eminent as the Duke of Manchester;

Increased to 26, and to 36 in 1878-9. No colonial branches were formed.

4 William Westgarth, an ex-colonist from Victoria, was among the chief speakers on this subject. His earliest address, entitled "Relations of the Colonies to the Mother Country", was given in 1869. Procs. R.C.I. vol.2.

2 This was in 1875, 1878 and 1882. Procs.R.C.I. (1874-5),vol.6, p.120 ff.; A.Michie (Agent-General for Victoria), "Great Britain and New Guinea", and discussion following; Procs. R.C.I. (1874-5), vol.6, pp.189-205; Annexation of New Guinea, correspondence and deputation to the Secretary of State (29 April,1875); R.C.I. to Colonial Office, 9 July,1878, C.O. 201/586; and Procs. R.C.I. (1882-3), vol.XIV, pp.247-264; Correspondence and deputation to the Secretary of State.
who led the deputation to Lord Carnarvon in 1875.

As a result of the growing interest in Great Britain and in the colonies, particularly in Canada, in the question of imperial unity, a new league, the Imperial Federation League, was founded in July, 1884. In this way the discussions of the past decade were brought a stage further from the widely held belief in the desirability of imperial unity, and the propagation of individual ideas how this could be achieved, to the formation of an organisation which would investigate aims and methods of achieving that unity.

The Imperial Federation League openly proclaimed as its aim - "that in order to secure the permanent unity of the Empire, some form of Imperial Federation is essential". For the present, the intention behind this aim was to stimulate discussion rather than to put forward definite proposals. As long as the definition of imperial federation remained vague, the League numbered among its "home" and "colonial" members men who favoured a loose link between the mother country and the colonies as well as others who

1 The I.F.L. was formed as a result of a meeting at the Westminster Palace Hotel which had been attended by such men as W.E. Forster, Lord Rosebery, Sir Henry Holland, Edward Stanhope, W.H. Smith and Sir Charles Tupper, the High Commissioner for Canada. The initial impulse had come from men who had long been active in the Royal Colonial Institute, including F.P. Labillière, Capt. J.C.R. Colomb, William Westgarth and Frederick Young. Report of the Proceedings of the I.F.L. Conference, 29 July, 1884, (London, 1884).

2 Ibid. Resolution I. In its final form the resolution was much less specific than the original motion which had advocated an extension of the political organisation of the Empire so that the colonies might share in the control of foreign policy and defence, and at the same time take a fair share in bearing the responsibilities of Empire.

3 See Frederick Young's statement in 1886 on the work of the League to date. F.Youn, "Schemes and suggestions for Imperial Federation", Imperial Federation March, 1886, p. 71.
sought a more organic unity. The League's hesitancy as a body in putting forward a scheme for the federation of the Empire was because its leaders, particularly W.E. Forster and Lord Rosebery, believed that a policy leading to federation could only be put into action slowly and in such measure as public opinion in Great Britain and the colonies was ready to accept. As Lord Rosebery once remarked: "The impulse for federation must come not from Parliaments, but from the people." For this reason, Rosebery believed that the British public, and especially the recently enfranchised working class, needed to become more aware of the Empire. Rosebery's own interest in the preservation of the unity of the "community of races" within the Empire was a result of his visit to the Australian Colonies in 1883-1884; and he, with W.E. Forster and Sir Henry Holland, believed that the first moves towards the federation of the Empire should come from the colonies and not from the United Kingdom.

During the years of the League's existence from 1884 to 1893,

1 The number of "home" members always greatly exceeded those members with colonial affiliations on the general committee of about 300 members in a proportion varying from 1:5 to 1:7. J.E. Tyler, op.cit. p.109.
3 Crewe, op.cit. p.208.
4 Hence Rosebery's address to the Trades Union Congress at Aberdeen in 1884.
5 Rosebery's speech at Melbourne, 1 Jan., 1884; quoted in Crewe, op.cit. p.184.
the differences of opinion among members became wider, but they did not break the unity of the League until that body put forward an official scheme of federation in 1892 at a time when Rosebery's restraining influence was temporarily absent. Then the differences between the four broad schools of opinion could not but weaken the League irreparably. These four schools of opinion were: first, those in favour of a full parliamentary federation; secondly, those who desired to approach such a federation gradually by means of a Council of Advice; thirdly, those in favour of a closer union being restricted to defence, with perhaps the colonies being associated with Great Britain in the framing of an imperial policy; and, fourthly, those, including many Canadian members, who desired to make the close tie between the mother country and the colonies one of a customs union or of imperial preference.

During 1885-1886 branches of the League were formed in the counties in Great Britain and in the most important Canadian centres, including Montreal, Ottawa, Halifax and Toronto. Branches were also established in Capetown, Melbourne and Christchurch (New Zealand), but these did not attract as much support as those in Canada. When Rosebery claimed in 1887 that the League was the sole mouthpiece of imperial sentiment in England, he implied that all who wanted to see closer ties between the mother country and the colonies supported the imperial federation movement. This was certainly not so in the colonies. Many colonists did not want to see the existing

ties loosened, but they did not favour the imposition of new imperial obligations and commitments on the colonies.

It is difficult to ascertain how wide a public the League reached, but it seems unlikely that its influence extended far beyond the upper and middle classes in England. Most of its support probably came from those who had any personal contacts with parts of the Empire through colonial lands, the professions, the civil service or investments. From January, 1886, the League issued a monthly periodical which adopted a very optimistic tone towards the prospects of the federation movement in England and the colonies. There was little in the spread of the movement and its ideas in the colonies to justify the hopes entertained by the parent League in London. On one occasion the Imperial Federation League went beyond lectures and publications and reached a wider public. It was responsible for the Colonial and Indian Exhibition of 1886 which displayed the various resources of the Empire and attracted over five and a half million visitors. This in itself was a sign of the renewed interest in the Empire. The League, therefore, claimed that the Colonial and Indian Exhibition had inspired the British democracy with a new idea - that of Empire.

Needless to say, those who advocated strengthening imperial

1 e.g. C.E. Howard Vincent in Imperial Federation, Feb., 1886, p. 41. Rosebery claimed that there were 1000 subscribers to Imperial Federation in 1887. Ibid. Aug., 1887, p. 163. When the League was inaugurated, a shilling registration fee was adopted so that "all classes of the community" could join the League.

2 Imperial Federation, 1 July, 1886, p. 188.
ties by means of a Council of Advice or a federal structure had strong opponents to contend with in Great Britain as well as in the colonies. In Great Britain one of the most trenchant criticisms came from Lord Blachford. Early in 1885 he avowed himself to be "one of that apparently small minority who look upon federation as an unattainable phantom". He hoped that the publication of his views would "compel people to think out the question seriously", instead of letting the world run into a federation with its eyes shut. He criticised a Council of Advice on the grounds that such a council of colonial ministers would be given a footing inside the office of Her Majesty's English Ministers, and that, since matters could only arise between the English government and this or that colony, the council would have little work to do.

Blachford thought that federation could only arise with regard to foreign policy, and he opposed the participation of the colonies in an imperial foreign policy because he feared it might lead to an attempt to bully the world. "Formerly," he contended, "it was found that we endangered the connection by claiming to

1 Letters of Lord Blachford, ed. G.E.Marindin (London, 1896), p. 425ff. In a Letter to Sir Henry Taylor, dated 20 Jan., 1885, Blachford enclosed a copy of "The Objections to the Colonial Board of Advice" which he had written in reply to Earl Grey's suggestion of a Council of Advice in the Pall Mall Gazette on 9 Jan., 1885. Blachford's reply appeared on 23 January. This led to the appearance in succeeding weeks of a large number of articles in which prominent public figures supported or opposed a Council of Advice.

2 ibid. p. 425; and Pall Mall Gazette, 23 Jan., 1885.

3 ibid. p. 428; and Pall Mall Gazette, 23 Jan., 1885.

As Blachford was replying to Grey's suggested federative council, he was probably referring to the Agents-General as a "council of ministers". In practice the Canadian High Commissioner held ministerial status in the Canadian government, and the Agent-General for Queensland held a similar position in his government.
interfere with the local affairs of the colonists. The doubt is now whether we shall not endanger it and ourselves by allowing them to interfere with our Imperial policy." Blachford's view was that this would be the result.

As far as the policy making powers of the Imperial Government were concerned in an imperial federation, Blachford's criticism reached the heart of the matter. In an imperial federation it was expected that this would no longer be a power which the Imperial Government would exercise exclusively. At the time when Blachford was writing, imperial foreign policy was based on the understanding of imperial problems by the Government of the United Kingdom alone. Although from the mid-1880s onwards, there was an increasing preparedness among British ministers and officials to consider colonial points of view where Britain's foreign relations affected any of the self-governing colonies in particular, the Imperial Government retained all powers of decision and action in its own hands long after the 1880s and 1890s when the imperial federation discussion was at its height.

In the long run, Blachford's doubts that the widely scattered

The other Australian Colonies and Cape Colony did not adopt this practice; but the New Zealand Government made the appointment into a political one after 1892.

Blachford's views had undergone little change since his retirement from the Colonial Office. In 1869 he had opposed the attempt by a group of ex-colonists to summon a conference of colonial representatives, because among other reasons, he thought that any attempt to cover all the principal colonies by one arrangement was injudicious. See Granville's Circular Despatch of 3 Sept., 1869, printed in G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, xlix (1870), C.24, Proposed Conference of Colonial Representatives, p. 3. Blachford's admission that he drafted the despatch is in a letter to Lady Rogers, Nov., 1869; quoted in Marindin, op. cit. p. 279.

4 ibid. p. 426; and Pall Mall Gazette, 23 Jan., 1885.

I ibid. p. 425.
nations in the Empire would have sufficient common interests to bind them together in foreign policy have been proved correct. Since 1945 the British Commonwealth as an entity has ceased to be a force in world politics, and the aims, objectives and needs of the individual members have diverged as the interests of each demanded.

By 1885 the great majority of those who were actively concerned in government, the press and in organisations such as the Royal Colonial Institute, the Imperial Federation League, the Fair Trade League and the Chambers of Commerce acquiesced in the retention of the self-governing colonies within the Empire. Many of them were willing to work to maintain and strengthen imperial unity; but there was much divergence of thought among them on the means to be employed. Probable only a minority vocally supported or planned new and closer constitutional ties. However, they all accepted the premise "that the relations of our colonies with the mother country must ultimately end either in disintegration or in some form of federation..."

The validity of the Imperial federationists' arguments rested, therefore, on the belief that the existing formal but loose ties, and a sentiment in favour of belonging to the Empire, would be insufficient to prevent the full independence of the self-governing colonies from the mother country. The passage of time has shown

that the imperial federationists were not so mistaken after all in this belief. Although Commonwealth membership might be retained, the grant of self-government since 1949 to colonies predominantly non-European in population has come to be termed independence, and increasingly to mean this in practice. The attachment of the Dominions to Great Britain, and to British political and other institutions, up to the Second World War, has since proved to be no real indication of the universal validity of this loose form of imperial tie.

In the 1880s a few, including such political figures as John Bright and Sir William Harcourt, still believed in the ultimate separation of the colonies from the mother country. They, and some others who warned that the basic assumption of the imperial federationists was false, found little support in an atmosphere of increasing imperial enthusiasm. Among the latter was Sir Charles Tupper, the High Commissioner for Canada, who, at the inauguration of the Imperial Federation League, stated that he could not agree to a declaration that ultimate federation or disintegration were the unqualified alternatives. Neither would he subscribe to the proposition that relations between the mother country and the colonies had to be changed to avoid disintegration. "So smooth have been the relations between the Dominion and the Imperial Government," he claimed, "so little friction has there been, that we have never come to them without meeting with a hearty and zeal-

ous response to all our efforts for the development of the country."

The stridency with which imperial federationists posed the alternatives of separation or imperial federation obscured the fact that the larger number of disinterested and practical people in Great Britain ignored both separation and federation. Some of these saw the possibility of a middle way which would avoid both extremes. Among the ideas on which they could build was Herman Merivale's recognition of the importance of sentiment and the Crown as means of upholding imperial unity without any further formal bonds. "It does not follow..." Merivale had contended, "that the attainment of domestic freedom is inconsistent with continued dependence on the Imperial sovereignty... Union might be preserved... long after the sense of necessary dependence is gone... And the Crown may remain, at last, in solitary supremacy, the only common authority recognised by many different legislatures, by many nations politically and socially distinct..." In addition to sentiment and the Crown as elements of unity, C.B. Adderley saw the value of mutual interests, such as emigration, co-operation, fellow-citizenship and "community of spirit". Adderley thought that "between the alternatives of dependence and separation lies the real secret of a lasting connection - that of a common partnership". Gladstone, with his contin-

1 ibid., p.44.
ual emphasis on "freedom and voluntaryism", also contributed an important element to this middle way between separation and imperial federation.

All these elements, sentiment, the Crown, mutual interests, cooperation, fellow-citizenship, "freedom and voluntaryism", were important factors in the desire and intention of the self-governing colonies in the late nineteenth century to retain their connection with Great Britain. The Colonial Governments were disinclined to recognise the alternatives of separation or imperial federation which were supposed to face them. Moreover, despite the pressures from the imperial federationists, and no matter what the personal views of ministers and officials might have been, the policies adopted by the Imperial Government avoided facing the same issue. The imperial federationist propaganda obscured from view the practical working relations which were being developed in the 1880s between the Imperial government and the governments of the self-governing colonies; and these, in the end, proved to be the means of securing a generally acceptable compatibility between imperial and colonial interests without the extreme alternatives of separation or imperial federation ever having to be faced. Despite the growth of the self-governing colonies into nations where colonial interests would take the first place, it was out of these undoctrinaire official attitudes in Great Britain and the colonies that the means of consultation and co-operation were to develop.

I House of Commons, 26 April, 1870. Hansard 3 Ser. vol. cc, pp. 1901, 1902.
CHAPTER 2

THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES: COLONIAL NATIONALISM AND THE EMPIRE

During his visit to the Australian Colonies, Lord Rosebery claimed that Australia had already established herself as a nation; but he did not see why the achievement of nationhood should necessarily lead to separation from Great Britain. "The Empire is a commonwealth of nations," he declared. Australian loyalty to the Empire, resting on "the golden thread of affection and descent", would be strong enough to survive the test of war, and would continue to exist "as long as the home country and daughter country were allowed to preserve their positions of mutual independence and mutual self respect".  

About two decades later Richard Jebb defined colonial nationalism as a "national sense of self-respect which chafes under a feeling of dependence upon the favour of others". In addition to self-respect, he observed that colonial nationalism had an element of self-assertion.

Both Rosebery's and Jebb's awareness of the self-governing colonies as emergent nations was only partial. They did not go beyond indicating something of the inevitable change in the attitude of a colony towards the mother country as it increased in wealth and population, and in internal self-government. Side by side with this there existed a growing feeling of distinctiveness among the

1 Speech at Adelaide, 18 Jan., 1884; quoted in Crewe, _op. cit._ vol. I, pp. 185-6.
2 Speeches at Sydney, 10 Dec., 1883, and Melbourne, 9 Jan., 1884; quoted in _ibid._ pp. 182-3, 184.
populations of the self-governing colonies, and of their particular interests, which marked them off from each other as well as from those who remained in Great Britain. By the end of the nineteenth century such a feeling could be found between Australians and New Zealanders, despite their relative proximity, as well as between Australians and the inhabitants of the United Kingdom.

This distinctiveness was comprised of many elements; and, bearing in mind the different stages of its development in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, it may perhaps best be described as a separate aspiration for nationhood. In Canada, the contribution of the French Canadians to the development of a distinctive Canadian aspiration for nationhood must not be overlooked. In Australia, one of the elements making for an Australian sense of a separate nationality was the identification in literature of the real Australia with the bush, and with the cult of mateship and equality. On a political and social level there was an insistence on democracy, equality of opportunity and freedom from privileges such as those of the aristocracy. A desire that Australia should be kept free from all the tensions and evils of the old world in Britain and Europe was paralleled by a belief in the unbounded future of Australia. To some this last factor was not exclusively insular; it included a belief in Australia’s "manifest destiny" in the Pacific. All these complex elements in Australian nationalism, as it had developed during the latter decades of the nineteenth century, go far to justify a remark made by a Governor of one of the Australian
Colonies that "the feeling of a separate nationhood was not apparent except by living in Australia".

In view of the many elements which were part of Australian nationalism by the beginning of the twentieth century, Richard Jebb made one surprising omission and one serious misreading in his analysis of colonial nationalism in Australia. However much or little there might be in reality, not the least part of colonial distinctiveness was the Australian's "bush image" of himself. Jebb, being solely concerned with colonial nationalism in its relationship to the mother country, made no mention of this, even though he recognised the contribution made by the radical Bulletin towards developing a sense of Australian nationality. The same basis premise led Jebb to a complete misunderstanding of the contribution of the Labour Parties in the Australian colonies to the growth of a sense of Australian nationality.

Radicals and Labour Party men, as well as historians of these movements, have long claimed a major if not the major contribution to the development of Australian nationalism. If this were so, it would make Australian nationalism insular and anti-militaristic,

I Chermside to Lyttelton, Secret, 10 Dec., 1903, Qld. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Secret Despatches, vol. II. Chermside noted the total absence of any such feeling among Australians living or travelling abroad whom he had met.

2 e.g. Bulletin 1887 onwards; R. Thomson, Australian Nationalism (Burwood, 1885); W. G. Spence, Australia's Awakening (Sydney, 1909); R. A. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, 1860-1910 (Melbourne, 1960); B. E. Mansfield, Australian Nationalism in the Growth of the Labour Movements in the 1880s in N.S.W. (unpublished M.A. thesis in the University of Sydney); Ailsa G. Thomson, The Bulletin and Australian Nationalism (unpublished M.A. thesis in the University of Melbourne).
and the important element in Australian nationalism of the growth of an Australian "Monroe doctrine" in the South Pacific, would then be discounted. Further detailed study is needed of the role of other groups in the development of Australian nationalism, and in particular of that group, which one historian has termed the nativist "middle class", whose interests made some of them seek Australian expansion in the Pacific. The claims of the radicals and the Labour Party men certainly need much modification; but Jebb denied the Labour Parties any contribution at all. He saw the Australian federation movement in the 1890s as "the outcome of a national sentiment", and he therefore labelled the Labour Parties as "colonial", that is, anti-national in outlook, almost solely on account of their lukewarm attitude towards federation. In the same way as Jebb overlooked the "bush image", he failed to see that the social ideas and policies of the Labour Parties in the Australian Colonies were something distinctively Australian by the beginning of the twentieth century.

In 1903, Sir Edmund Barton, the first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia, spoke of a "spirit of local patriotism" animating those who wanted an Australian Navy. The words were

1 C.S. Blackton, "Australian Nationality and Nationalism, 1850-1900"; Historical Studies. Australia and New Zealand, vol. 9, No. 36, May, 1961, pp. 361-367. Blackton's treatment is rather superficial and the groupings he discusses are over-simplified. In a sense Blackton's nativist "middle class" federationists are of the same broad group as those to whom Jebb gave most credit for being national minded.

2 R. Jebb, op. cit. pp. III, II5, II9. Having taken up this position, Jebb gave no explanation of his commendation of the federal Labour Party, within a few years after federation, for its "national policy on naval and military defence as well as on immigration.

deliberately chosen to indicate the connection of this feeling with Australia, and to distinguish it from the continuing sentiment for Great Britain. If a distinction between patriotism and nationalism is accepted as valid, and is applied to Australia at the beginning of the twentieth century, Barton's statement could be understood to show that he saw in Australia "the will to maintain and defend what is one's own and cherished". Whether or not any clear distinction can be upheld between patriotism and nationalism, some of the elements which are usually regarded as going to make up modern nationalism, such as the awareness of a sense of nationality and liberty, in the guise of full autonomy both political and economic, were at least present in Australia by the beginning of the twentieth century, although in a weak and somewhat different form in comparison with European national movements; and in some cases a nationalist drive for Australia's political and economic domination in the Pacific had shown itself.

On the other hand, in European terms, colonial nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century might well have had some similarity with particularism. Had that been so, the feeling in the colonies for Great Britain would have been the cornerstone of a continuing British nationalism in which a common language, heritage and

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1 This is Johan Huizinga's definition of patriotism in "Patriotism and Nationalism in European History", reprinted in Men and Ideas (New York, 1959), p. 97.
Several of the most important writers on nationalism uphold a distinction between patriotism and nationalism, but not as a result of the same reasoning. It is possible to apply Huizinga's distinction, with some qualification, to the development of national feeling in a colonial society, such as Australia; but it is very difficult to make Karl Deutsch's ultimate distinction applicable. Karl W. Deutsch, Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality (Cambridge, Mass.,
culture would have remained important elements. Indeed, some imperialists in Great Britain expected something of this nature to result, and in the 1880s the use of the term "local" to describe a colonist's feeling for Australia seemed to give point to such an expectation. The point of departure for a contrary development was that circumstances enabled a Canadian and an Australian nationality to develop because "they formed a political and geographical entity". As a result, Canada and Australia, by the end of the nineteenth century, had gone a long way towards fulfilling a definition of nationalism: that "nationalism is a state of mind, permeating the large majority of a people and claiming to permeate all its members; it recognises the nation-state [i.e. in the form of a self-governing colony and particularly the Dominion of Canada and the Commonwealth of Australia] as the source of all creative energy and of economic well-being. The supreme loyalty of man is therefore due to his nationality, as his own life is supposedly rooted in and made possible

1953), p.78 and note on page 232. This is only one of the difficulties of applying concepts of nationalism, based on the development of nationalism in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, to a colonial society.


Even Sir Henry Parkes in 1884, when writing on the imperial connection primarily for the English reader, referred to colonists as being "only Englishmen with a more ardent temperament". H. Parkes, "Australia and the Imperial Connection", Nineteenth Century, May, 1884, p.371.

It is useful to try to relate the growth of Australian national feeling to generalisations about nationalism and to the development of nationalism in Europe and elsewhere; but the differences rather than the similarities are of most significance. Although the population of the Australian Colonies was European in origin, Australian nationalism did not arise from a merging of many cultures, as in the case of the development of a sense of American nationality in the United States, nor did it derive from the traditions and culture of the past as happened among many peoples in central and eastern Europe. Australian nationalism had some historical origins in its inheritance of British traditions; but the elements distinguishing Australian national feeling from its kinship with "Britishness" were forward looking and not backward looking. Australian national feeling was inspired and sustained to a very large extent by a belief in the new and distinctive achievements awaiting Australia and Australians in the future. Some of the features which distinguished a growing Australian national feeling from "Britishness" were apparent by the 1880s; and Australians reached very different answers to two insistent questions. Would the increase in the numbers of the native-born population affect the closeness of ties with Great Britain? Is loyalty to Australia compatible with loyalty to Great Britain?

By 1881 in the eastern Australian Colonies those who were

I H. Kohn, _op. cit._ p. 16.
I see tables in C. M. O'Gair's 'Secret Documents in Australian History' from the third edition which seem to indicate that the proportion of Australian-born children born in the 1880s to the total population of the 1880s and 1890s was not as high as might be expected. This was regarded as the time in the Australian colonies when the development of an Australian national identity might start. In addition, the Australian colonies had been regarded as British by those who put the fact that they were Australian born.

The question now is how to determine the real importance of the immigration into Australia in the 1850s. The amount of discussion on this topic is much in evidence, and not in the least because the development of an Australian national identity might start. The younger generation, a discussion becomes apparent in the 1880s and the country. A partition, the Australian-born introduced the majority of the colony, who had emigrated either as adults or as children from their mother.
and British born because opinion on certain important issues cut right across this division. This is especially true with regard to the despatch of the Sudan Contingent, the agitation for British annexation of the New Hebrides, the agreement on the Australian Auxiliary Naval Squadron, the reaction to Sir Henry Parkes' bill to change the name of New South Wales to Australia and, some years later, to the despatch of the contingents to South Africa. Neither did Australian birth preclude a colonist from also being a supporter of imperial unity. W.B. Dalley, who despatched the Sudan Contingent, was colonial born and at the same time was an ardent supporter of the imperial link. In the 1880s the Australian born Alfred Deakin was one of the foremost champions of Australian interests against the policy or the inertia of the Imperial Government in the South Pacific. In 1905 he became President of a newly reconstituted Imperial Federation League in Victoria. On the other hand, several of the leading radicals in New South Wales in the 1880s, such as Thomas Walker, J.F. Archibald and W.G. Spence, who advocated separation from Great Britain, were not Australian born; and in the 1890s and 1900s several of those, who through the Labour party contributed much to the shaping of Australian democracy and society, were not Australian born. Among them were W.M. Hughes, W.A. Holman and Andrew Fisher.

In the Australian Colonies the question of Australian birth was linked very closely with an Australian view of social progress, democracy and freedom in internal affairs from interference by the Imperial Government. The desire to be free from the antagonisms and
quarrels of the old world was very noticeable with regard to the bitter issue of Irish Home Rule. These attitudes in turn gave rise to some exclusive elements in Australian nationalism. In order to defend the rate of social progress and the higher standard of living in the Australian Colonies, further assisted immigration, particularly of the unemployed and destitute, was opposed. The Trade Unions adopted this attitude the most vehemently, but they received a fairly substantial amount of support from members of the colonial legislatures and from the press. Some of the Australian born went further and claimed that they alone should have the deciding voice in the destiny of the Australian colonies. All the native born would not have agreed with such a claim. Instead they would probably have accepted as an Australian "every person who was born on the continent or who comes to permanently settle on it or to throw in his lot for weal or woe with it..." The implication was that such a person would accept and become part of Australian democracy and society.

With the increase in the numbers of the Australian born, and

1 Even such a conservative colonist as Sir Frederick Darley questioned, "Why import these old world quarrels amongst us?" Darley to Parkes, 28 June, 1886. Parkes Correspondence, A 921, pp. 275-7, (Mitchell Library).
3 R. Thomson, Australian Nationalism (Burwood, 1888), p. 135. Thomson was a radical and an Australian nationalist; but his definition of an Australian is not applicable solely to radical thought.
4 The Bulletin's attitude agreed with Thomson's definition; but added plainly that an Australian hated privilege, censorship, monarchy and conscription. "No nigger, no Chinaman, no lascar, no kanaka, no purveyor of cheap coloured labour" was or could become an Australian. Bulletin, 2 July, 1887.
as the personal link with the mother country became weaker, the individual colonist unconsciously tended to put his loyalty to Australia first and his loyalty to the mother country second. This did not necessarily mean that the two should conflict or that the former should become exclusive and all-pervasive as the radical paper, the Bulletin, claimed that it should. Indeed, an Australian born member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly was not exaggerating when he said: "We have among us men who, although they have never seen the shores of the old country, are just as loyal to and as much attached to her as if they had been born there."

In the 1880s the possibility that such a double loyalty could exist was not readily understood or accepted. Imperial federations in Great Britain expected that the desire for independence would increase as the percentage of colonial born in the self-governing colonies became greater. To avert any danger of independence, they thought that active steps should be taken immediately to bind the colonies more closely within the framework of the Empire. Radicals in the Australian Colonies, who were most insistent on the distinctiveness of colonial society and democracy, also reasoned that the desire for independence from Great Britain would grow with the increasing numbers of the colonial born. They contended: "An Australian by birth cannot have precisely the same affection for Great Britain as his British-born father; his son will have still

I Sir Saul Samuel, who had been Postmaster-General in N.S.W. before his appointment as Agent-General in 1880, pointed out to the Colonial Conference in 1887 the small amount of correspondence that passed between immigrants or colonists and Great Britain. Proceedings of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.5091, p.173.
less affection for the old lands, and it is almost inconceivable that his grandson should have any at all..." From this premise they argued that an Australian should put the interests of Australia "not merely first, but first, second and third", and it would follow, at least in the next generation, that Australia would become independent.

Such views and hopes were an over-simplification of the complexities of Australian and imperial loyalties. Something further of this complexity is to be seen in Sir Henry Parkes' seemingly paradoxical statement that, though he called himself an Englishman first and an Australian second, if the need arose he would put Australian interests before imperial interests. Few, if any, in the Australian Colonies, would have seen Parkes as an Australian nationalist; but the primacy of Australian interests was the ground on which he claimed that he acted at the time of the crisis over restrictions on Chinese immigration in 1888.

Before 1887 the radicals in the Australian Colonies did not unequivocally favour independence. In 1885 a contemporary had described the republicans in New South Wales as "a few people of little influence"; By the late 1880s there was without doubt a very

2 ibid., p. 80.
4 Parkes to Lord Carrington, 8 June, 1888. Parkes Correspondence, vol. 6, pp. 141-4, A 976, (Mitchell Library).
vocal republican minority in New South Wales in particular. Like the Sydney radicals, the Bulletin was not avowedly republican before 1887; but it was very critical of any apparent encroachments by the imperial authorities on Australian local powers.

Undoubtedly the spread of republican ideas was connected with the development of a primary, if generally inarticulate, loyalty to Australia, and was linked with the radicals' charge that "imperialists" in the colonies did not put Australia first. This was the main reason for radical opposition to the despatch of the Sudan Contingent in 1885, and to the naval agreement of 1887 which provided for contributions from the Australian Colonies towards the maintenance of an auxiliary squadron. On occasions radicalism and republicanism found expression in demonstrations against the imperial connection. Among these occasions were the first two public meetings held in Sydney in 1887 in connection with the Queen's Jubilee celebrations. In 1889 when G.R. Parkin, a Canadian propagandist for the Imperial Federation League, addressed a moderately attended meeting in Sydney on behalf of the League, strong objection was taken by a number of radicals who were present to Parkin's calling his audience Englishmen. Interjectors insisted that they were Australians, and the meeting ended in disorder.

1 B.E. Mansfield, op. cit. p.237.
2 By 1884 the Bulletin had been expressing what might be called a half-hearted republicanism.
3 See accounts of these meetings in the Sydney Morning Herald, II and 12 June, 1887. Reports of the disturbances and of expressions of disloyalty at these meetings were regarded as sufficiently serious for the N.S.W. government to cable the Agent-General in London to refute any such accounts appearing in the British press, and the Colonial Office was prepared to adopt a similar attitude. Telegrams from Carrington to Holland, 12, 14 and 16 June, 1887, and minutes by Bramston and Holland. C.O. 201/606.
4 Account of meeting on 18 June in S.M.H. 19 June, 1889. The S.M.H.
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4 Account of meeting on 18 June in S.M.H. 19 June, 1889. The S.M.H.
Although the attitude of the radicals and the Bulletin was determined to a large extent by their growing awareness of an Australian nationality, it did not take the form of advocating an aggressive policy. Instead the New South Wales radicals and the Bulletin favoured a policy which they termed "continentalism": that is, that the Australian Colonies should concentrate solely on their internal development and avoid any entanglements with New Guinea, the New Hebrides and other islands in the Pacific. Radicals and others advocated isolationism also because of their belief in Australia's greater security if she were freed from the possibility of being drawn into any of England's quarrels with other European Powers. A belief in neutrality as Australia's true destiny was not new in the 1880s. It had been discussed as a result of Charles Gavan Duffy's neutrality proposals in 1870; and it was an argument used by opponents at the time of the despatch of the Sudan Contingent in 1885 and again in 1887 during the debates on the Australian Naval Force Bill. In the 1890s it came to be used less often and with less conviction.

1 e.g. Bulletin, 31 March, 1883; and 24 April, 1883.

On the whole the radicals did not expect an immediate fulfilment of their hopes. They looked to the future when Australia would equal or surpass Great Britain in population and in economic and social progress. On account of their belief in Australia's unlimited development in the future, a further factor in their expectation of eventual separation from Great Britain was a belief that the Australian Colonies should find strength in unity by forming an Australian federation. Such a federation, in their view, could only be a prelude to independence. In 1891, the newly formed Labour Party in New South Wales did not go as far as this; but it adopted as part of its platform, "The federation of the Australian Colonies on a National as opposed to an Imperial basis".

In the 1880s intellectual radicalism did not have a monopoly of the expression of Australian national ideals. An incipient Australian nationalism was also expressed by a body which on the whole was politically conservative, and numbered among its members men who were substantially well-off, professional men and others of very much more limited means, but who were outside of "organised labour" in the trade unions. Since 1871 a number of the native-born Australians, with those resident in the colonies for a long time,


2 "Middle class" would be a useful label to apply to these sections of Australian colonial society, but it seems to suggest more of a class structure in Australia than really existed.
I had formed the Australian Natives' Association. It was particularly strong in Victoria in the 1880s. On the whole, the nature of the membership of the Australian Natives' Association made it an expression of a much more responsible section of Australian opinion than the Sydney radical groups. In the late 1880s, some of the younger native-born Victorians, and especially those in the professions, began to be influential in the Australian Natives' Association. It was from among these that the strongest support for Australian federation was to come in the early 1890s. The branches of the Australian Natives' Association in New South Wales were much less flourishing than those in Victoria, and as a body the Association was influential in Victoria only.

Unlike the radicals, the Australian Natives' Association did not support "continentalism". In 1886 it took an active interest in the Victorian agitation against French annexation in the Pacific. A deputation waited on Duncan Gillies, the Premier of Victoria, in support of the Victorian Government's opposition to what appeared to be the Imperial Government's weak policy towards the French. At this stage the Association adopted a position which was opposed to

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1 The membership of the A.N.A. and its role as a national organisation has to some extent been examined by C.S. Blackton in "Australian Nationality and Nativism, the Australian Natives' Association", *Journal of Modern History*, vol. xxx, No. 1, March, 1958. In this and in a subsequent article (1), the A.N.A. is the main basis for Blackton's emphasis on the predominance of the role of the nativist "middle class" in the Australian federation movement.


2 There is some difficulty in making any clear demarcation between radical nationalists and some of the members of the A.N.A.

3 Account in *S.M.H.* 18 March, 1886.
the imperial viewpoint on a specific question; but it did not follow from this that the Australian Natives' Association was actively seeking imminent separation from Great Britain. It was another matter whether separation might come eventually as a result of Australia's further development. Neither was the Australian Natives' Association as a body in favour of any scheme of imperial federation. In 1885 when certain members of the Association opposed a resolution at the inaugural meeting of the Melbourne branch of the Imperial Federation League that some form of imperial federation was "essential", they claimed to be speaking for the colonial-born who thought that imperial federation might be a red herring drawn across the path of Australian federation.

By 1888 the Australian Natives' Association in Victoria clearly included republicans and imperialists within its ranks. This caused the Bulletin to criticise the Association for not having the courage to be either republican or imperialists; and, because it was neither the one nor the other, it followed that the Australian Natives' Association was not truly Australian. This dichotomy in the attitudes of members of the Australian Natives' Association continued until 1890 when the Association rejected republicanism in its support for Australian federation. In Victoria

1 About a dozen of those present at the meeting supported this amendment. Report of Public Meeting held in the Town Hall, Melbourne, 5 June, 1885 (Melbourne, 1885), pp. 10, 14.
2 See account of annual dinner in Melbourne, 26 April, 1888, in Young Australia, April, 1888.
3 Bulletin, 7 April, 1888.
4 See resolutions submitted to the A.N.A. Conference of 1890 on Australian federation, none of which put forward a republican form of government. (Business paper in Parkes Correspondence, vol. II, p. 390, A 881 (Mitchell Library).
the Association played an important role in the Australian federation movement of the 1890s, and Alfred Deakin paid tribute to its support. Its members believed that federation would secure Australia's continued and uninterrupted progress in all aspects of national life. A federated Australia would also have greater influence in the Pacific, and in ensuring that Australian interests were not overlooked in imperial foreign policy. Further, if the existing loose imperial ties continued, Australian federation might be the means of establishing a relationship of near equality with Great Britain.

In the 1880s the squatters, with some of the more substantial professional men, businessmen and merchants still regarded themselves as forming an "upper class" in Australian colonial society. Membership of this class was in the main determined by inclination and personal or family experience. Their main interests, and particularly their ties with Great Britain, prevented its members from becoming the leaders of a national movement as a class or as individuals. This is one aspect of the development of Australian nationalism which bears a distinct resemblance to many of the national movements in Europe in the nineteenth century.

2 Among those in this section of the community were squatters, such as Sir Patrick Jennings who was Premier of New South Wales in 1856-7, and professional men, merchants and businessmen, such as Bishop Moorhouse, the Anglican Bishop of Melbourne, and G. D. Carter, the Mayor of Melbourne, who called the public meeting in Melbourne in 1885 to inaugurate a branch of the Imperial Federation League.
3 In this instance Karl Deutsch's examination of leadership in national movements can be applied without too much qualification to the development of nationality and nationalism in Australia. op. cit. pp. 75-7.
As a result of this rejection of leadership by the colonial "upper class", the national and social leadership, particularly in the creation of what by British and European standards was a democratic and almost egalitarian society, fell on the next "class" in Australian society. In terms of Australian society this "class" was very much broader and less uniform than any European middle class which I assumed the leadership of a national movement. Nor was there a clear cut division between this and the "upper class" on business or professional levels. In the 1890s the "middle class", for want of a better term, came to be associated with the Australian federation movement. It included Australian and British born, and in the national leadership there were such diverse figures as Sir Henry Parkes, Sir Edmund Barton, Alfred Deakin, Sir Samuel Griffith, C.C. Kingston and G.H. Reid.

Unlike these men, those who formed the "upper class" in Australian colonial society, were led by their interests and background to be the most vocal supporters of the imperial link and of some

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1 Any sections of Australian society in the late nineteenth century which might possibly be termed a "middle class" did not form as homogeneous or as clearly defined a social economic group as in Europe. The homogeneity and articulate expression of such sections of the community varied from State to State; for example, they were more coherent in Victoria, through the A.N.A., than in New South Wales.

2 In 1893, of the 156 members of the executive of the Australasian Federation League, 126 were professional men. Of these, 53 were legal and medical men, and 73 were connected with commerce, manufactures, land, building, investments, insurance, banking and the pastoral industry. A.W. Martin, "Economic Influences in the 'New Federation Movement'", reprinted in Historical Studies. Selected Articles (Melbourne, 1964), p. 218.
form of closer ties. On account of their interests many of them favoured Australian economic expansion in the Pacific. They were able to keep in closest touch with the mother country. Although some families had come fairly recently from Great Britain, others had been in the colonies for several generations. The sons of these "upper class" colonists would also be favourably disposed towards the imperial tie. In some cases they were sent to England for their education, and they became the officers in the Colonial Volunteers and Militia. It was this section of the community which would be reached when, in December, 1888, the Australasian Naval and Military Gazette became Young Australia, the journal of the Victorian branch of the Imperial Federation League. There was not, therefore, too much exaggeration in a radical assertion that imperialists in Australia were "as a rule, persons of considerable social standing, and generally of great wealth"; but there was less justification for the claim that "their influence with the Imperial Government and in creating an image of Australia is out of all proportion to their numerical strength".

When Lord Loftus, the Governor of New South Wales, told the Colonial Office that the general desire in that colony was for Imperial federation, his statement was based on the views of the sections of colonial society with which the Governor would have

I R. Thomson, op. cit. p. 83. One of the radical papers went further than Thomson in thinking that probable supporters in Australia for imperial federation were "grey-bearded men whose early life in Great Britain implanted in their minds the Toryism of forty years ago, and that remains their creed to the present day". Australian Star, 6 July, 1889.
most contact. On the whole, it was also the members of the squatter, professional, merchant and business sections, apart from vice-regal circles, with whom visitors to the Australian Colonies, such as the Duke of Manchester, the Earl of Rosebery, the Earl of Carnarvon, Sir Thomas (later Lord) Brassey, Sir Charles Dilke, and J.A. Froude, came into contact. The views of the same circles of colonial society were taken by certain sections of the British public as being truly representative of colonial opinion. As much, or even more, notice was taken by press, business and financial circles in England in the 1870s and early 1880s of the views of men who had spent a period in the colonies and had then returned to England. These ex-colonists had more identity with the views of Englishmen than with those of the colonists among whom they had lived for a time.

Once a colonist had returned to England, he soon became out of touch with the realities of colonial growth, and the effect of this growth on the colonists' regard for themselves and on their attitude towards imperial policy. Further, the ex-colonists were out of sympathy with the democratic colonial governments. They had either been conservatives themselves while in the colonies, or they still had close business or personal links with conservative circles in the

I Loftus to Derby, Confd. 30 Dec., 1884. C.O. 201/601.
2 Yet there is a great difference in the value of Dilke's observations in 1889 in comparison with those of Froude in 1885-1886. J.A. Froude, Oceana (London, 1886); C.W. Dilke, Problems of Greater Britain (London, 1890). Certainly the colonial circles in which he moved account for certain of Froude's remarks on the "Englishness" of the colonies. ibid. p. 215.
This was a point on which Herman Merivale had commented in 1870, when he said that many of those who disliked the looseness of the imperial link were really governed by their antipathy towards the colonial democracy which was a leading feature in the existing imperial situation. In their dislike of colonial democracy, many of the ex-colonists failed to recognise the strength of colonial loyalty to Great Britain as an offset to colonial determination to oppose any imperial interference in their internal affairs. This failure was the main reason why the ex-colonists were generally viewed with such dislike by the colonial governments, and their rights or ability to speak for the colonies were denied.

Sometimes it was felt in the colonies that perhaps the charges against the Imperial Government of seeking the separation of the colonies were not genuine, but "the work of a few gentlemen who are more conspicuous at home as the representatives of colonial opinion than in the Colonies themselves". When, from 1868 onwards, these same ex-colonists became the leaders of the Royal Colonial Institute and then of the imperial federation movement, it was inevitable that they should be regarded with even greater suspicion in the colonies, and

I For example, Sir Charles Nicholson, an ex-colonist from New South Wales, was very active in the foundation of the Colonial Society in 1868-1869; and as a conservative he remained a strong opponent of the Cowper Government in that colony. Berry Papers, vol. I7, Uncat. MSS. Set 315, Nicholson to Berry, 19 April, 1862, (Mitchell Library).

2 H. Merivale in Fortnightly Review, new series vol. 7, Feb., 1870, p. 173

3 There were two outstanding exceptions to this. Hugh Childers and Sir Daniel Cooper were held in high esteem by the Victorian and New South Wales Governments respectively; but on occasions they held official appointments from these Governments as Agent-General or as Acting Agent-General. Sir Daniel Cooper had financial connections in the City of London. Childers held office as First Lord of the Admiralty in Gladstone's 1868 Government, and was Secretary of State for War and later Chancellor of the Exchequer in Gladstone's 1880 Government.

4 S.M.H., editorial 26 Oct., 1869.
that doubts should arise concerning the genuineness of the denials by ex-colonists and other imperial federationists that they intended no reduction in colonial autonomy. Another cause of colonial criticism of the ex-colonists was that they regarded colonial federation as a prelude to imperial federation. Yet there was much muddled thinking on the relationship between the two kinds of federation by those in the colonies who disliked colonial democracy. Among these was one colonist from New South Wales, who, at a London meeting of the Imperial Federation League, accused those who were working for Australian federation of being disloyal to the Queen, and insisted that they "were really enemies of the Imperial connection, and wanted to use Federation as a means of separating from the mother country".

II

During the long period of general European peace in the nineteenth century and of Britain's undisputed supremacy of the seas, there was little reason for Australian colonists to question the existence or the benefits of the imperial tie between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies. From the 1880s onwards with France, Germany and Russia active in the Pacific, Australia's immunity from any threat by another Power could no longer be so certainly taken for

1 Among Anglo-Australians, who were stalwarts of the imperial federation movement, were F.P. Labillière, William Westgarth, Harold Finch-Hatton, J. Denistoun Wood, J. Hogan, J. Henniker Heaton and Sir Daniel Cooper.
2 F.P. Labillière denied an Australian criticism that imperial federation was "spred herring drawn across the path" of Australian federation. He claimed to have been an Australian federationist long before he became an imperial federationist. Imperial Federation, June, 1886, p. 164.
3 Sir Alfred Stephen to Parkes, 10 July, 1891. Parkes Correspondence, A 928, pp. 67-70, Mitchell Library.
granted. Between 1884 and 1886 the German annexation of part of New Guinea and the threat of French annexation in the New Hebrides caused the advantages of the imperial tie to be questioned in the Australian Colonies. Certainly the majority, as in Canada and New Zealand, were either indifferent to the imperial link or continued to take it for granted; but some of the questioning was also a repercussion from the imperial federation movement in Great Britain. In this respect the Sydney Morning Herald made a very pertinent comment about the general attitude in 1887 in the Australian Colonies towards the imperial tie: "The simple fact is, that the connection with the mother country has been taken for granted by the people of Australia, and it was, therefore, not discussed by them until the discussion was forced upon their attention by reports of discussions at home... But so many theories of Imperial federation have lately been discussed at home that the question has been taken up here, and out of it the question of separation as an alternate policy has arisen. But Imperial federation has never been the live question that it has been at home, and the question of separation is virtually a dead one. The English connection has been looked upon as a matter of course... It exists and it has been taken for granted..."

Possibly the theoretical basis of the imperial link would have remained unquestioned had not certain important questions arisen in the 1880s. The Australian Colonies were then forced to discuss the nature and significance of the imperial tie and of the

I S.M.H., editorial 20 Dec., 1887.
existing relations between the mother country and the Australian Colonies. The most important of these questions were connected with New Guinea, French penal settlements and annexation in the Pacific, Chinese immigration into Australia, the despatch of the Sudan Contingent and the naval defence of the colonies. Discussion in the Australian Colonies on the imperial connection seemed to arise, therefore, whenever imperial interests appeared to be exercised at the expense of what colonists regarded as Australia's vital external interests, or whenever the jealously guarded rights of local autonomy appeared to be endangered.

This questioning of the imperial connection did not mean that there was any great amount of active disloyalty. Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith's advocacy of separation in January, 1885, on account of the German annexation of part of New Guinea, and threats at the end of 1884 by the Victorian Government of possible independence, found little support in the colonies. Yet on one occasion the view was put forward that these protests against imperial policy and threats of separation would not have been discussed in the press unless journalists "were convinced that it was the voice of a growing sentiment".  

1 This contention also finds support from the previous decade: first, when the suggestion of a colonial conference in 1869 led to the introduction of George Higinbotham's five resolutions in the Victorian Legislative Assembly; then in 1870, after the final withdrawal of the imperial troops, the discussions on neutrality in Victoria under Charles Gavan Duffy's leadership; the broad question of the colonies and Great Britain's treaty commitments which arose in 1871-1875 over the request of the Australian Colonies for the power to impose differential duties; and the agitation during the 1870s for the annexation of Fiji and New Guinea.

2 It is doubtful whether these statements of M'Ilwraith's should be taken too literally. In London, in July, 1884, he had expressed sympathy with the aims of the Imperial Federation League if colonial views would thereby have more weight in imperial policy.
Even Lord Augustus Loftus, the Governor of New South Wales, who was not particularly perspicacious with regard to a growth of Australian national feeling in the colonies, feared that there might be an adverse effect on colonial loyalty if the interests of the colonies appeared to be disregarded by the Imperial Government.

Certain public men in the Australian Colonies, such as G.H. Reid, as well as influential sections of the press, argued that the present state of imperial relations worked well and no deliberate changes were necessary. In the 1890s, when Reid had become, or was about to become, a supporter of Australian federation, he adhered to this view and contended that colonial federation "must not be expected to ripen the prospects of what is called Imperial federation..."

Statements made by other public men and in other colonial journals, that changes had to come in the relations between the mother country and the self-governing colonies, did not necessarily have any connection with the imperial federation movement. Sir Henry Parkes was among those who, in the 1880s, held the view that "a change in the relations between England and Australia must come and cannot be long in coming". The problem which was involved in

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1 Loftus to Derby, N.S.W. No.263, 31 Dec.,1884. C.O.201/601.
such a statement - that of eventually changing a relationship of dependence into one of near or full equality with Great Britain - could be discussed in the colonies without any intention whatsoever that equality should create additional formal ties such as some imperial federationists in England advocated. Although it might be an ultimate objective, few in the Australian Colonies in the 1870s or 1880s would have gone so far as to support Charles Gavan Duffy's contention that those colonies were "not dependencies of the Crown", but "Free States subject to the Crown of England - precisely as England is a free state subject to the same crown".

In 1884 Sir Henry Parkes suggested some ways in which he thought colonial autonomy might be extended and Australian external interests recognised. To secure the latter, Parkes saw the need for the Australian Colonies to speak with one voice in London, and not through a Federal Council such as that which was supported by the Victorian and Queensland Governments. Neither did Parkes accept the view which was frequently publicised in England that the Agents-General should form an advisory council or a committee of the Privy Council. He thought of specially elected representatives of the Australian Colonies as the members of a council or cabinet. The council would put the collective views of the colonies before the Imperial Government. Parkes believed that such a council, and particularly one which represented a federated Australia, would ensure

1 C.G.Duffy to Parkes, 31 March, 1870(?), Parkes Correspondence, A 921 (Mitchell Library).
2 A Federal Council had been set up in 1885. New South Wales, South Australia and New Zealand, for a mixture of motives, refused to join the Council. Even with regard to a Federal Council of such limited membership and scope, there were statements for and against it as a step towards imperial federation.
the equality which he desired to see between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. Although the imperial connection was to be retained and strengthened through this council, he did not intend that it should be the first step towards an imperial parliament and executive. Similarly, Australian federation, as advocated by him in 1889, was to secure full colonial autonomy and greater equality with Great Britain. He did not think that such a federation would lead to Australian independence. Colonial federation would ensure that Australian representations would carry more weight in imperial policy by means of the Imperial Council which he advocated.

This is one aspect of Parkes' intentions of securing a greater degree of equality between the mother country and the colonies. Another aspect appeared as if it might have as its main object the weakening of the existing ties between Great Britain and the colonies; but this would be a misunderstanding of Parkes' aims and methods. A common element can be found in his opposition to the despatch of the Sudan Contingent in 1885 and to the policy of the New South Wales Government under Sir Alexander Stuart in sup-

1 Parkes [to Salisbury], telegram, 4 Jan., 1890, Parkes Correspondence, vol. 46, p. 212; A 916 (Mitchell Library); and Carrington to Knutsford, tel., 7 Jan., 1890. C.O. 201/611.
2 Parkes to Salisbury, 2 Nov., 1889, and 4 Feb., 1890. Printed in Lord Carrington, Extracts from Diary, 1889-1890 (Mitchell Library).
3 An interesting suggestion, for comparison with that of Parkes', came from Sir Henry Loch, the Governor of Victoria. This was for a Federal Council with executive powers in the Australian Colonies. The collective views of the colonies would then be put to the Imperial Government by the Federal Council and supported by the Agents-General, who would in this case be acting as the mouthpiece of the Federal Council and not of the individual colonies. Loch to Stanley, Confd., 30 June, 1885. C.O. 309/I29.
porting the Imperial Government's attitude towards French penal settlements and annexation in the Pacific, as well as in his defiance of the Imperial Government at the time of the crisis over Chinese immigration restriction in 1888. In each of these cases, he saw a detraction from Australian freedom of action in defence of what the colonies considered as their vital interests and in deciding where those interests were to be found. In other words, Australian interests were to be found in the Pacific; but they could not be found in the Sudan.

Parkes, therefore, was representative of a point of view in the Australian Colonies which saw a change in the imperial relationship as being both necessary and certain. He saw this change in terms of increasing equality between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies, but not in any of the forms of imperial federation which had been suggested.

Others in the Australian Colonies could only see any increase in the stature of the colonies, which would result from their continued development and progress, as leading to separation. In general only a small number in the Australian colonies, from among the Irish and the intellectual radicals, came to desire separation; but it is likely that a larger number rather reluctantly believed that ultimate separation would be inevitable. It was an assumption rather than a conviction or an expectation. Among those who held this view were free trade followers of the Manchester School in New South Wales, such as Sir William McMillan, a wealthy merchant and
businessman and member of the Legislative Assembly. Some of the free trade journals in New South Wales and conservative papers in other States took a similar view. Some of these began to revise their attitude in the late 1880s in support of the existing ties being sufficiently strong to remain intact. Yorkshire-born Henry Copeland is representative of others who were actively loyal to Great Britain and would sincerely regret separation from Great Britain; but, because imperial federation seemed to be the only alternative, they thought that separation would have to come one day and hoped it would not come during their own lifetime. When the alternative of imperial federation practically disappeared from view in the 1890s, their sentiment in favour of Australia's remaining as a part of the Empire could be freely expressed again, and many of them became Australian federationists. Some others in the colonies in the 1880s, including a number of the members of the Australian Natives' Association, certainly believed that Australia must one day become independent from

I e.g. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 35, Legis. Assembly, 21 Nov., 1888, pp. 586, 587.
2 e.g. editorials in S.M.H., 12 Oct., 1869, and Argus 30 Jan., 1883.
3 e.g. editorials in S.M.H., 19 Feb and 27 March, 1885, and 13 Dec., 1887. Other sections of the press took up a somewhat more positive attitude towards separation. The (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, which purported to speak for the selector and growing manufacturing classes in N.S.W. (which were to become protectionist by the end of the 1880s), regarded separation at some future time as the way to overcome the remaining restrictions imposed on the Australian Colonies by the existing imperial relationship. e.g. editorial, 23 Jan., 1888. The Age, representative of the protectionist and manufacturing classes in Victoria, the South Australian Register and the Brisbane Courier also strongly upheld the interests of the colonies against the interference of the Imperial Government, and regarded the eventual independence of the colonies as inevitable; but by the later 1880s they were beginning to express a greater feeling of regret that this must occur. e.g. editorials in Age,
the mother country; and there was at least a few who would most likely support independence should it be found that Australian federation could not be achieved as long as the colonies remained a part of the British Empire, or that Australian federation was only possible as a step towards imperial federation.

In the reasoning and attitudes of these more or less reluctant separationists something further of the complexity of Australian attitudes towards the imperial connection may be seen. They were men who, like Parkes, wanted to see the unlimited development of the Australian Colonies. They wanted no interference with or reduction in colonial autonomy. They wanted vital Australian interests to be recognised and safeguarded by the Imperial Government as long as the imperial tie remained; but the diversity of this very disparate section of opinion is seen in that some favoured Australian expansion economically and territorially in the Pacific and some did not.

In one respect some of them came fairly close to the less extreme of the radical points of view. This was through the idea of alliance with Great Britain following independence. The radicals believed that it would be impossible for an Australian nationalism to develop and exist unless Australia separated from the mother country and became an independent political entity. They could see no other way by which Australia could emerge from a state of dependence to one of full equality with Great Britain. Then, and then

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15 June, 1888, and 15 Dec., 1888; S.A. Register, 26 March, 1888; 26 July, 1886, II April, 1886, and 24 Nov., 1888; Brisbane Courier, 4 May, 1886, 2 Jan., 1888, 24 May, 1897.
1 E.g. B.R. Wise, articles in Macmillan's Magazine, July, 1885, and August, 1886.
only, some form of alliance might be possible. The idea of alliance had another antecedent in the Liberal viewpoint, which was most current in England in the 1860s, that the independence of the colonies might be a necessary prelude to the formation of an alliance between Great Britain, the self-governing colonies and the United States of America. In 1888 M’Ilwraith’s National Party in Queensland, and the Bulletin in the 1890s, adopted the cry “Alliance not Dependence”. The form of alliance which was envisaged was never clearly defined; but undoubtedly those who supported this motto had in mind the removal of any remaining limitations on colonial self-government. Then any willing co-operation with Great Britain would be offered from a position of equality and not because of dependence on the mother country.

This attitude is seen most clearly in the continued criticisms in the colonies of the 1887 "naval tribute", and in the Bulletin’s change from republicanism in the late 1880s to support for Australian federation in the late 1890s. On the other hand, the use of the term alliance in the Australian Colonies did not necessarily involve a preliminary independence at all; but a recognition of equality between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies was still a pre-requisite. By the mid-1890s colonial journals, which in the 1880s had seen no alternative to eventual separation, came to support this interpretation of an alliance between the colonies and Great Britain. Side by

I In the 1860s Goldwin Smith and Sir Charles Dilke were among those who put forward this idea. There was some continuation of it in the 1880s and 1890s in the advocacy of an Anglo-Saxon alliance.

2 e.g. editorials in S.M.H., 12 June, 1896; and Brisbane Courier, 13 March, 1894, and 7 April, 1894.
side with Australian federation it offered an alternative to imperial federation.

In the records of the colonial parliaments and in the colonial press a large number of statements similar to this may be found: "The best of all federations is the federation of sentiment and goodwill". Those who went further and used the term imperial federation present a problem to determine what they meant. Few favoured federation in the strict sense of the term. At bottom it probably had one broadly accepted meaning in the Australian Colonies: that is, that the colonies should remain loyal to the mother country, and, therefore, should continue to remain a part of the British Empire. In addition, a recognition of mutual aid between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies was probably included. Sir Henry Loch, the Governor of Victoria, was certainly justified in remarking on the elastic character of the term in the Australian Colonies and on the various interpretations given to it. Indeed, as Loch stated, "the opinions as to its feasibility or otherwise varies in accordance with the construction each individual may place on the term Imperial federation, and the extent to which, in his opinion, it should be carried out". Sir Patrick Jennings, Sir Samuel Griffith and other leading political figures on several occasions proclaimed their belief in imperial federation, and Jennings said in 1887 that the Colonial Conference of that year

2 Loch to Derby, Confid., 20 Jan., 1885. C.O. 309/129.
showed that a measure of federation had already been achieved. These and other references to imperial federation in the speeches and writings of public men in the Australian Colonies have to be interpreted as an emphasis on loyalty to the mother country and the retention of some vague and undefined link of Empire through sentiment, the Crown and mutual advantages; or the term might be used as a means of declaring a belief in the permanent unity of the Empire.

Sometimes colonial statesmen gave adherence to some undefined form of imperial federation because of the material benefits that might accrue to the colonies in the sense of increased influence on imperial policy; but at the same time they were emphatic that all local powers must remain intact. James Service, who was premier in Victoria in 1883 when Australian interests in the Pacific were strongly asserted at the intercolonial conference in Sydney, was one of those who proclaimed such a qualified faith in imperial consolidation: "It may be difficult to say in what way so vast and scattered an Empire can be federated, but any scheme that may be decided upon, while it cannot take from us anything that we at present possess, must give to the colonies more tangible influence, and more legal and formal authority than they now have...."

1 Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1887, C.5091, pp.20-1.
2 Similarly, with regard to New Zealand, Keith Sinclair has found that, in general, there was widespread indifference to the question of imperial federation both in the House of Representatives and in the country at large; and that sentiments expressed in favour of imperial federation did not refer to any particular scheme for the formal federation of the Empire, but to the retention of an imperial link based mainly on sentiment. Imperial Federation. A Study in New Zealand Policy and Opinion, 1860-1914 (London, 1956), passim.
3 James Service to R. Murray Smith (Agent-General for Victoria), 20 Nov., 1884; printed in Imperial Federation, Feb., 1886, pp.45-7.
Certain individuals in the Australian Colonies, as well as ex-
colonists, published drafts of schemes for an imperial federation;
but there was little or no political agitation for the acceptance
of any of these schemes, which in themselves may be regarded as
imitative of others already published by Englishmen and Canadians.
No prominent political figures took part in the public meeting called
by G.D. Carter, the Mayor of Melbourne, to launch a branch of the
Imperial Federation League a few months after fervent loyalty to the
mother country had been shown by the offer and despatch of colonial
troops to the Sudan. The arguments put forward at the meeting in
favour of imperial federation clearly showed that none of the speak-
ers, including Carter himself, Bishop Moorhouse and Mr. Justice
Holroyd, was prepared to go beyond general expressions of a desire
for imperial consolidation. Despite the claims which were made by
the parent League in London of the progress of the movement in Aus-
tralia and New Zealand, the Victorian branch in Melbourne was the
only one to have any appreciable length of life. No branch was
formed at this time in New South Wales, Queensland or South Australia.

I D'Esterre Taylor, The Advantages of Imperial Federation (Melbourne,
1888); An Australian Native, "Imperial Federation or the Consolidation
of the Empire", Bankers' Institute of Australasia Journal, Jan., 1889, pp. 651-655; R. Christison, United Australia and Imperial
Federation (London, 1888); Sir Daniel Cooper, A Federal British
Empire the Best Defence of the Mother Country and her Colonies
(London, 1880); and The Imperial Federation of Great Britain and
her Colonial Possessions (London, 1891).

2 The intention of using this imperial fervour of the moment induced
Carter to call a meeting himself without waiting any longer for
someone else to take the initiative. Report of Public Meeting of
5 June, 1888 (Melbourne, 1885), p. 3.

3 Ibid. pp. 3, 4. Holroyd seemed to show too little understanding of
the views of his fellow colonists when he stated that one of the
principles of federation should be "a comprehensive scheme of interna-
tional defence... in which every member of the British Empire
shall bear a proportionate part". Ibid. p. 4.

4 Imperial Federation, Jan., 1886, p. 12; Feb., 1886, p. 41.
but a few colonists in Tasmania followed the Victorian example. The one branch in New Zealand, at Christchurch, held two meetings only.

The opponents of imperial federation in the colonies directed their attack against the institution of a legislative and executive structure for the British Empire rather than against the existence of a sentiment in favour of strengthening imperial unity. Out of the discussions on how to achieve a closer tie between the mother country and the self-governing colonies, one particular danger was recognised by both the supporters and opponents of imperial consolidation. Since the alternatives of independence and imperial federation appeared to be so distinct, any pressure in favour of a form of imperial federation might result in a stronger movement for independence either immediately or ultimately so as to safeguard colonial autonomy and its corollary, Australian society. This possibility was clearly recognised by the Sydney radicals as being likely to serve their own purposes. A more general feeling of letting well alone was expressed in such a statement as this: "Any attempt we make to meddle with the elastic bands which bind us to the mother country will be inevitably to snap them on the first strain..."

Attitudes in the Australian Colonies towards the imperial connection were little affected by political alignments. Sentiment

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I Some not very successful attempts were made to form branches in Queensland and South Australia after G.R. Parkin's tour on behalf of the parent Imperial Federation League in 1889.


3 Australian Star, 19 June, 1889. This was at the time of G.R. Parkin's visit to Sydney.


5 In the 1880s there were no political parties in the true sense. The opinions of a group were, therefore, liable to change with changing personal alignments. Neither had the free trade or protection issue assumed sufficient importance before 1889 for it to
was the main determining factor in favour of retaining the tie with Great Britain; but by 1887 there were some indications that loyalty to the mother country was not as unconditional as it had appeared to be at the time of the despatch of the Sudan Contingent from New South Wales in March, 1885. Events in the Pacific which involved Germany and France caused this conditional loyalty to be particularly expressed with regard to defence. If the colonies showed their loyalty to the mother country through support for her policy, and through bearing a share in the risks of that policy, then the mother country should also show a responsibility towards the Australian Colonies. She should consider the opinion and interests of those colonies, especially with regard to British policy in the South Pacific, and provide for the naval defence of the Australian Colonies against those European Powers which had become active in the Pacific.

In 1885 Ninian Melville, a rather radical member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly, asserted that the majority in New South Wales did not see the tie with Great Britain as a means by which Australia gained all the advantages and would advocate separate

form an election issue in New south Wales and become the basis of rudimentary party organisation. (i) In Victoria, the free trade party or group no longer existed as such, and it is difficult to see where the lines of division came between conservatives and liberals. (ii) In Queensland and South Australia the divisions were not parties but groupings based on special interests, such as the squatter and planter interests in Northern Queensland.

tion when those advantages appeared to be lessening. During the two years following the despatch of the Sudan Contingent, the material advantages in retaining the sentimental tie with Great Britain became more apparent. In the Australian Colonies these material interests were seen to lie in external defence and in loans for colonial development. However, it did not follow that bargaining and securing material advantages would replace sentiment as the major factor in determining attitudes towards Great Britain, or that separation would be advocated when the advantages in the imperial tie appeared to be lessening.

Throughout the 1880s there appear to be certain contradictions which add to the complexity of assessing Australian attitudes towards the imperial connection. Since 1883 the Queensland Government under Sir Thomas McIlwraith, and then under Sir Samuel Griffith, had been very critical of British policy with regard to New Guinea and the New Hebrides. At the 1887 Colonial Conference, Griffith showed the greatest readiness of all the delegates in London to identify the Australian Colonies with imperial policy; but on his return, Queensland, for complex reasons, refused to sanction the naval agreement. New South Wales spontaneously offered and despatched the Sudan Contingent in 1885; Victoria,

1 N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 16, 17 March, 1885, p. 35.
2 For example, the Evening News thought that independence could not be proclaimed immediately because the further development of Australia was dependent on obtaining cheap money from England, and the faith of investors would not survive the shock of independence. *Evening News*, 7 Jan., 1885.
from 1883 onwards, opposed British policy with regard to the New Hebrides and other Pacific Islands, forcefully urged her demands on the Imperial Government and even threatened to declare her independence. But in 1887 Victoria, after the most haggling over the contribution to the Australian Auxiliary Naval Squadron, voted her share almost without debate. New South Wales only did so after long debate in the Legislative Assembly. In the years immediately following the despatch of the Sudan Contingent, more critical views of the imperial connection itself developed in New South Wales, and there were some open expressions of disloyalty. In Victoria, despite her policy of "bounce and bully" towards the Imperial Government, imperial sentiment remained strong; and James Service and more particularly Alfred Deakin, two of Victoria's leading statesmen, believed in the growing power of Australia but saw that this could best reach fulfilment with in the Empire. In New South Wales in the 1880s once W.B. Dalley had retired from political life, and it must not be forgotten that he was a member of the Legislative Council and so was removed from the rough and tumble of political life, there was no other politician, not even Parkes, with Dalley's faith in the Empire.

One of the most significant developments in the relations between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies in the 1880s and 1890s was a growing sense in the Australian Colonies that certain responsibilities and duties could not be left entirely to the mother

2 N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 29, 24-25 Nov., 1887.
3 This shows clearly in Deakin's and Service's attitudes at the Colonial Conference of 1887. Procs. C. 50@I, p. 35-6.
country. They recognised that their isolation in the Pacific placed them in a special position. For this reason, they were prepared to share in the cost of strengthening what was essentially their local naval defence. In addition, they recognised that in certain matters there were purely Australian interests which might appear to be opposed to general and imperial interests; but it did not necessarily follow that separation was the only way to safeguard colonial interests. Sir Alexander Stuart, Premier of New South Wales in the mid-1880s, thought there would be no danger of separation from Great Britain as long as the mother country listened to and granted all the reasonable and unanimously expressed wishes of the Australian Colonies.

Over-emphasis on the growing Australian national feeling in the 1880s, and into the 1890s, leads to an exaggeration of the conflict between imperial and Australian interests. It was perhaps over Australia's position in the Pacific that in some Australians the primary loyalty to Australia was inclined to prevent a balanced judgment of Australia's strength and Britain's relations as a world Power with other States. This seems particularly true of Alfred Deakin in the 1880s, and especially during the Colonial Conference of 1887 on the naval defence question and even more so with regard to the New Hebrides.

To eliminate the probability of independence, without turn-

I Sir A. Stuart, Imperial Federation and Earl Grey's Suggested Board of Advice for the Colonies. Copy in N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, Box 146 (Federal Council), State Archives of N.S.W., Mitchell Library.
ing to imperial federation as the only alternative, it was nec-

sary to find a means of satisfying Australian national aspirations,

and so secure something nearer to an indefinable equality between

Great Britain and the Australian Colonies which would allow them
to remain a part of the Empire. Sir Samuel Griffith, one of the
leading Australian federationists, understood the nature of this
duality, but he did not believe that the two elements need be
mutually exclusive: "I am an Australian, and every object truly
Australian, everything that shall keep Australia for Australians
and their kinsmen of the Old World who will come to us, shall al-
ways command my most active help. But I decline to join in the
senseless cry that the interests of Australia and Great Britain
are in conflict, and that those who cherish the existing ties are
disloyal to Australia. The best men in both parts of the Empire are
sincerely trying to prevent any such conflict from arising..."

I Griffith’s election manifesto, May, 1888. Reprinted in F. Adams,
MAKING COLONIAL VIEWS KNOWN: THE AGENTS-GENERAL OF THE AUSTRALIAN
COLONIES AND THE COLONIAL OFFICE

The revival of interest in Great Britain in the 1870s in up­
holding the unity of the Empire led to criticisms of the machinery
of Empire as well as to attacks on what was believed to be a policy
which had separation as its aim. The methods and personnel of the
Colonial Office were the main objects of this criticism of the
machinery of Empire. The charge reviled most often against the
Colonial Office was that it was insufficiently informed about the
interests and views of the colonies; and for this reason, apart
from any others, colonial wishes were frequently ignored.

In the Australian Colonies the Colonial Office was also
quite often the object of attack; but here on occasions the main
target for criticism was not so much the Colonial Office's lack of
knowledge about the colonies, but what was believed to be Downing
Street's infringement of colonial autonomy through its interference
in colonial internal affairs. Australian criticisms of the lack of
information and understanding in England about the colonies were to
a much larger extent aimed at the British press and financial
institutions. Misrepresentation of the Colonial Office in the

I e.g. Argus, editorial 17 Jan., 1883; (Sydney) Daily Telegraph,
editorial 14 June, 1888.
The force of colonial strictures on the lack of attention to the
Australian Colonies in the English press is much weakened after
the early 1880s if consideration is given to the amount of com­
ment on matters in which the Australian Colonies were interested,
such as New Guinea, the New Hebrides and postal and telegraphic
communication. At the same time, the financial policies of the
Australian Colonies still remained targets for attack.
colonies was increased by the publication of criticisms of the
Office which came from some of the ex-colonists in England.

Much of the criticism of the Colonial Office in both Great
Britain and in the Australian Colonies was ill-informed. The period
between 1870 and 1885 shows clearly that the Colonial Office became
more and more aware of the changing climate of opinion in Great
Britain on the value of the Empire, and also of the need to act as
far as possible in accord with colonial as well as imperial inter-
est. The 1880s saw several serious issues under discussion between
the Colonial Office and the governments of the Australian Colonies.
On these issues the colonial voice was expressed within the Colonial
Office and it was certainly not disregarded.

Unfortunately for its reputation in the colonies, the Colonial
Office did not always have the power of final decision. The Foreign
Office, the Exchequer or the Cabinet had this power in several
questions in which the Australian Colonies found least satisfac-
tion in the attitude of the Imperial Government. In 1884 a Cabinet
decision overruled the recommendations of the Colonial office that
M'Ilwraith's annexation of New Guinea should not be repudiated.
With regard to the New Hebrides and French transportation of
criminals to the Pacific between 1884 and 1886, and also during
the crisis over Chinese immigration into Australia in 1888, the
Colonial Office could only urge the Foreign Office to take action
with the French and Chinese Governments.

1 See e.g. J. Henniker Heaton and J. Hogan.
2 See Chapters 5 and 9.
The long period from 1871 to 1892 when Sir Robert Herbert was Permanent Under-Secretary may be seen as one of gradual adjustment by the Colonial Office to the demands of colonial autonomy on the imperial relationship. Herbert had had colonial experience as Premier in Queensland in the early 1860s, and it is very likely that this personal contact with colonial politics and opinion made him more ready than Sir Frederic Rogers to listen to and consider colonial interests and the colonial point of view. On the other hand, Herbert had been associated with colonial conservatism in Queensland. His influence after 1871 on relations between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments stands as a contradiction to statements made in Great Britain and in the Australian Colonies in 1869-1870 condemning the baneful influence of the permanent officials of the Colonial Office. At a time when there were several changes of Secretary of State in a short period, Herbert's permanency and influence on Colonial Office policy became a matter for satisfaction. As one of the Australian Agents-General remarked, "Herbert is after all the Colonial Office".

There is abundant evidence in Herbert's minutes on despatches and correspondence from the Governors and the Agents-General.

1 After his return to England from Queensland, Herbert was at the Board of Trade for a while, and then, after one year in the Colonial Office as an Assistant Secretary, he became Permanent Under-Secretary in 1871. For a brief while after his retirement in 1892 he acted as Agent-General for Tasmania; and he returned to the Colonial Office in 1900 for a short time after Sir Edward Wingfield's retirement from the Permanent Under-Secretaryship. As Carnarvon's cousin, Herbert had aristocratic connections.

2 See forward re criticisms by R. Torrens, William Westgarth and George Higinbotham.

of his fair-mindedness towards the colonies, and his judicious consideration of their complaints and arguments. This contrasts with certain of the more impatient attitudes of the junior officials towards colonial demands; but even here perhaps the Colonial Office tradition was not entirely baneful as the colonies were so inclined to believe. An increase in preparedness to consider and, if possible, to understand and meet colonial views becomes apparent from a comparison of an official's attitude in his earlier days at the Colonial Office with that of his later years. As far as the relations of the Colonial Office with the Australian Colonial Governments and then the Commonwealth are concerned, this progression may be found during Sir John Anderson's career at the Colonial Office.

That there were Colonial Office traditions seems undeniable; but colonial critics and others were mistaken in viewing them as being merely static and mainly concerned with rigidity of outlook and traditionalism for its own sake. Any dislike for some of the attributes of colonial democracy did not influence the political heads or the permanent officials in their dealings with the Australian

I Anderson's background was different from Herbert's. He entered the Colonial Office in 1879 after an outstanding undergraduate career at Aberdeen University. His whole career was spent in the Colonial Office or in some connection with colonial affairs, and culminated in his appointment as Permanent Under-Secretary in 1902. Apart from his contacts with the colonial Premiers in 1897 and 1902, his personal experience of the colonies came fairly late in his career. In 1901 he accompanied the Duke of York to Australia for the inauguration of the Commonwealth, and in 1904 he became Governor of the Straits Settlements.
lian Colonies. The high calibre of the officials, the wide interests of some of them, and their knowledge of the colonies, although in general this was not drawn from personal experience of the colonies, received insufficient recognition in the colonies. Yet the colonies themselves, through the Governors and the Agents-General, supplied the Colonial Office with most of the information it received about colonial conditions and attitudes. Even more so than with regard to the permanent officials, the qualities of some of the Secretaries of State before Chamberlain were hardly appreciated in the colonies. This is especially true of Sir Henry Holland, later Lord Knutsford, who held office between 1887 and 1892 during what was in some ways an important period of development in imperial relations.

II

In Great Britain and in the Australian Colonies the recognition of the need to make colonial views known and understood in the Colonial Office led to suggestions from 1869 onwards for the creation of additions to the existing machinery of Empire. In particular the inadequacy of the Governors as the channel of communication between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments was emphasised.

Among the critics in Great Britain of the methods and personnel of the Colonial Office was Robert Torrens, a former Treasurer.

1 Apart from the Blue Books, newspapers and other colonial publications, special reports were furnished at the request of the Colonial Office, e.g. on colonial attitudes towards imperial federation.

2 Holland had been Legal Adviser in the Colonial Office from 1867 to 1870, and then Assistant Secretary until 1874.
urer and Premier of South Australia. On April 26, 1870, he moved in
the House of Commons that a Select Committee should be appointed to
ascertain whether the existing means of communication between the
Imperial Government and the governments of the self-governing
colonies were adequate, and, if necessary, to suggest ways of im-
provement. Torrens claimed that the Secretaries of State for the
Colonies were unaware of the real nature of conditions in the
colonies and of their attitudes towards Great Britain. This meant
that the permanent officials in the Colonial Office had too much
influence in maintaining a tradition of enforcing British policy
in the colonies. As imperial officers, the Governors were the means
of conveying the policy of the Imperial Government to the colonial
governments and of promoting its interests; but because their
future advancement depended on the Secretary of State, they were
not "suitable channels for advocating the colonists' cause from
the colonies' point of view".

To improve the means of communication between the Imperial

I Hansard 3 Ser. vol.cc, p.1847. A search in the leading Australian
newspapers has failed to find any references in the colonies to
Torrens' motion. Evidently the London correspondents had not re-
garded it as sufficiently important to include in their regular
newsletters. Neither does Torrens' motion appear to have drawn
any response from the Australian Agents in London, as it did
from Sir John Rose on behalf of Canada. Rose's Memo to the
Colonial office is quoted in D.M.Farr, "Sir John Rose and Impe-
rial Relations", Canadian Historical Review, vol.33, No.1, March,
1952, pp.25-28. Rose was a semi-official Canadian representative
in London.

2 Hansard 3 Ser. vol.cc, pp.1825-6.

3 Ibid. p.1835. C.B. Adderley in A Review of "The Colonial Policy
of Lord John Russell's Administration" by Earl Grey (p.25) had
written in a similar vein. In general such remarks were at vari-
ance with the calibre of men appointed as Governors in the 1860s
and afterwards.
Government and the governments of the self-governing colonies, Torrens suggested that the colonial governments should appoint envoys who would hold a position comparable with that of an envoy or a charge d'affaires of a foreign country. The colonial envoys should be informed of any measure affecting their colonies, and, because they had first hand knowledge, they should have the important function of offering advice and suggestions to the Secretary of State. Torrens did not see his suggestion for the appointment of colonial envoys as having any connection with proposals for setting up an Advisory Council.

Two main objections were immediately raised against the appointment of colonial envoys. It was thought incongruous that a dependency, even as self-governing one, should send an envoy to the Imperial Government; and, moreover, the appointment of colonial envoys would mean that relations between the mother country and the colonies would become foreign relations and so tend towards the dissolution of the Empire. Further, if a rival line of communications was established in addition to that already existing between the Secretary of State and the Governors, the favour shown

1 Hansard 3 Ser. vol.cc, p.1834. At the same time Torrens also suggested that imperial interference in the internal affairs of a colony should be lessened by limiting the Governor's power of veto to colonial Acts which infringed the Royal Prerogative or were inconsistent with imperial treaty obligations.
2 ibid.
3 Torrens rejected an Advisory Council as impracticable and inconsistent with the theory of the constitution. Letter to the Pall Mall Gazette, 31 Dec.,1869, in which Torrens first outlined his suggestion for the appointment of colonial envoys.
4 Hansard 3 Ser. vol.cc, H. of Commons, 26 April,1870, pp.1837, 1863.
to such envoys in Great Britain "would expose them to unjust suspi-
cions in the Colonies and impair their influence..."

Probably the most condemnatory attitude in 1870 was that adopted by Herman Merivale. By implication he denied the inadequacy of the Governors as a channel of communication, and he questioned if there could possibly be any room for a Colonial Agent as a member of a council or otherwise: "If he opposes the view of his constitu-
ents (i.e. of the colonial cabinet for the time being), he will be simply in the way, and must be removed accordingly. If he urges them, he is superfluous, and will have to make unnecessary business for himself in order to earn his salary. The whole scheme - frame it in detail how you will - tends to a complication of machinery which must either be useless or inconvenient."

Torrens and Merivale seemed to see the functions and powers of a colonial envoy resting on different foundations. If his position was to be comparable with that of a foreign envoy, a colonial envoy would act under instructions from his government. Torrens did not explicitly state this; but it seems implied to a greater or lesser extent in the role he saw the colonial envoys playing of offering advice to the Secretary of State. Unless their advice was in accord with the views of the colonial governments, they would be no more useful than the Governors in urging the interests of the colonies. Merivale seemed wholly to discount the possibility that

I ibid. p. 1850
a colonial envoy would act entirely, or almost so, under instructions from his government, and perhaps hold ministerial status.

In the latter part of 1869 the personnel and methods of the Colonial Office were under attack on a rather broader front from a group of ex-colonists in London. They claimed that the British Parliament was absorbed in domestic affairs, and the Colonial Office was "ill-adapted for carrying on friendly intercourse with Colonial Governments, or representing their wants and wishes". Further, the Colonial office was out of step with the publicity that the other government departments gave to their activities and policies. The correspondence which passed through the Colonial Office was only partially and irregularly published, and the permanent officials, who were unknown to the public, practically controlled colonial policy. However unexceptionable they might be as private individuals, as officials they were "liable to the official bias of all long-continued and unchecked authority".

In 1869-1870 there appeared to be more than a little justification for these criticisms. The beginnings of the upsurge of interests in imperial questions, and the consequent movement for imperial consolidation, coincided with the Gladstone Government's


2 Resolution submitted by W. Westgarth and adopted at the Cannon Street Meeting, 1869. Quoted in The Colonies and the Cannon Street Meetings (London, 1870), p.34; reprinted from letters to the European Mail.
decision to withdraw the imperial garrisons from the self-governing colonies. In view of the continuation of the Maori War in New Zealand, these ex-colonists believed that the Imperial Government's policy was intended as a step in the direction of encouraging the colonies to separate from the mother country. Led by James Youl (late of Tasmania), some of the ex-colonists attempted to call a conference of colonial representatives in London to discuss the state of imperial relations and to put colonial views clearly before the Imperial Government. The colonial governments were invited to appoint representatives, and a number of ex-colonists in England were prepared to act as spokesmen for the colonies.

Apart from the fact that the Imperial Government disapproved of the ex-colonists' action, it is unlikely that the colonial governments would have responded to this invitation. Although it was often asserted in the colonies that the Colonial Office paid little attention to their wishes, strong objection was taken there to the fact that ex-colonists had called the conference and to the charge that independence was desired by the colonies. As far as the governments of the Australian Colonies were concerned, no radical changes were wanted; the important fact was, and remained, that colonial points of view should be considered by the Imperial Government. This was the basis of all colonial criticisms of the Colonial Office. Granville, the Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1869.

in informing the colonial governments of his objections to the proposed conference, did not deny the need for an expression of colonial views; but he claimed that the wishes of the colonists were "likely to be more faithfully and effectively brought before the Home Government by the Local ministers, who are in immediate contact with the communities they represent, and through the Governor, who is responsible to Her Majesty for furnishing all requisite information". Officially none of the colonial governments denied Granville's claim; but Victoria and New Zealand, the colonies which most recently had been openly critical of imperial policy as it affected them, again stressed the need for colonial viewpoints to be considered by the Imperial Government.

In Victoria the outspoken George Higinbotham, then a member of the Legislative Assembly, strongly disagreed with Granville's claim that the Governor was the most suitable channel of communication. Higinbotham concentrated his attack on the Governor's dual role in a colony as an imperial officer and as a channel of communication. In addition, Higinbotham attacked the influence of the

1 Granville to Governors of self-governing colonies, 8 Sept., 1869. Printed in ibid., p.3.
2 This despatch had been drafted by Sir Frederic Rogers, then permanent Under-Secretary, "to turn the flank of some fellows who are trying to set up an anti-Downing Street Colonial Conference". Rogers to Lady Rogers, quoted in G.E. Marindon, op.cit., p.279.
3 Despatches in reply from the Governors of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, printed in C.24, pp.3, 4, 6-8; and C.51 (1870), pp.3-4. A Canadian, but similar view, was expressed by Sir John Rose in his Memo. to the Colonial Office on Torrens' motion in 1870; quoted in D.M. Farr, op.cit., pp.23-25.
4 Despatches from the Governors in reply to Granville, printed in C.24,p.8, and C.51,p.3.
permanent officials of the Colonial Office.

The Governor was the representative of the Crown and of the Imperial Government. The question of how far the Governor acted solely on the advice of his ministers, or whether at the discretion of the Secretary of State he should act contrary to ministerial advice, had caused much difficulty on occasions between the Imperial and Colonial Governments. The root of the problem lay in the fact that it was most difficult in practice to define clearly what were imperial matters as distinct from local ones. Several subjects were neither wholly the one nor the other. It was on this problem, and on that of colonial attempts to assume certain powers which had always been regarded as imperial, that the need for consultation between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments became most apparent. In general, it may be said that in practice ministerial responsibility was continually being extended at the expense of the Governor's power as laid down in the Instructions.

I Higinbotham moved five resolutions in the Victorian Legislative Assembly on 2 Nov., 1869. Vict. Parl. Deb., vol. 9, p. 2123ff. Inter alia in these resolutions he laid down: "That the official communication of advice, suggestions or instructions, by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Her Majesty's representative in Victoria, on any subject whatsoever connected with local government, except the giving or withholding of the royal assent to or the reservation of Bills passed by the two Houses of the Victorian Parliament, is, a practice not sanctioned by law, derogatory to the independence of the Queen's representative, and a violation both of the principles of the system of representative government and of the constitutional rights of the people of this colony." ibid. p. 2123.

The five resolutions were adopted by the Victorian Legislative Assembly after several days of debate; but no government in Victoria showed any eagerness to implement them. Vict. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, II May, 1870, pp. 416-419.

2 One of the most important of such questions had arisen in Victoria in 1868, and it had led to the recall of the Governor, Sir
The Instructions had undergone no change with the grant of responsible government; therefore Higinbotham claimed that as long as these Instructions remained unaltered, with the consequent interference by the Imperial Government in a colony's internal affairs, self-government existed only "by law but not in fact". By his Instructions the Governor was given power of veto and of reserving colonial Bills for the Queen's pleasure; and he was also required to report regularly on colonial affairs to the Secretary of State. In practice, since the passage of the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865, restrictions on the colonial legislatures in internal affairs, through reservation or disallowance, operated only where it was felt that some co-ordination of colonial legislation was necessary in the interests of imperial unity.

Higinbotham was concerned with the letter of the Instructions and not with any modifications which had been or might still be worked out in practice. He claimed that under the Australian Colonies Government Act (1856) it was only with regard to the reservation of Bills that the Governor was to be instructed by the Secretary of State. Otherwise the Governor, as the Queen's representa-

Charles Darling. A similar difficulty arose in New South Wales in 1872 with regard to the Governor's powers under the Audit Act.


The first changes in the Instructions were made with reference to Canada in 1874 in response to Canadian representations. Changes in the Instructions to the Governors of the Australian Colonies will be discussed in Chapter 8.

2 In a (secret) circular despatch of 9 March, 1892, Lord Knutsford asked that the sending of these reports should be resumed. Some Governors did so, and in a further (secret) despatch of 21 Nov., 1896, Chamberlain asked for reports at intervals of one to three months.
tive, should act on the advice of his ministers. Higinbotham's most stringent criticism was reserved for the permanent officials in the Colonial Office. They, and not the Secretary of State, were the real rulers of the colonies, and particularly the permanent head - "a person named Rogers" - who inspired every Secretary of State for the Colonies "with Colonial Office traditions, Colonial Office policy, Colonial Office ideas". However, despite his criticisms, Higinbotham did not believe that the colonies would need to separate from Great Britain.

Few in the colonies upheld Higinbotham's extreme view that no communications should be sent between the Imperial Government and the Governor of a self-governing colony with regard to the internal affairs of that colony. The Governor's role as a channel for the expression of colonial views was of more interest in the colonies, because it was recognised that information from the Governors was "necessarily meagre and incomplete". Sir James McCulloch, when Premier of Victoria, thought that the government should be made responsible for the despatches sent in reply to imperial communications. The people in the colony knew nothing

2 Ibid. p.2127.
3 Ibid. p.2126.
4 Higinbotham held this view so strongly that in 1889 and 1892, when as Chief Justice of Victoria he would in the normal course have acted as Administrator in the absence of the Governor of Victoria, his refusal to send such despatches caused Lord Knutsford, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, to make other appointments.
5 e.g. Argus, editorial 29 Sept., 1869; and this was the view of a conservative paper.
about the despatches sent by the Governor, and these "were taken
in England as expressive of the community here, when the fact was
neither the people nor the Ministry had anything to do with them..."
McCulloch, therefore, thought that the Governor should immediately
forward to his ministers all despatches from the Secretary of State,
and the replies should be based on memoranda from the ministers to
the Governor. McCulloch did not make it clear whether he was refer-
ring to all classes of despatches; but he appeared to be unaware
of what was becoming current practice. Certainly confidential and
secret despatches from the Secretary of State were communicated
to the colonial government or not at the discretion of the Imperial
Government, and they were not to be published without the permi-
sion of the Imperial Government; but by the 1880s public despatches
and some of the confidential despatches to the Secretary of State
repeated almost word for word memoranda submitted by the Premiers
to the Governors. The adoption of this practice is probably the
explanation for the small amount of criticism in the Australian
Colonies after 1870 of the role of the Governor as a channel of
communication. An even more important reason for this was that the
colonial governments themselves gradually instituted an additional
means of communication with the Colonial Office.

2 This is very clear in the Queensland Govt. House Papers which
include volumes of official letters to the Governors from the
Premiers and other ministers. In 1869 both the Queensland and
Tasmanian replies to Granville's despatch of 8 Sept., 1869, which
severely criticised the attempt to call a colonial conference,
were accompanied by the minutes on which they were based. Printed
in C.24 and C.51 (1870).
In 1870 Torrens had advocated the appointment of colonial envoys to the mother country. In 1879 Earl Grey suggested that the colonial Agents-General should form a Council of Advice. During the intervening years there had been a development in imperial relations which had occurred with little recognition either in Great Britain or, more surprisingly, in the Australian Colonies themselves. Yet by the 1880s the colonial Agents-General had become a recognised means, in addition to communications from the Governors, whereby the colonial governments put their views clearly and sometimes forcefully before the Imperial Government. In other words, an addition to the machinery of Empire had unobtrusively been created.

There are two probable reasons for Torrens' implicit rejection of the Agents-General as the envoys to the mother country which he proposed as a solution to the problem of better means of consultation between the Imperial and the colonial Governments.

The genesis and development of the office of the High Commissioner for Canada has been afforded detailed treatment by several writers: G.P. de T.Glazebrook, A History of Canadian External Relations (Toronto, 1950); D.M.L.Ferr, The Colonial Office and Canada, 1867-1887 (Toronto, 1955); H.G. Skilling, Canadian Representation Abroad: From Agency to Embassy (Toronto, 1955). The development of the Australian Agencies-General in the 1860s and 1870s has been adequately dealt with in B.R. Atkins, The Problem of the Representation of Australia in England: The Origins and Development of the Australian Agencies-General During the Nineteenth Century (unpublished M.A. thesis in the University of Melbourne). The treatment of the 1880s, and especially of the relations of the Agents-General with the Colonial Office, is much less satisfactory as it is based solely on the Agent-General Papers. No use was made of the C.O. series, and the role of the Agents-General is, therefore, inclined to be exaggerated.
In 1870 there were some influential and able men among the ex-colonists in London; and it was not until after 1870 that the scope of the office and functions of the Agents-General widened. By 1870 only an intermediate stage had been reached in the expansion of the functions of the Agents-General, and the extent of this development was then either not apparent or not fully understood by contemporaries in Great Britain and in the Australian Colonies.

In 1869 Granville, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, made reference to the existence of colonial Agents in London to put forward colonial points of view. This was in connection with his opposition to the unofficial suggestion for a colonial conference, and his assertion that the Governors formed an adequate channel of communication between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments. Granville stated that his objection had no connection with the permanent or temporary agents which most of the principal colonies had in London and which Granville believed fully fulfilled the purpose for which they were appointed. In 1869 the Youl committee rejected the Agents-General as not fulfilling the purpose which they had in view in calling the conference, because the Agents were not "authorised to deal fully with political questions". To see what purpose

1 The first appointment by a colonial government was that of Hugh Childers by the Victorian Government in 1857. Then followed appointments by N.S.W. in 1863, South Australia in 1865 and Queensland in 1869.

2 Circular despatch of 8 Sept.,1869. Printed in C.24,p.3; and his reply to a deputation from the Youl committee, reported in Youl, Blaine and Sewell to J.Robertson, Premier of N.S.W., 23 Dec.,1869. N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters 70/2365 (Archives of N.S.W.).

3 Youl to Robertson, loc.cit.
Granville saw the Agents fulfilling some indication of the development of their functions up to that time is necessary.

In the late 1850s and early 1860s the main duties of the Agents General were in connection with emigration; but in 1862 other duties were officially hinted at for the "Agent for Victoria". These other duties were the beginnings of what the colonial governments and the Agents-General came to describe as their "diplomatic" functions. In 1862 Hugh Childers, the Agent for Victoria, was instructed to take up two matters with the Colonial Office. These concerned the mail routes and services to Australia and the provision of naval vessels for local defence. They involved changes in policy. This is an early example of the means by which the colonial Agents assumed the role of putting forward the points of view of the colonies which they represented. This role was distinct from the purely formal contact with the Colonial Office which was concerned with the forwarding of requests to the War Office and Admiralty in connection with the equipment of colonial forces. However, on account of Childers' personal relations with Gladstone and other Liberals, it would be unwise to generalise from his relations with the Colonial Office that in the 1860s all colonial Agents would be extending their activities in the same way.


Childers was instructed to take action to supplement a memo, which was being forwarded through the Governor in support of direct steam communication between Great Britain and Australia via the Cape; and he was also asked to urge the Imperial Government to send Victoria a second warship which, like the one the Victorian Government was buying, would be manned by Victorians.
In 1865 Childers drew up a statement of what he considered should be the duties of a colonial Agent-General. Although his views were then in advance of the powers a colonial government was prepared to confer on an Agent-General, they are important in that they foreshadowed the way in which the office of Agent-General developed during the 1870s and 1880s. Childers saw the Agent-General as “a Minister and a Consul”, who had a general authority to negotiate with the Imperial Government and other public bodies, and to conclude agreements in accordance with instructions from the colonial government. The “consular duties” of an Agent-General would involve the transaction of all business on behalf of the colony in the United Kingdom, including the handling of all money raised and spent on behalf of the colony. His next suggestion, had it been adopted, would have given the Agent-General a position analogous to that of a minister in a colonial government as well as an enhanced standing with the Colonial Office. Childers suggested that the Agent-General should be made aware of the contents of all despatches to and from the Colonial Office, with the exception of confidential ones which the Governor did not communicate to his ministers; and similarly the Agent-General and the colonial ministers should exchange information about important public matters in Great Britain and in the colony.

There is little to show before 1869 that government, business and press opinion in the Australian Colonies demanded more of an

1 Childers, op. cit. pp. 217-8. This memo. was forwarded to Charles Gavan Duffy in Victoria.
2 ibid. p. 217.
Agent-General than that he should be concerned with emigration, the raising of loans and the purchase of materials for public works. It was only as the scope of the office developed that it began to take on the guise of being an honour for a colonist, usually a member of a colonial government, to be appointed as Agent-General, and that a colonial government laid down the functions and duties of its Agent-General. There are two probable reasons for this. First, it was only by experience that a colonial government knew what duties its Agent-General should perform, and, secondly, there was fear that an Agent-General might commit a colony unless he was limited by instructions from his government.

If the appointment was a political one, as it became in Queensland during the 1880s and after so that the Agent-General relinquished office with the colonial government, there would presumably be sympathy with regard to policy between the Agent-General and the

I George Verdon's was one of the first of such appointments. Yet in 1867 a Committee of the Victorian Legislative Assembly had favoured the appointment of a British M.P. Verdon, who as Colonial Treasurer had been on a mission to England in 1867, found opposition in England to such an appointment because of the dislike for any paid colonial advocacy being undertaken by a British M.P. Vict. V. and P., Legis. Assembly, 1867 Session, vol. 4, No. 25, Report of Mr. Verdon's Proceedings as the Delegate of Victoria to H.M. Govt.

Francis Dutton, an ex-minister, was appointed Agent-General for South Australia in 1865. Although the importance of his duties in connection with the raising of loans was stressed, his instructions did not include any mention of political duties.


The first two Agents-General for N.S.W. were ex-colonists, the second of them also being a member of the House of Commons. In 1870 Charles Cowper, an experienced colonial politician and an ex-Premier, was appointed Agent-General for N.S.W., but no formal instructions were issued to him.
colonial government. In the other colonies the Agent-General was in fact a public servant rather than a politician, and so there was the possibility of his being out of step with the colonial government if he held office for a long period or if he was given too wide a discretionary power. One Agent-General succinctly stated his impartial position with regard to colonial politics as "whatever is right".

By 1868-1869 the Victorian Government showed some awareness of the political functions that might be carried out by an Agent-General as a channel of communication. According to instructions issued to George Verdon on his appointment as Agent-General, he was to make certain that he was aware of any matters which might arise in England and through which Victoria might be affected directly or indirectly. He was to keep the Victorian Government informed about any such matters; but he was to take no part in party political questions in Great Britain. In England he was to disseminate correct and up to date information about the progress and resources of Victoria, and refer any incorrect statements made in Great Britain about Victoria's political, financial and commercial affairs.

2 Lack of impartiality in colonial politics was the main reason for the recall of William Forster, the Agent-General for N.S.W., in 1879.
5 The instructions were approved by the Governor-in-Council on 16 July, 1869. Vict. V. and P., 1869 Session, vol.4, No.57.
6 Verdon's correspondence with the Colonial Office indicates his energy and enterprise in collecting information from official
The instructions then laid down the Agent-General's duties in connection with emigration, purchase of materials for public works and the conduct of the office itself. There was, therefore, no explicit acceptance of what Childers had called the ministerial functions of an Agent-General vis-à-vis the Colonial Office.

Verdon was well aware of the limitations of his discretionary action. In 1869 in reply to a criticism that the colonial Agents in the United Kingdom were unable to act without instructions, Verdon pointed out that in political questions the Agent-General could only express the opinion of the people of Victoria, and that opinion could only be known by consulting the Victorian Government.

Although, on account of the position held personally by Childers in British governing circles, it might have appeared that the Victorian Agent-General held a more advanced position than the Agents-General of the other Australian Colonies, the official Victorian statement of the functions of that colony's Agent-General was more or less in accord with the existing practice in the other Australian Colonies. This is probably why the colonial governments and members of the colonial legislatures, such as George Hignbotham, in addition to Torrens and the Youl committee in London, did not stress or even show any awareness in 1869-1870 of the office of the Agent-General as a kind of diplomatic appointment. Certainly
Higinbotham spoke of direct communication between a colonial government and the Secretary of State, but he made no mention of the Agent General as a channel for these communications. In any discussions in the colonial press between 1869 and 1870 of suggestions for a consultative council in London, the Agents-General were not mentioned as suitable representatives for the colonies. Nor in subsequent years in Great Britain or the colonies did any awareness of the potentialities of the Agents-General as representatives in a wider sense materialise very quickly or gain very widely accepted recognition. During the 1870s some practice of such functions on the part of the Agents-General preceded any general recognition. Indeed, as much depended on the capabilities of the individual Agent-General as on the increasing number of questions which arose in the 1870s between the Imperial and Colonial governments. The assistance of an official representative of a colony in London then became of ever greater importance.

By the 1870s the Colonial Governments realised that the great developments taking place in the colonies would cause questions to arise in which the interests of the colonies would come into conflict with those of each other, and especially with those of the mother country. Two of the questions of this nature which first arose in the 1870s concerned the arrangements for the mail contracts from the Youl committee's rejection of the Agents-General as suitable representatives of the colonies at the projected colonial conference.

2 e.g. Argus, editorial 29 Sept., 1869, where ex-colonists were suggested as suitable representatives. But Edward Wilson, one of the ex-colonists in London who were then very active in criticising the Colonial Office, was the former owner and editor of the Argus.
and the imposition of colonial tariffs. From the same time onwards, colonial interests in certain questions needed to be stressed even if they conflicted with Great Britain's imperial and foreign policy. Among these questions were the transportation of large numbers of French prisoners to New Caledonia from 1871 onwards and the possibility of their escape to Australia, the effects of the imposition of colonial tariffs on British commercial treaties, and the interests of the Australian Colonies in Fiji and New Guinea. Such considerations lay behind the development of the Agencies-General into something more than offices to deal with emigration, the raising of loans and the purchase of materials for public works.

When in 1870 the Sydney Morning Herald published a description of what it thought the duties of an Agent-General should be, the functions mentioned were somewhat forward looking rather than an accurate statement of the work of an Agent-General at that time. These functions were financial, political, commercial and industrial. The Agent-General was to inspire confidence in the financial stability of the colony; he was to represent current views on the relations of the colonies to each other and to the mother country; he was to attempt to improve communications between Great Britain and Australia and promote the interests of Australian exporters; and he was to disseminate information on the resources and prospects of the colony which he represented.

1 This was at the time of Charles Cowper's appointment as Agent-General. The N.S.W. Government did not issue a formal set of instructions to Cowper.
2 S.M.H., editorial 12 Dec., 1870.
This description of the work of an Agent-General remained true for the whole period up to 1900. Although the political and "diplomatic" functions of the Agents-General in presenting colonial points of view to the Imperial Government, and in working to secure or enhance colonial interests, appeared in the 1880s to be taking pride of place, their commercial and financial duties remained important. Indeed, when the votes for the Agent-General departments came up annually in the colonial legislatures, criticism always fastened on neglect of the financial and commercial functions; and it cannot be denied that the energetic exercise of these functions was vital to a colony's development and prosperity in a period when its resources, industries and public works were expanding rapidly. Although the prestige of the office was important in colonial opinion, the commercial ability of an Agent-General was often emphasised when his appointment was announced, and it was on his practical work in these matters that his success was ultimately judged.

This balancing of the emphasis, on both the political aspects of the office and on its business functions, remained during the 1880s, but there was a new impetus in the latter direction after the depression in the early 1890s. Although, in the end, material successes were regarded as the more valuable to the colonies, the recognition which was gradually accorded in Great Britain to the official status of the Agents-General as the representatives of the colonies was appreciated.

I.e.g. When the Parkes Government in N.S.W. sought a successor to William Forster, following his recall in 1879, Sir Alexander Stuart's commercial and financial ability was emphasised, S.M.H., editorial 26 Nov., 1869.
in the colonies. It was in the political sphere of being spokesmen for the colonial point of view that some of the Agents-General themselves sought increasing recognition. To some extent an explanation for this may be found in the continued practice of appointing colonial politicians as Agents-General.

Following the appointments of Verdon in 1868 and Cowper in 1870, there were many more references in the colonial legislatures to the Agents-General as ambassadors or envoys. In general, the majority of colonists expressing such views were conservative, and, therefore, inclined to be more imperialistic in outlook. On the other hand, the radicals in the 1880s opposed the idea that the Agents-General were ambassadors. To a large extent this was on the grounds that such activities were unnecessary and dangerous, because the Agents-General might become advocates for imperial rather than for Australian interests.

A year after his appointment as Agent-General, Cowper was writing that certain of his duties were of "a semi-diplomatic nature". During the 1870s Sir Henry Parkes held firmly to the view

1 E.g. S.M.H., editorial 15 Sept., 1887.
2 Few bad appointments were made, but in certain instances appointments were injudicious because commercial and financial ability was lacking. Among such appointments could be included those of Charles Cowper as Agent-General for N.S.W. in 1870, and William Forster for the same colony in 1875; also James Munro and Duncan Gillies for Victoria in 1892 and 1894 respectively.
3 Cowper to J.D. Lang, 3 Nov., 1871. Papers of J.D. Lang, vol. 7, p. 1023, A 2287 (Mitchell Library).
that the Agent-General had a "semi-diplomatic" status. William Forster's actions while Agent-General for New South Wales and certain of his statements suggest a similar point of view. Yet in 1881 Forster denied that the Agent-General was an ambassador or a delegate, or that he was in an equivalent position to one; he was an Agent.

To some extent there was some support for the latter view in the reaction in New South Wales to the appointment of a Canadian High Commissioner in 1879: the time had not yet come for such an officer to be appointed to represent an Australian Colony. Perhaps the location of the Agents-General in Westminster had some influence on the acceptance of such "diplomatic" functions. In upholding the interests of the colonies which they represented, the Agents-General were in London within reach of the Colonial Office and verbal representations were possible. The Governors, who had imperial interests to uphold as well as the views of their advisers to put forward, were dependent on despatches and cables. The importance of cable communication in reducing distance must not be under-estimated. It helped to maintain the Governor's role as a channel of communication, and it also had an important influence on the development of the Agent-General as an additional channel of communication. It enabled him to take immediate action in London under instructions from his Government.

I Parkes on introducing a motion into the N.S.W. Legis. Assembly on the office of the Agent-General, 12 May, 1875 (speech reported in S.M.H., 12 May, 1875); and text of motion in N.S.W. V. and P., 1875 session, vol. I, II May, 1875. Also minute for Executive Council, 7 Oct., 1879, N.S.W. V. P., 1879 session, vol. 2, p. 664.


4 Telegraphic communication between Great Britain and the Australian
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On account of Granville's acknowledgement in 1869 of the existence and work of the colonial Agents in London, it is probable that what previously might have been attributable only to Childers' rather special position had become acceptable to the Colonial office with regard to the other Agents from the Australian Colonies. This could have been a result of criticisms of the Colonial Office, but the documentary evidence suggests that the increasing contacts between the Colonial Office and the Agents-General developed out of such practical matters as mail contracts and subsidies, as well as from the Colonial Office's acting as the intermediary with the War Office and the Admiralty in the purchase of defence equipment and materials, and above all in the matter of emigration. Although full evidence of contacts between the Agents-General and the Colonial Office is not at hand, there is sufficient to show the nature of some of the questions on which the Agents-General acted "diplomatically" on behalf of colonial interests which were at variance with those of another colony or those of the mother country.

Colonies was completed in 1872.

5 e.g. as Sir Archibald Michie did in 1875 on receipt of a cable from Sir James McCulloch, the Premier of Victoria, to inquire into the conditions whereby imperial troops could again be stationed in Victoria. McCulloch to Michie, tel., 22 Nov., 1875, copy enclosed in Michie to C.O., 29 Nov., 1875. C.O. 509/II3.

I In 1869 Canada was represented by a semi-official agent, Sir John Rose. The first High Commissioner was appointed in 1879.

2 The Colonial Office records and the correspondence of the Agents-General with the Colonial Governments provide the evidence for this statement. In the same way as Childers had been instructed to act for Victoria with regard to the mail contracts and services, Verdon was told in 1868 that as Agent-General he could use his knowledge of colonial views on the subject "to assist and carry out whatever arrangements may hereafter be made". McCulloch to Verdon, II Aug., 1868, printed in Vict. V. and P., 1868 Session, Legis. Assembly,
As far as the mail contracts were concerned, the Agents-General came to play an increasingly important part in the negotiations which attempted to reconcile the conflicting interests of the Australian Colonies, New Zealand and Great Britain. Not only did this matter involve interviews with the Secretary of State for the Colonies, or Colonial Office officials, but also with the Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the other hand, the office of the Agent-General was still in an early stage of its development, and so in 1873 the New South Wales Government sent Saul Samuel, then Postmaster-General, to England to act in finalising the contracts. Subsequently it appears that the Agents-General were recognised by the Colonial Office as a channel of communication on postal questions whenever any alteration in the agreements were considered.

It also seems evident that in the early years after 1870, the Agents-General, acting within the discretionary powers granted to them on questions affecting the interests of the colonies, initiated inquiries at the Colonial Office. There are two certain occasions when this was done. In 1871 Verdon and Cowper inquired at the Colonial Office with regard to the reported intention of the French Government to transport large numbers of prisoners to the

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1 This statement is based on the records of the Government Depts. in the colonies, and the Offices and Individuals volumes in the C.O. series under which much of the correspondence from the Agents-General was filed.

2 Cowper to N.S.W. Col.Sec., 15 May, 1873. N.S.W. Col.Sec. Papers, in-letters, 73/5147 (Archives of N.S.W.).
Pacific after the failure of the Commune; and the two Agents-General indicated the effect this might have in the Australian Colonies if large numbers of prisoners should escape. This is also one of the earliest occasions, as far as can be known, when an Agent-General, in this case Cowper, wrote a private note instead of an official letter to Sir Robert Herbert, who had recently succeeded Sir Frederic Rogers as Permanent Under-Secretary, and notified his intention of calling at the Colonial Office the same day to see Herbert and to seek an interview with Lord Kimberley, then the Secretary of State. The succeeding correspondence in 1871 between the Foreign Office, the two Agents-General and the Governors of New south Wales and Victoria shows that the Colonial Office took Verdon’s and Cowper’s representations seriously, even though Herbert had some doubts whether the Colonial Governments held exactly the same view as Verdon and Cowper. There was some ground subsequently for Herbert’s doubts. In 1873, when the Agents-General again raised the matter in the Colonial Office, the interest of the New South Wales and Victorian Governments in the question soon subsided. Copies of some of the correspondence between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office were forwarded by the latter to the two Agents-General as well as to the Governors of New South Wales and Victoria.

1 Verdon to C.O., 8 June, 1871. C.O. 309/I02.
2 Cowper to Herbert, 8 June, 1871; filed with Verdon to C.O., 8 June, 1871. C.O. 309/I02.
3 Minutes on Verdon to C.O. 8 June, 1871; and F.O. to C.O. 30 June, and 7 July, 1871. C.O. 309/I02.
4 Minute by Herbert on F.O. to C.O. 25 Jan., 1873. C.O. 309/III.
but a remark by one of the Colonial Office officials, that "Mr. Verdon seems to think that we inform him with a view to his informing the Government of Victoria", suggests that the information was sent to Verdon and Cowper personally and not in recognition of the Agent-General as a channel of communication between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments.

The other occasion when it appears that an Agent-General took the initiative without definite instructions from his Government was concerned with Fiji. In 1871 Cowper wrote confidentially to a private individual in New South Wales that he had seen Kimberley, and had urged the annexation of Fiji and intimated that New South Wales would become financially responsible for the administration of the new colony. Almost certainly Cowper was more willing than his Government to incur such a responsibility. Before this, but in the same way, Verdon had been active on behalf of Victoria with regard to Fiji.

On the grounds that such questions came within the purview of their appointment to defend colonial interests, the Agents-General inevitably became concerned with the means of gaining increased recognition of their status. Yet, to some extent, this was unnecessary, for Herbert's comment on Verdon's term of office — that Verdon

2 Cowper to J.D.Lang, 3 Nov., 1871. Papers of J.D.Lang, vol. 7, p. 1023; A 2227 (Mitchell Library). There is some further evidence of Cowper's activity in this matter in a minute by Herbert on Belmore to Kimberley, N.S.W. No. 128, 9 August, 1871. C.O. 201/564.
3 Stephen (Lient. Governor) to Kimberley, N.S.W. No. 24, 19 April, 1872. C.O. 201/559.
4 Minute on Canterbury to Kimberley, Vict. No. 132, 12 August, 1870. C.O. 309/94.
"has been a very good Agent" - shows that the work of an Agent-General was recognised by one of those within the Colonial Office with whom he would have most personal contact. Although in the later 1870s, James Lowther, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, described the office of Agent-General as "a doubtful institution", Carnarvon, as Secretary of State, was prepared to show the Agents-General the respect which he felt was due to them as the representatives of important colonies.

In 1878 at a private function, following Carnarvon's resignation from the Secretaryship of State for the Colonies, the Agents-General of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand presented an address of appreciation to Carnarvon for his work at the Colonial Office and for the manner of his official contacts with them. This was an action which the Agents-General took on their own initiative. When it was reported to the Colonial Governments, Parkes, the Premier of New South Wales, agreed that the tribute to Carnarvon was deserved on account of his readiness to listen to colonial points of view and to consider their interests; but he was reluctant that the presentation of an address should create a precedent. This action by the Agents-General, and its endorsement

1 Minute by Herbert on Verdon to Kimberley, 24 Jan., 1872. C.O. 309/107.
2 Minute by Lowther on Speaker of the House of Commons to Carnarvon, 6 May, 1876; and minutes by Carnarvon on Forster to C.O., II April, 1876. C.O. 201/592.
3 Minute by Parkes on Forster to Parkes, 15 March, 1878. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 78/3644 (Archives of N.S.W.). The text of the address was also enclosed in this despatch. Yet Carnarvon, no more than Gladstone or Granville, had been eager to undertake increased responsibilities in the Pacific at the request of the Australian Colonies unless they appeared unavoidable, as in the case of Fiji in 1874. Carnarvon had stood firm against an annexation of New Guinea in 1875.
by the Colonial Governments, was a far cry from the dissatisfaction expressed by the ex-colonists towards the Colonial Office in 1869-1870. Undoubtedly also the first appointment of a Canadian High Commissioner in 1879, and the Imperial Government’s recognition of the duties which the Canadian Government entrusted to him, increased the stature of the Australian Agents-General.

By the end of the 1870s official calls were becoming customary by the Agents-General when a Secretary of state took up office. It was not until the Earl of Derby became Secretary of State for the Colonies that this action was reciprocated. From then onwards an official reception was given to the High Commissioner for Canada and the Agents-General whenever a Secretary of State took up office or relinquished his duties. Sir Saul Samuel, the Agent-General for New South Wales saw the reception which Derby accorded to them in January, 1883, as "a new departure" which would "improve the status of the representatives of the Colonies" in Great Britain. Samuel later claimed that the "diplomatic and other work has completely altered the status of the Agent-General".

These developments which enhanced the position of the Agents-General were noted with satisfaction in the Australian Colonies, and they merited favourable comments in the London press. However, the Times did not prove to be correct in thinking that the Agents-General would come to replace the Governors as the channel of communication

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1 e.g. Sir Arthur Blyth to H.E. Bright, 7 May, 1880 reporting such an official call when Hicks-Beach entered office in 1878 as Carnarvon's successor. S.Aust. Archives, Group 991/4.
between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments. Certainly by 1883 the basis had been laid that the Agents-General were an additional channel of communication; but there were important questions before then on which the Agents-General do not appear to have taken any action, and communications passed solely through the Governor. Among these were the tariff question between the Australian Colonies, New Zealand and Great Britain from 1871 to 1873, and the agitation for the annexation of New Guinea in 1875 and 1876. The activity of the Agents-General with regard to New Guinea in 1883-1884, the New Hebrides between 1884 and 1887, the establishment of the New Guinea administration, the setting up of the Federal Council and their representation of the colonies at the Colonial Conference of 1887 was a culmination of a development over more than a decade in the expansion of their functions as spokesmen for the colonies on political questions. Between 1884 and 1887 the Agents-General appeared as if they might replace the Governors as the channel of communication. Indeed, Sir Graham Berry, as Agent-General for Victoria, went so far as to hint somewhat obviously to

1 *Times*, editorial 18 Jan., 1883, p. 9c.
2 The official correspondence in the C.O. records and in the records of the Colonial Governments gives no indication that the Agents-General took any action on these matters; but in 1875 Sir Archibald Michie's address to the Royal Colonial Institute on the need for British annexation in New Guinea led to a memorial from that body to Carnarvon. *Procs. R.C.I. (1874-5)*, vol. 6, p. 120ff. and 189-205.
3 A fuller discussion of the role of the Agents-General between 1883 and 1887, during the high water mark of their "diplomatic" activity, and especially with regard to the offer of colonial contingents for service in the Sudan, the New Hebrides and the Colonial Conference of 1887, is reserved for Chapters 4, 5 and 6.
the Colonial Office that the Agents-General should be the only channel of communication. Berry also expected that their representation of the colonies at the Colonial Conference of 1887 would enhance the position of the Agents-General, and increase the authority of the communications they made to the Imperial Government as the authorised agents of the Colonial Governments.

In the long run, the Agents-General did not take the place of the Governors as the channel of communication. The Colonial Office was willing to afford the Agents-General every facility for presenting the views of their Governments, despite the tone of some of their communications. By the 1880s the Colonial Office more than met the Agents-General in giving them information, including much that was of a confidential nature. Between 1885 and 1887 there is nothing to support R. Murray Smith's complaint to Lord Derby of the difficulties that the Australian Governments "have experienced for some time past in obtaining official information on the subject of negotiations vitally affecting their interests and conducted apparently without consideration for their unanimously expressed sentiments". During these same years the Colonial Office was at pains to ensure that the position of the Governors

1 Minute by Bramston on Loch to Holland, Secret, 10 Feb., 1886. C.O. 309/132.
3 e.g. some of those of William Forster and R. Murray Smith. On one occasion Murray Smith remarked in a private note that he was ashamed of the tone of a telegram from James Service, the Victorian Premier, which he had forwarded to the Colonial Office. Smith to C.O., 31 March, 1886. C.O. 309/130.
as the channel of communication should not be affected. Certain of the Governors complained that they were not kept informed of instructions sent by the Colonial Governments to the Agents-General. This resulted in an instruction from Granville that the governors should be so informed. The Queensland Government alone made reservations in its response on the ground that the Agent-General held ministerial status in that colony.

The Agents-General were also anxious to impress the Colonial Governments with their zeal. This caused them to exaggerate their own importance in their relations with the Colonial Office; but it did not follow, as Herman Merivale had suggested in 1870, that they had to make unnecessary business for themselves to avoid showing their Governments, and especially the Parliaments, that they might be superfluous. Difficulties were caused on occasions when certain of the Agents-General allowed confidential information, given to them by the Colonial Office, to become public; or when information from the Colonial Office was known in the colonies, as a result of its being telegraphed by the Agents-General, long before such...
information was given to the Colonial Governments by the Governors. This caused Herbert to suggest that the Agents-General should only be told as much as it was convenient should be published.

If the position and influence of the Agents-General is judged solely by their own correspondence with the Colonial Governments, especially between 1883 and 1887, an erroneous impression is created. The correspondence of the Agents-General with the Colonial Governments used with the Colonial office records suggests that this period was a kind of high water mark in the so-called "diplomatic" activities of the Agents-General. After 1887 the Colonial Office worked out a procedure which would still afford the Agents-General all facilities for putting the views of their Governments, and receiving information on questions which affected the Australian Colonies; but at the same time the position of the Governor as the channel of communication was upheld and even enhanced. Cables were sent more frequently to the Governors, and information in despatches was sent to the Governors by the mail preceding that by which the Agents-General could possibly forward the same information to the colonies.

I See the despatches cited in note I on the previous page. Also see Loch to Stanhope, Vict.No.I45, 14 Oct.,1886. Records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria, Letterbooks of Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol.10.

2 Minute on Loch to Holland, 10 Feb.,1888, Secret. C.0.309/132.

3 See minutes by Herbert, Dunraven and Stanley on Loch to Stanley, Vict. No.I39, 27 Nov.,1885. C.0.309/129. The instruction in Granville's circular despatch of 8 April,1886, was in keeping with these views. See also Granville to Musgrave, 6 April,1886, Secret. Q'ld.Govt. House Papers.

4 See minutes on Loch to Stanhope, 3 Sept.,1886, Confid. C.0.309/130. And minutes by Bramston and Fuller on Loch to Holland, 10 Feb.,1888, Secret. C.0.309/132. In accordance with these ruling, the draft articles of a proposed treaty with China to regulate immigration into the Australian Colonies were not sent to the Agents-General.
Neither does it appear that the Agents-General could interview Salisbury at the Foreign Office in the same way as during Rosebery's tenure of office as Foreign Secretary some of them reported interviews with him. It seems that this development had some connection with personal knowledge of Rosebery as a result of his visit to Australia in 1883-1884 and his known interest in the colonies. There is nothing to show that the Colonial Office thought such interviews were necessary of that the arrangements were made through that Office. Either Rosebery approached the Agents-General, or they requested interviews which they usually described as "informal".

Once the New Hebrides question was settled in 1887, and the Agents-General had taken their place among the colonial representatives at the Colonial Conference of 1887, their forceful and pushing attitude more or less came to an end. It therefore seems significant that with regard to colonial restrictions on Chinese immigration in 1888 the Agents-General played no part at all. Neither did they do so in connection with the problems which arose from

I On 12 May, 1886, Sir Andrew Clarke, as Acting Agent-General for Victoria, reported an interview with Rosebery at the latter's request. Clarke to Gillies, 12 May, 1886. Vict. Premier's Dept. records, in-letters 86/I336.
Berry reported what he termed as "confidential" or "informal" interviews with Rosebery, and his wording suggests that he applied directly to Rosebery rather than through the Colonial Office. Berry to Gillies, 4, 11 and 25 June, and 9 July, 1886. Vict. Premier's Dept. records, in-letters 86/I59, 2092, 2275 and 2277.
Sir James Garrick, Agent-General for Queensland reported two interviews with Rosebery. His statement that he applied for these interviews suggests that he approached Rosebery directly. Garrick to Griffith, 16 April, 1886. Q'ld. Agent-General Letter-books, vol.29 (State Archives of Queensland).
colonial adhesion to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1894. Only on a few occasions after 1887 was there a reversion to their role in 1883-1884. The first of these was in 1888 when the Agents-General of Queensland and South Australia made representations to the Colonial Office over the appointment of Governors. Then between 1892 and 1897 the Agent-General for New South Wales was active in connection with the compensation sought by the New South Wales Government from the Dutch Government for the owners, master and crew of the "Costa Rica" packet. In 1895 the Agent-General of New South Wales was instructed to make representations to the Colonial Office over the delay in appointing a Governor. In 1888 and again in 1895 there was some feeling in the colonies, as there undoubtedly was in the Colonial Office, that the Agents-General were not a suitable means of communicating with the Imperial Government on a matter concerning the Governor. In 1897 and again in 1901-1902, the South Australian Government favoured the Agent-General as the sole channel of communication between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments. Otherwise the Agents-General were recognised as the representatives of the colonies. They acted for them in negotia-

I See Chapter 8.
2 A vast amount of correspondence on this case is to be found in the N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters in Boxes 224-232 (Archives of N.S.W.); and in C.O.201/613-621.
3 The likely reason behind this suggestion in 1897 was the possibility that it offered a way whereby Kingston could achieve the victory over the Colonial Office which he had failed to secure by means of a colonial nomination of a Governor or an indefinite postponement of the appointment of one by the Imperial Government.

In 1901-1902 the recognition of the Agent-General as the channel of communication was seen by the South Australian Government at the time of the "Vandee" affair as a means of avoiding compliance with Chamberlain's instruction that the Governor-General should be informed of all correspondence between the States and the Colonial Office.
tions for the revision of the mail contracts and in the inquiries into the Pacific Cable project. Some of them were appointed members of the Pacific Cable Commission in London. At the time of the despatch of the contingents to South Africa in 1899-1900 and to China in 1900 they did not play a role comparable with the one which they, and particularly the Agent-general for New South Wales, had played at the time of the despatch of the Sudan Contingent in 1885.

Through the office of the Agent-General some new machinery of Empire had been created by the Colonial Governments as a means of making colonial views known to the Imperial Government. By the 1880s the Agents-General did not hesitate to do this individually or collectively through personal interviews with the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the senior officials at the Colonial Office. They also carried their colonies' representations direct to the chancellor of the Exchequer, the Foreign Office, the War Office, the Admiralty and the Postmaster-General when necessary. Imperialists in Great Britain who wished to form a Council of Advice, in which the Agents-General would represent the colonies, were unaware of the fact that this new machinery was not the prelude to closer relations on the pattern they desired. The Agents-General proved to be one of the means of ensuring the continuation of the existing loose Imperial link, and of finding a middle way between separation or consolidation in the form of an imperial federation. Admittedly in the mid-1880s certain of the Agents-General had imperialist sentiments, or they sympathised in some measure with the aims of the imperial federationists; but they
were too closely bound by the instructions from the Governments which they represented for them to be influenced in their actions to the detriment of colonial autonomy.

Although by the mid-1880s the Agents-General were reporting at length to the Colonial Governments on their interviews with the Secretary of State or senior officials in the Colonial Office on various matters, they did little to improve the very sparse objective knowledge which existed in the Australian Colonies about the Colonial office and so alter in any material way the traditional image of the Colonial Office as it was seen in the colonies. The Agents-General were often too much the servants of their own Governments, or too intent on proving their own zeal, to speak favourably of the way in which the Colonial Office attempted to meet colonial demands.

The attitude towards the Colonial Office, and the blindness or disinclination to see behind a preconceived and long-held notion, was shown explicitly in Alfred Deakin's outburst at the Colonial Conference in 1887. He sweepingly condemned the lack of consideration which was given to the colonial viewpoint. By implication Deakin also seemed to be denying the efforts and achievements of the Agents-General between 1883 and 1887 when he told the Colonial Conference: "We know the great difficulties which must exist in

None of the Australian Agents-General seems to have been quite so active in the imperial federation movement or as sympathetic towards it as Sir Charles Tupper, the Canadian High Commissioner. Some of them attended the conferences in July and November, 1884, when the League was inaugurated; but they took no part in the proceedings. R. Murray Smith, the Victorian Agent-General, was much more sympathetic towards the aims of the League than Sir Saul Samuel; but the N.S.W. Agent-General saw that some advan-
communicating the wishes of a few millions of people, thousands of miles away, even to that Colonial office which is specifically charged with their interests, and we would be the last, from our experience, to blame those officials, whether permanent or political, who would avoid difficult questions if it were possible to avoid them, but what we feel is that when we have succeeded in conquering the vis inertia of the great department specifically charged with colonial concerns, we have by no means attained the full realisation of our hopes. Behind the Colonial Office is the Foreign Office which is still more difficult to reach; and behind the Foreign Office again lies that mysterious entity, the Cabinet, which in this country as in every other, owing to political exigencies, is not only paved, but walled and roofed with good intentions unfulfilled."

Deakin's assertion would seem to suggest that imperial policy continually disregarded colonial interests and did not heed the colonial point of view. Yet the opposite might equally be possible: that where the colonies rightly or wrongly thought that their interests were being disregarded, they were incapable of seeing any constructive elements in imperial policy. This increased the difficulties of satisfying both imperial and colonial views of what was a desirable policy. Several questions which arose in the

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mid-1880s between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies show this. Two of these concerned the role of the Australian Colonies in imperial defence and the safeguarding of Australian interests in the Pacific.
CHAPTER 4

A COLONIAL SHARE IN IMPERIAL DEFENCE: THE SUDAN CONTINGENT AND THE AUSTRALIAN AUXILIARY NAVAL SQUADRON

When the Imperial Government decided to withdraw the British garrisons from the self-governing colonies, the burden of providing for their own internal defence was thrown on the colonies. This decision formed part of a policy of reducing overseas expenditure and commitments. As the second Maori War was still being fought in New Zealand when this decision was made, those who opposed this policy believed the withdrawal of the garrisons was a step towards loosening the ties between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies and encouraging those colonies to become independent. The decision to withdraw the garrisons was one of the major reasons for the ex-colonials' attacks on the Gladstone Government in 1869-1870 and the beginnings of the imperial federation movement. As this movement gathered momentum, many of the imperial federationists concentrated on the dual problem which they saw at the heart of any form of imperial federation. They were concerned with the security of the Empire, and so they favoured a proportionate share in the burden of imperial defence being borne by the colonies. As a corollary to this they thought that the colonies should be given a voice in the determination of imperial foreign policy. To some of the enthusiasts in the imperial federation movement, a colonial voice in foreign policy was to be the reward, as it were, after the colonies shouldered a part of the burden of imperial defence.
The imperial federationists seemed to take it for granted that
the colonists would also regard their undertaking a proportionate
share in imperial defence as the raison d'être of their being
given a voice in imperial policy, and that both responsibilities
would be exercised through a form of imperial federation.

Between 1885 and 1887 imperial federationists in Great Brit-
tain were greatly encouraged in these assumptions by the despatch
of a New South Wales contingent to the Sudan and the agreement to
provide an auxiliary naval squadron in Australian and New Zealand
waters. The Australian Colonial Governments had much more limited
ends in view in both cases; and their actions between 1885 and
1887 were to disprove any real basis for the expectations of the
imperial federationists. Despite what might be read into the des-
patch of a colonial contingent overseas, the Australian Governments
by 1887 showed that they did not intend to undertake a share in
the general naval defence of the Empire. On the other hand, they
were determined that the Imperial Government should heed their
representations when imperial foreign policy seemed to be disre-
garding some vital Australian interests.

In the early 1880s there were some factors which suggested
that a more precise, and possibly an increased, colonial role in
the defence of the Empire would be welcomed by the Imperial
Government. Both Liberal and conservative Governments in Great
Britain had long been interested in lessening the burden of the
Empire on the British taxpayer; but a reduction in overseas commit-
ments did not imply a lack of interest or purpose in securing the defence of the Empire. Instead of depending on the imperial garrisons, the self-governing colonies themselves were to uphold imperial security within their own territories. The naval defence of the Empire remained the sole responsibility of the United Kingdom; but after 1865 the colonies could provide small naval forces for their own local defence. The colonies also provided for the defence of their harbours.

In British eyes the most important objective outside the defence of the United Kingdom itself was to safeguard the sea-routes to India. Although South Africa was vital to this purpose, Canada, Australia and New Zealand were not. Moreover, Canada, on the one hand, and Australia and New Zealand, on the other, were in very different situations in the pattern of imperial naval defence. The United States would be as interested as Great Britain in ensuring that a third Power, as a result of gaining naval supremacy in the Atlantic or the Pacific, did not secure a foothold on the North American continent. Although Australia and New Zealand were on the periphery of the British concentration on defending the routes to India, there was no other Powers, as in the case of Canada, who had an interest in ensuring their freedom from sea-borne invasion or naval raid. For this reason alone, those in Great Britain who were interested in improving the naval defence of the Empire thought

I The imperial garrisons which remained at Halifax and Esquimalt did not invalidate the general purpose of this policy.
that the Australian Colonies and New Zealand might be more interested, and thus more willing, to undertake a share in the naval defence of the Empire, and the more so because by the 1880s there were two other European Powers with colonial acquisitions in the South Pacific.

The need to place imperial defence on a sound basis was made more urgent by the growing participation of European Powers, particularly France and Germany, in colonial acquisitions in Africa, the Far East and the Pacific. This added another problem to the recurrent one caused by Russian threats to the Straits. The defence of these against Russia still remained a key to British strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean. The whole pattern of imperial military and naval defence needed reappraisal. Over a period of several years it was discussed in detail. Despite the important role played by Lord Carnarvon in the work of the Royal Commission on Defence, action followed very slowly in the wake of the recommendations contained in the 1881 and 1882 reports of the Commission. As far as the Australian Colonies and New Zealand were concerned, the Commission made a significant departure by recommending that they should be asked to make a monetary contribution towards the naval defence of the Empire.

The advent of other European Powers in the South Pacific had the effect of greatly increasing Great Britain's naval commitments.
in those waters. This was a major factor which led the Australian Colonies in the mid-1880s to view their relations with Great Britain in the light of how far they could be drawn into Britain's imperial wars. At the same time they increasingly realised the need for adequate naval defence. This raised in a practical form the problem of whether the colonies should assist the imperial Power, even if only on a small scale, in strengthening their naval defence. The role of the Australian Colonies in imperial defence was forced into prominence between 1885 and 1887 by two actions of major significance - the despatch of the New South Wales contingent to the Sudan in 1885 and the adoption of the Australian Auxiliary Naval Force Agreement in 1887.

II

The news of General Gordon's death at Khartoum was published in the Sydney press on 12 February, 1885. On the next day, 12 February, W.B. Dalley, the Acting Premier of New South Wales, offered the immediate despatch of two batteries of field artillery and one battalion of infantry for service in the Sudan. Lord Loftus, the Governor of New South Wales, personally sympathised with the

I Telegrams to Derby and Samuel, 12 Feb.,1885. Printed in N.S.W. V. and P., 1885 (First Session), vol.I, p.49. The story of the offer, enrolling and despatch of the contingent has been told by several writers: F.Hutchinson and F.Myers, The Australian Contingent. History of the Patriotic Movement in N.S.W. (Sydney, 1885); T.Shine, The History of the Soudan Expedition (Sydney, 1885); S.Brogden, The Soudan Contingent (Melbourne, 1943); E.Penny, "The Age of Empire: an Australian Episode", Historical Studies, Australia and New Zealand, vol.II, No.41, Nov., 1963, pp.32-42.
Cabinet's action. He strongly urged the Imperial Government to accept the contingent because a refusal would be felt deeply in the colony.

The offer of the New South Wales Contingent was both a spontaneous reaction to the news of the death of General Gordon and an expression of a sense of solidarity and unity with the mother country at a time of grave international difficulties with Germany, France and Russia. Dalley's quick action in making an official offer of a military contingent moulded the widespread feeling of sympathy for Great Britain into a practical form. Apart from this action, the colonial-born Dalley, a lawyer by profession, would probably have left little mark on colonial politics. Although his "imperialism" came under fire from certain quarters in the Australian Colonies, the integrity of his personal character was always regarded as being beyond reproach. Dalley saw New South Wales as "an integral portion of the Empire". The colony, therefore, was in duty bound to support the mother country. Although Great Britain did not need colonial military assistance in the Sudan, he thought that a gesture of imperial solidarity would have "a beneficial effect upon those (Powers) who may, in dealing adversely with Imperial interests, fail to recognise and value the sympathy and adherence of the Colonies". Moreover, the offer of the contingent

1 Loftus to Derby, N.S.W. No.18, 16 Feb.,1885; No.23 17 Feb.,1885; and Confidential, 19 Feb.,1885. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers and C.O.201/603.
2 Minute for the Governor, 12 Feb.,1885. Printed in N.S.W. V.and P. 1885 (First Session), vol.1,p.49.
3 ibid.
would show that imperial unity remained strong despite recent Australian criticisms of British policy in the South Pacific. A few weeks later Dalley went to most pains to defend before the New South Wales Parliament these wider implications of the gesture of offering the contingent. In particular he indicated the ways in which he believed the offer of the contingent would affect the present and future relations of the colonies with the mother country: "I felt that the time had arrived when a great opportunity was afforded of showing in the first place to England herself, and in the second to the world what were the true relations of the Colony to the Empire - that we were not a weight upon the arms of England, and not an encumbrance of her policy... but that they could give substantial and valuable assistance in moments of disaster and difficulty. It seemed to me that this would be a great thing to do in our own interests, in those of the mother country, in those of the world..."

The sincerity of these motives is beyond question; but, when the position of New South Wales in the pattern of relations between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies at the beginning of 1885 is looked at more closely, Dalley might also have had a more immediate object in view. Despite strong public criticism in New South Wales, the Stuart-Dalley Government in that colony had adopted a much less critical attitude than the Governments of Victoria and Queensland towards the Imperial Government for its failure to

prevent part of New Guinea from falling into Germany's hands. The Colonial Office appreciated the New South Wales Government's temperate attitude, and wanted to encourage its continuance. At the same time the Colonial Office did not discount the critical attitudes of the Victorian and Queensland Governments. Disloyalty to the mother country might well be encouraged by the obvious irritation in the eastern Australian Colonies at what they regarded as the Imperial Government's failure to defend Australian interests in New Guinea. The Australian Colonies were also threatening to take legislative action if the Imperial Government failed through diplomatic means to secure them from the evil effects of a large increase in the numbers of French convicts transported to the Pacific. The Victorian and Queensland Governments had used the possible adverse effect of imperial policy on colonial loyalty to induce the Imperial Government to pay heed to their remonstrances. The offer of the New South Wales contingent, followed by offers from some of the other Australian Colonies, might well have had some more particular relevance to the state of relations between the Imperial Government and the Australian Colonial Governments at the beginning of 1885 in addition to the spontaneous outburst of loyal feeling which

1 Minutes by Herbert on telegrams from Loftus to Derby, 30 Dec., 1884, and 2 Jan., 1885; draft telegrams to the Governors of the Australian Colonies, 3 Jan., 1885; and draft letter to Sir Saul Samuel, 3 Jan., 1885. C.0.201/603.


Sir S. Griffith to Sir James Garrick, telegram, 14 Jan., 1885.

Q'I'd. Chief Secretary's Papers, Letterbooks of correspondence to Agent-General (State Archives of Queensland).
had been awakened by the death of General Gordon. However, it does not follow that calculation played the greater part in inducing the Colonial Governments to make their offers of assistance. In particular, the offers of the contingents were not primarily intended as a means of building up a grateful attitude in Great Britain so that the Imperial Government would find it harder to disregard Australian representations about British policy in the South Pacific.

The immediate reaction in the Colonial Office and in the War Office to Dalley's offer of a colonial force to serve in the Sudan is not easily determined. Such an offer was unprecedented, and a cautious approach probably seemed imperative. In any case, the offer was not immediately refused. The Liberal Government's rather uncertain policy with regard to the Sudan was under severe criticism from several quarters at the time. There were deep divisions in the Cabinet over the policy to be followed in Egypt and the Sudan. Hartington, the Secretary of State for War, was one of those who had favoured a more forward policy of British involvement in Egypt. He might, therefore, have viewed the offer of colonial forces more sympathetically than Derby or Gladstone. The English press had no hesitations. The offer was taken up enthusiastically, and the Government was criticised for the delay in accepting it.

Within two days the Imperial Government decided to accept

2 e.g. as Sir John Macdonald, the Prime Minister of Canada, believed. Quoted in C.P.Stacey, "Canada and the Nile Expedition of 1884-5", Canadian Historical Review, vol.xxxiii, No.4, Dec.,1952, pp.328,335.
3 The Imperial Government's earlier request for Canadian voyageurs to work on the Nile was rather different. C.P.Stacey,op.cit.
one battery of artillery and the battalion of infantry, provided
they were placed under the control of the general officer command-
ing the British troops at Suakin. A hint that the troops might go
into winter quarters after a short campaign seemed to leave a loop-
hole for the colony to withdraw its offer. Sir Saul Samuel, the
Agent-General for New South Wales, later claimed that the Imperial
Government's acceptance was due to his pertinacity in interviewing
Derby and Hartington and urging on them the need for a speedy
decision. Had a decision been delayed another two days, Samuel
asserted, "the offer would have been declined as then the other
offers came from the other colonies and proved embarrassing and
were declined as ours would have been had they all come together".

Sir Saul Samuel's claim needs some qualification. On 13
February, R. Murray Smith, the Agent-General for Victoria, made a
vague offer of assistance on receiving a message from Service.
In the Colonial Office the next day, his "somewhat bombastic
message" was thought to have been inspired by the offer of the New
South Wales contingent, and it was presumed that the War Office
would refuse the offers from both colonies. When, therefore, on

1 Samuel to Dalley, 14 Feb., 1885. Printed in N.S.W. V. and P., 1885
(First Session), vol. I, p. 61
2 Samuel to Parkes, 2 Oct., 1885. Parkes Correspondence, vol. 36,
pp. 192-9, A 906 (Mitchell Library).
3 Ibid.
4 Smith to C.O., 15 Feb., 1885. C.O. 309/129. Service had stated in
his message that Victoria would do her part should her assist-
ance be required. Telegram of 15 Feb., 1885, printed in G.B. and I,
Parl Paper, lli (1885), C. 4584, p. 6. In writing to Service on
the same day, Smith said that N.S.W. had offered 500 men "following
the offer of the Victorian gunboats". Vic., Premier's Dept. rec.
3

5 Minute by Mercer, 14 Feb., on Smith to C.O., 13 Feb., 1885.
C.O. 309/129.
I4 February the War Office accepted the offer from New South Wales, that colony was seemingly given more favourable treatment; but up to that time the New South Wales offer was more precise than the Victorian one.

Detailed offers of assistance were made by the Victorian, Queensland and South Australian Governments on I6 February. Undoubtedly there was an element of calculation in these offers. The three colonies wanted to show that they were not less loyal or willing than New South Wales to assist the mother country, to enhance their own prestige and act in accordance with an outburst of loyal sentiment. At the same time, James Service, the Premier of Victoria, admitted the validity of the broader motives which had inspired Dalley's action. As a result, Australia had been turned in one short week "from a geographical expression into a nation".

The offers from Victoria, Queensland and South Australia created a dual problem. In London the additional offers, totalling between 1000 and 1200 men, raised a more serious issue for the

I Like the offer from N.S.W., these offers were made through the Governors and the Agents-General. The Victorian Govt. offered 600-700 men of the Naval Brigade and an infantry battalion; the S. Australian Govt. offered 250 infantry; and the Queensland Govt. stated that an unspecified number of men wished to volunteer for the Sudan. These offers reached the Colonial Office on 16 and 17 February.

2 e.g. Lord Loftus reported Service's intimation that Victoria "would heartily co-operate and follow suit" if the N.S.W. offer was accepted. Loftus to Derby, N.S.W. No.18, I6 Feb.,I885. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol.39.

Among the Governors of the three colonies, Sir Henry Loch gave the fullest indication of some of the motives which inspired the offers. Loch to Derby, Vict.No.21, 20 Feb.,I885. Records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria, Letterbooks of Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol.10.

3 Quoted in H.G.Turner, op.cit., p.152.
Imperial Government than the single offer from New South Wales. A few months earlier the Gladstone Government had decided against any attempt to reconquer the Sudan. Wolseley's expedition was to do no more than rescue Gordon. On 5 February, in a reversal of policy following the news of Gordon's death, Wolseley was ordered to defend Egypt from as far south as Berber at least. In view of the dissensions within the Cabinet, and of the changes of direction in the Government's policy in Egypt and the Sudan during the last few months, there was no surety that the present policy of defending Egypt from well inside the Sudan would be upheld for long. Only if this policy continued could additional colonial forces take part in a campaign. A delicate problem in imperial relations had been created by the colonial offers. The Imperial Government would have to weigh their decisions on policy and strategy with their appreciation of the strength of colonial loyalty.

In the Australian Colonies the three later offers created a somewhat tricky problem in intercolonial relations. At the same time as the offers of troops were made to the Imperial Government, Thomas Playford, the Premier of South Australia, suggested that the colonial contingents would be most effective in the form of a united Australian force. Dalley was not in favour of this. He thought that New South Wales would be exposed to public abuse and

2 T. Playford to the Premiers of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, 16 Feb., 1885. South Australia, Chief Secretary's Office, out-letter books to Governments.
ridicule if the departure of the New South Wales contingent was postponed to await the formation of a united force, and he assumed that the military authorities in Egypt would break up a combined Australian force. He was also reluctant to dampen the enthusiasm in New South Wales by the inevitable delay before the Colonial Governments could reach agreement on a united contingent. It looked as if any co-operation would be left to Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. Before anything could be done, the first indication of the attitude of the Imperial Government to the offers from those colonies was received on 20 February.

The Imperial Government's response to the offers was somewhat ambiguous to say the least. New South Wales had offered a fully armed and equipped force to leave for overseas forthwith; but the length of time which must pass before the other colonial contingents could be embarked was seen as an obstacle to their being accepted at once. Should the Sudan campaign continue into the autumn, the colonial offers would be considered. The English press and the South Australian Government understood these statements as conveying a refusal.


2 The Imperial Government did not seem to be aware that the N.S.W. contingent was not ready as a force when the offer was made. Enrolments, equipment and training had to be dealt with in haste to get the contingent away by 3 March.

3 Telegram from Derby to the Governors of Victoria, Queensland and South Australia, 20 Feb., 1885. Similar statements were made by Derby in the House of Lords and Gladstone in the House of Commons on 20 February.

4 Telegram from Playford to Sir A. Blyth (Agent-General), 21 Feb., 1885, that Derby had telegraphed to the Governor "declining troops for the present". Letterbooks of correspondence from Treasurer to Agent-General, South Australia Archives 634.
The Imperial Government had probably intended to end the matter at this point; but it was reluctant to raise further adverse criticisms of its conduct of affairs. Within a few days Derby partly reopened the door to an eventual acceptance of the colonial contingents so as to lessen the blow to colonial feelings. The Governments of Victoria, Queensland and South Australia were asked to supply detailed information so that the Imperial Government could consider how an Australian force might best be employed later in the year.

Sir James Garrick, the Agent-General for Queensland, might well interpret this request as a result of the Cabinet's reconsideration of the colonial offers following the comments in the English press on the earlier refusal.

On 3 March a conference was held at the War Office so that the Agents-General could submit details about the colonial forces which had been offered for service overseas. The conference proved futile because the Imperial Government's earlier response to the colonial offers had effectively dampened the colonies' enthusiasm. Indeed, Sir Arthur Blyth, the South Australian Agent-General, said that his...
Government was no longer prepared to offer any troops. Neither was the effect of the Imperial Government's previous attitude countered by an intimation that contingents from the three colonies separately or a united force would be accepted if they could be ready to leave Australia during August. The final discouraging touch from the Imperial Government was the suggestion that officers and non-commissioned officers from the regular army should be supplied for the colonial contingents. It was little wonder that the Victorian and Queensland Agents-General suggested to their Governments that as there was plenty of time in hand they might await a full account of the conference at the War Office before replying to the Imperial Government.

This was practically the end of the matter. The New South Wales contingent of 700 had sailed on 3 March, the northern autumn was a long way off, enthusiasm for the Sudan war was lessening in the colonies and the "Russian scare" arising from the Pendjeh incident was soon to make the Colonial Governments feel that their forces might be needed in the colonies. There had been little encouragement towards raising an Australian force. Within a few weeks the Gladstone Government reversed its policy once more and

1 Blyth to Playford, 6 March, 1885. Agent-General to Treasurer Letterbooks, S.Aust. Archives 613. Blyth's despatch contains an account of the War Office conference.
3 Garrick to Griffith, 6 March, 1885. Q'ld. Agent-General Letterbooks, vol. 25 (State Archives of Queensland).
4 Ibid.
ordered a withdrawal from the Sudan. In June, 1885, the decision to evacuate all British forces from the Sudan was notified to the Colonial Governments. Through delays, indecision and dwindling enthusiasm the Imperial Government and the Colonial Governments had managed to escape having to face the delicate problems which the Victorian, Queensland and South Australian offers of contingents had seemed likely to create in imperial and in intercolonial relations.

In the Imperial Government's handling of the colonial offers of troops in 1885 there was nothing to show that it regarded the offers as anything more than an expression of imperial solidarity and of support for Great Britain during a time of great difficulty and international crisis. There is no reason to suppose that Gladstone in 1885 would have denied his earlier belief that should a time of grave emergency arise the colonies would assist the mother country. Freewill offers of support were something very different from binding commitments in imperial defence. At the official level in 1885 there was no intention, as a result of the colonial offers, of taking the initiative to integrate the colonies more closely into the pattern of imperial defence so that they would be bound in an emergency to undertake military commitments outside their own

2 Derby to Loch, Vict. No. 51, 23 June, 1885. Records in the office of the Governor of Victoria.
3 Intercolonial co-operation early in 1885 was hindered by the obvious intention of N.S.W. to remain outside the Federal Council which Victoria and Queensland were anxious to set up.
confines. The spirit which had prompted the colonies in February, 1885 was generously recognised by the Imperial Government. It was not the colonial offers in themselves which proved embarrassing, but the fact that British policy in Egypt and the Sudan had no settled aim. The Imperial Government probably did not want to be so deeply committed to a campaign in the Sudan that another cause for colonial dissatisfaction with its policy would arise if, after colonial troops had been sent to the Sudan, a campaign was not undertaken.

The Imperial Government's disinclination to make any attempt to turn the colonial offers into future commitments in imperial defence is even more obvious in the epilogue to the despatch of the New South Wales contingent to the Sudan. When the Pendjeh crisis gave rise to the prospect of an Anglo-Russian conflict, Dalley again wanted to demonstrate colonial support for the mother country. The very limited military activity around Suakin meant that there was practically no employment for the New South Wales contingent. With Cabinet approval and at colonial expense, Dalley offered the services of the contingent in India or the Mediterranean should the men be willing to volunteer. There was considerably less enthusiasm in New South Wales for this offer. Dalley had

1 Loftus to Derby, telegram, 27 April, 1885; also Samuel to W.O., 27 April, 1885. C.O. 201/604.
2 Lord Loftus felt it necessary to explain that this was "in no way to be interpreted as evidence of any diminution of loyalty or devotion to the mother country". Loftus to Derby, Confidential, 30 April, 1885. C.O. 201/603.
again acted without first seeking Parliamentary approval, and it was felt that the troops might be needed in the colony. The ambiguous terms of the Imperial Government's reply had a familiar ring. The offer was accepted, but the New South Wales force would "remain in Egypt with British troops similarly set free for service elsewhere as occasion may demand". In the event, the Pendjeh crisis did not develop into hostilities between Britain and Russia, and the New South Wales contingent returned to Sydney in June, 1885.

In the long run, the offer of troops for service in India opened up a more serious question than their despatch to the Sudan. The latter came in response to Gordon's death which was publicly regarded in England and in the colonies as a national calamity. Dalley's India or Mediterranean offer more clearly opened up the question of colonial participation in all wars in any part of the world in which Great Britain might be engaged. If this was what Dalley really intended and the colonies were prepared to accept, the imperial federationists would be justified in seeing the New South Wales offer of a contingent for service in the Sudan as a first step towards imperial federation for the defence of the Empire.

During February and March, 1885, the atmosphere of exuberant...
enthusiasm in New South Wales was not conducive to a calm appraisal of some of the issues involved in creating a precedent of sending colonial troops overseas. In the excitement, the strength of the critics in opposition could easily be overlooked and their arguments discounted. Voices in opposition were heard within a few days of Dalley's offer of the contingent. They came from various quarters. Some of the critics were political opponents of the Stuart-Dalley Government and others came from the radical groups and press. The most serious charge was that Dalley had acted unconstitutionally. He had offered the contingent in the name of the Government. He had not obtained the prior approval of Parliament or made any immediate move after making the offer to seek Parliamentary sanction. Even some of Dalley's political supporters felt some concern over this. Dalley himself was well aware that his action was probably unconstitutional. The reason which he gave for adopting this course was that reference to Parliament "would certainly mean indefinite post-
ponement and might mean defeat for the aid". This suggests that Dalley realised that there were differences of opinion in the colony, but he discounted their importance and possible effect when he assured the Governor that the people and the press were unanimous in supporting the offer of the contingent.

Sir Henry Parkes, who was not then a member of Parliament, was

1 e.g. H. Copeland to Dalley, 12 Feb., 1885. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box I47 (Archives of N.S.W.).
2 Dalley to Loftus, 19 Feb., 1885. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box I47 (Archives of N.S.W.).
Most of Dalley's supporters were not expecting Parliament to meet before July.
3 ibid.
the spearhead of the attack on Dalley's unconstitutional action. Two letters from Parkes appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald.

When a seat in the Legislative Assembly fell vacant, he decided to stand as a candidate. There was some feeling that Parkes would use the result of the election to claim public support for his opposition to the contingent; and, indeed, Parkes did see his victory as a vindication of his attitude. Furthermore, a claim was made that Parkes' opposition to the Sudan contingent was supported by the bulk of the working class.

Parkes had some connection with a petition which was sent to the Governor in protest against the Government's unconstitutional action. Representations were also made direct to Gladstone, Derby and Sir Stafford Northcote that the offer of the contingent had been made in the absence of the Premier and without Parliamentary approval, and that opposition in the colony was increasing daily.

1 The first of Parkes' letters appeared on 19 February.
2 e.g. J. Gannon (Goulburn) to Dalley, 20 March, 1885. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 175 (Archives of N.S.W.). Parkes was contesting the seat for Argyle in the Goulburn district. The election campaign continued after Parliament was recalled on 17 March to indemnify the Government.
3 There can only be speculation whether or not Parkes' motives were politically pure in opposing the contingent. Sir Thomas Bavin has suggested that Parkes' attitude in 1885 was determined by the fact that he was not in power at the time and so could not offer a contingent himself. T. Bavin, Sir Henry Parkes (Sydney, 1940), pp. 24-5. Parkes subsequently claimed that the idea of a contingent was stolen from himself. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 10 Sept., 1885, vol. 17, p. 130.
5 The petition was dated 26 Feb., 1885. The initiative came from N. Hawken and Wm. Fraser Martin. They claimed that the petition was "extensively signed". N. Hawken, The Power of Government in Relation to the Entrance of the Labour Party into Parliament in 1891 (Sydney, 1894), pp. 21-2. Parkes apparently approved the text
Parkes' association with these charges caused the Colonial Office to make some inquiries, but it was suspected that the charges were motivated by party politics or by the existence in the colony of "some philosophical politicians who object to the operations in the Soudan". Neither Loftus nor Samuel admitted that there was any significant opposition in the colony, and the Colonial Office did not inquire further after it was known that a short session of Parliament had been called to indemnify the Government. The opponents of the contingent, who had instigated the direct protest to the Imperial Government, had no grounds for their claim that knowledge about the real feelings of the people of New South Wales "evidently convinced the British Cabinet that the expedition, at that point, was a farcical extravaganza, and could not proceed to practical work"; it changed from "an act of war into a visit of friendship".

The Governor's assurance to the Colonial Office that the Government would be supported in Parliament by a large majority proved correct; but his expectation that there would only be a few "dissentient voices in the Legislative Assembly" was less well

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1 Minutes by Bramston on Parkes to Derby, 25 Feb., 1885; and by Herbert on Loftus to Derby, telegram, 28 Feb., 1885. C.O. 201/603 and 604. Parkes' telegram was sent to the War Office on 4 March with Loftus' reply to the Colonial Office' inquiry.

2 Samuel to Herbert, private, 26 Feb., 1885; and Loftus to Derby, telegram, 28 Feb., 1885. C.O. 201/603 and 604.

By implication Samuel confirmed the Colonial Office's impression that party politics would be the cause of any opposition in the colony.

I founded. When Parliament met on 17 March, a fortnight after the excitement of farewelling the contingent had died down, twenty-three members of the Legislative Assembly opposed the Government's action.

Factiousness as much as any principle could well have motivated those who made a stand on the unconstitutional nature of Dalley's action. The opposition of others in the colony was intellectual in origin. One of its main sources was the John Bright school of pacifism which saw all imperialist wars of expansion as immoral and unjust. By means of the Sudan contingent, Australia was being dragged into imperialist wars. Another main element was the long standing sympathy of the Gladstonian Liberals for movements to gain freedom from oppression. In the same way as Liberals in Great Britain had supported the Bulgarians against the Turks, and some of them had favoured Arabi Pasha in Egypt, some of those who opposed the despatch of the New South Wales contingent to the

1 Loftus to Derby, N.S.W. No.10, 10 March, 1885. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol.59.

Lord Loftus himself did not escape criticism. Responsibility for Dalley's unconstitutional action was placed on him. (Petition to the Governor, 26 Feb.,1885; quoted in N.Hawken, op.cit.,pp.21-2.) He was later accused of partiality because he had attributed to Parkes the leadership of the opposition to the contingent, and had characterised the opposition as being "insignificant both in numbers and influence". (Evening News, editorial 3 Aug.,1885; and Parkes in Legis. Assembly, 10 Sept.,1885, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.17, pp.132-133.

Probably Lord Loftus' enthusiasm for Dalley's action was greater than his popularity or his discretion. He defended himself against both charges. (Reply by Lord Loftus to the petition, quoted in N.Hawken,op.cit.,p.22; and Loftus to Derby, Confidential, 6 August, 1885. C.O.201/603.

2 The Government's motion was carried by 64 to 23 in the Legislative Assembly. In the Legislative Council there was only one dissentient voice.

3 e.g. D.Buchanan, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 17 March, 1885, vol.I6, p.22; and Bulletin, 7 March, 1885.
Sudan saw the Mahdist revolt as a movement for national liberation. Neither of these bases of criticism were Australian in origin, and several of those who most forcefully used these arguments were recent arrivals in the colony or had had some personal contact with English liberalism and radicalism; but such arguments could be equally valid in a colonial community where English political thought was part of its heritage. More specifically Australian grounds for opposing the contingent lay in the belief that Australia's distance from Europe and Asia would make her immune from ever being involved in war but for her tie with Great Britain. Others argued that a distinction could be made between Britain's involvement in imperial wars and Great Britain herself being in danger. Further, Australians must put the defence of their own continent first. When that was secured, some, but not all of those who held this view, would admit that the colonies of their own free will should come to Britain's aid. These arguments had a much wider applicability than to the Sudan contingent alone. They remained part and parcel of Australian thought on defence. Although they were held most strongly by the radicals in the 1880s and the Labour Parties in the 1890s, they were not confined to those political groups. In the long run, opposition to the Sudan contingent based on these arguments had much greater significance than opposition

1 e.g. T. Walker, Oration on Mr. Dalley's Offer of Troops for the Soudan Campaign (Sydney, 22 Feb., 1885), p. 6.
2 e.g. T. Walker, D. Buchanan, and J. F. Archibald of the Bulletin.
4 e.g. R. Wisdom, ibid. p. 55; and H. Parkes, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 10 Sept., 1885, vol. 17, p. 130.
originating from what was regarded as the unconstitutional nature of Dalley's action. Attitudes with similar intellectual foundations were to be held more widely and also advocated more forcefully when contingents were offered for service in South Africa.

The despatch of the New South Wales contingent to the Sudan provided no reliable guide for the future whether the colonies would or would not offer military assistance to Great Britain in every emergency in any part of the Empire. To the more irresponsible imperial federationists it appeared to be an initial step towards the colonies' acceptance of a share in the burden of imperial defence.

From 1885 onwards imperial federationists and other more responsible bodies gave increasing attention to the ways by which this might be achieved. By the late 1890s the Colonial Defence Committee and the War Office, as well as imperial federationists, were drawing up schemes in which a proportion of the colonial forces were to be trained to imperial military standards in readiness for service overseas. These forces could then be employed by the Imperial Government as soon as the Colonial Governments decided to give military support to Great Britain in an emergency.

On the whole, the offer of the New South Wales contingent

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1 The offer of the N.S.W. contingent came at a time when there was much activity and discussion of imperial federation, e.g. the series of articles in the Pall Mall Gazette.

W.E. Forster, the President of the I.F.L., felt compelled to warn imperial federationists not to make any precipitate moves towards establishing an imperial federation on account of the N.S.W. action in sending a contingent to the Sudan. Nineteenth Century, vol.xvii, March, 1885, p.553.

2 This proviso was included in the schemes put forward by the C.D.C. and the War Office between 1899 and 1903. Several imperial federationists who drew up similar schemes took colonial aid much more for granted.
was regarded in Great Britain solely as a gesture of loyalty; but
the precedent which had been created undoubtedly encouraged the
Imperial Government and official bodies to think that colonial
assistance would be forthcoming in future emergencies. Although it
is unlikely that Dalley had such ultimate intentions, some of his
statements in justification of his action might suggest that he did
not see colonial assistance in the Sudan as a unique offer, but as
the beginning of a future association between the mother country
and the colonies in the defence of the Empire. Some critics in New
South Wales took Dalley to task for creating a precedent which
imperial federationists in Great Britain could interpret as an indi-
cation that the colonies were willing to undertake commitments in
sharing the burden of imperial defence. If the New South Wales
force had not already been raised, equipped and sent overseas, it
is doubtful whether Dalley would have offered its services in India
in April, 1885. Neither was there anything to show that the public
in New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia would
support offers of contingents to assist Great Britain in every
future emergency. To call forth colonial military support, it was
likely that Great Britain would have to be involved in an emergency
which would catch the imagination or raise an emotional sense of
danger to British ideals. In 1885 Gordon's death fulfilled the
first of these conditions; and in 1899 the political disabilities

1 e.g. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Council, 17 March, 1885, vol. 16,
pp. 6, 9.
2 e.g. Bulletin, 21 Feb., 1885.
of the Outlanders in the Transvaal and the Boer threat to British supremacy in South Africa fulfilled the second.

On the other hand, the colonial offers of military contingents in 1885 raised two serious issues. Both of these issues might affect future relations between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies, and the sharpest divisions of opinion in the colonies arose over them. First, would the colonies endanger their own safety by their being drawn into all wars in which Great Britain found herself engaged, and the more so if they offered military contingents to assist her? Secondly, had the colonies shown that they were no longer dependencies but nations asserting their growing self-confidence, or had the real interests of the colonies been lost in assisting Great Britain in an outburst of aggressive imperialism? These issues were debated most openly and at the greatest length in New South Wales; but the same pattern of differing opinion would most probably have shaped itself elsewhere had anything come of the offers from the other colonies. Opinions on both these issues hardened and changed during the following two years as the colonies turned their attention to improving their naval defence.

III

In their comprehensive schemes for the defence of the Empire, the imperial federationists saw the colonies as partners with Great

Britain. No longer did they consider it to be Great Britain's sole responsibility to provide for the naval defence of the Empire. The colonies should play a role proportionate to their resources and I strength. Enthusiasts drew up schemes by means of which money would be raised in the colonies, as well as in Great Britain, to provide adequate naval defence for the Empire. By the same means the burden on the British taxpayer would be lessened. Some of these schemes included the imposition of a supplementary uniform duty as a means of avoiding any infringement of colonial powers of taxation; but no moves could be made to implement a scheme of this kind, with or without a form of political federation, unless Great Britain was prepared to modify her firm belief in a policy of free trade.

In some respects the Australian Colonies were an exception to the general understanding that Great Britain alone was responsible for naval defence. Naval forces had been raised in the Australian Colonies under the Colonial Naval Defence Act of 1865; and, in addition to these, naval vessels had been provided for local defence by the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia. At an intercolonial conference in 1881, the South

I First and foremost among the propagandists on this question were Capt. J.C.R. Colomb and Sir G. Baden Powell. Lord Brassey was another active exponent of this idea, e.g. "Imperial Federation for Naval Defence", Nineteenth Century, vol. xxii, Jan., 1892, pp. 90-100.

2 The most statesmanlike of these schemes was that put forward by J.H. Hofmeyr, one of the representatives of Cape Colony at the Colonial Conference of 1887. Proc. C. 5091, pp. 467-8. This and similar schemes had a long history up to 1902 and beyond. During the 1890s the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee issued several pamphlets in support of such views.

3 The "Nelson" had been acquired by Victoria in 1868 and the "Cerberus" in 1871; the "Protector" by S. Australia in 1884; and the "Gayundah" and the "Paluma" by Queensland in 1884. There was also the "Wolverine" under the control of the N.S.W. Government.
Australian representatives had suggested that the colonies might pay a small annual sum towards the upkeep of an adequate naval force in Australian waters. The other Australian Colonies disagreed. They distinguished their own small naval forces from the imperial squadron. The latter should be provided at the exclusive charge of Great Britain because of the large imperial interests which had to be defended in the South Pacific. At the same time, the Colonial Governments thought that the imperial squadron on the Australia and New Zealand station should be increased in strength. The Imperial Government still recognised its sole responsibility for the naval defence of the Empire; and, following the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Defence and the resolution of the 1881 Intercolonial Conference in Australia, it was willing to see what could be done to strengthen the naval defence of the Australian Colonies. If the Commission's recommendation was accepted by the Imperial Government, the Australian Colonies might be asked to contribute towards the increased cost.

Fears of German moves in New Guinea and a French expansionist movement in the South Pacific made the Australian colonies realise more acutely that naval defence was equally, if not more, important to them than land defences. They recognised that the ships on the Australian Station would not be retained there in time of war if

The colonies had been invited to submit evidence to the Royal Commission on Defence. Circular Despatch (secret), 6 March,1880; copy to Kennedy in Q'ld. Govt. House Papers.
2 Derby to Loftus, Secret, 19 June,1885. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
they were needed elsewhere. The colonial naval vessels were entirely separate from the imperial squadron, and the men who manned them could not receive any benefit of training with the ships of the Royal Navy. The earliest proposals from both the Admiralty and the Colonial Governments sought to strengthen the force of colonial naval vessels and make them a part of imperial instead of local naval defence. At no stage in the subsequent negotiations did the Colonial Governments think of providing an Australian navy. The initial difficulties of the cost of construction and the provision of trained personnel were too great. Moreover, the establishment of an Australian navy would have raised the basic question of overall responsibility of control. After the Federal Council had been set up in 1885, that body would have been the obvious authority to be vested with the control of an Australian navy; but New South Wales, South Australia and New Zealand remained outside it.

Neither did the Australian Colonies intend their participation in the provision of an auxiliary naval force to be regarded as a contribution to the imperial fleet in general. Colonial contributions towards the upkeep of the imperial fleet were seen as a

I The Australian Station extended far beyond the limits of Australian and New Zealand waters. In 1887 its western boundary was 95°E (i.e. just west of the Cocos Is.); its eastern boundary was 160°W (i.e. to the Cook Is.); in the south it was bounded by the Antarctic Circle; and to the north its boundary ran from 10°S in the west to 12°N so as to include New Guinea, Samoa, and the Caroline, Marshall, Gilbert and Ellice Is. By 1902 the eastern boundary had been extended to 149°30'W (i.e. to the east of the Cook Is.).

2 Sections of the colonial press vehemently refuted such a possibility, e.g. S. Aust. Register, editorial 23 Aug., 1886.
first step towards a curtailment of colonial autonomy. The colonies intended any vessels provided as a result of negotiations with the Imperial Government to be additional to the vessels New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and South Australia had already provided, equipped and manned as part of their local defences. The Imperial Government, no matter whether a Liberal or a Conservative Ministry held office, recognised the purpose and limitations of the Australian proposals. As far as the political aspects of the negotiations were concerned, they were not intended to secure a monetary contribution to the imperial fleet in general. Indeed, at one time, Admiral Tryon's advocacy of the colonies' point of view caused the Colonial Office to be apprehensive that he was "disposed to favour the development of a colonial navy" rather than "a colonial contribution to an increase in the imperial navy for a specific purpose". The additional ships would be "localised vessels"; therefore the cost of any "addition to the sea-going squadron... made at the instance of the colonies, should be borne by them". However, the Imperial Govern-

I e.g. Loch to Tryon, 21 March,1885, that the additional vessels were not intended "to lessen in any way the Imperial responsibility for the external defence of these Colonies, or for the protection of the commercial trade of the Empire in Australasian waters"; and the vessels "should be in addition to, and not in exchange for, any protection for these purposes by Her Majesty's squadron in these seas". Vict.Premier's Dept. records, in-letters 86/533 (copy) 2 W.C.B.Tunstall is mistaken in regarding the negotiations in this light. Cambridge History of the British Empire (Cambridge,1959), vol.III, pp.236-8. 3 Minute by Meade on Carrington to Granville, 13 March,1886. C.O.201/606. The italics are mine. 4 Statement by the Admiralty, quoted in Tryon to Loch, 23 May,1886. Copy in N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters in Box I64 (Archives of N.S.W.).
ment's recognition of the political limitations of the Australian proposals did not imply that the Admiralty in any way modified its doctrine of the unity of imperial naval defence in strategy and command.

Although on occasions from 1881 onwards the Colonial Governments gave some attention to the need for strengthening the naval defence of the Australian Colonies, they made no determined attempt to consider ways and means until early in 1885. The offers of contingents for the Sudan and the "Russian scare" gave point to their deliberations. To secure a more adequate naval force in Australian and New Zealand waters, the Colonial Governments knew that they must seek the co-operation and assistance of the Imperial authorities; but at first they favoured separate action by each colony.

The New South Wales Government took the initiative in this. Dalley thought that if the other colonies were notified of the New South Wales Government's intention, they might adopt a similar course. After consulting Admiral Tryon, Dalley proposed that under an agreement of ten or fifteen years' duration the Admiralty should build and equip two ships of war of a type to be agreed upon jointly by the Admiralty and the Colonial Government. The colony would

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1 By 1885 some attention had already been given to improvements in other forms of defence, e.g. in N.S.W. with regard to the Volunteers, the Permanent Artillery and the Naval Brigade.
2 e.g. W.B. Dalley's statement - "the more we identify ourselves with the Imperial Government for the purpose of securing perfect Naval Defences, the more efficient will be its administration". Minute on Naval Defence, 10 March, 1886. Copy in N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 164 (Archives of N.S.W.).
3 Ibid. In addition, Dalley suggested that two torpedo vessels should be provided.
bear the cost of building, equipping and arming the vessels. The officers and crews were to be provided by the Imperial Government, and they were to serve under the same terms as those in the imperial squadron. The cost of manning the vessels would be borne by the Colonial Government. Repairs to the vessels were to be carried out in the colony as far as possible. The ships were to be under the command of the Admiral on the Australian Station. In time of war, the Colonial government's consent would have to be obtained before the ships were employed outside New South Wales waters; but Dalley did not insist on this right in time of peace. The auxiliary force "would be in addition to that provided by the Imperial Government for our defence in the annual vote for Her Majesty's Navy".

These proposals show the maximum extent to which one colony was prepared to go in providing more adequate naval protection in co-operation with the Imperial Government. Admiral Tryon readily admitted the need for a further naval force to operate in Australian waters; but, when he was asked by the Victorian Government to recommend the most suitable type of vessel and the number Victoria should try to provide, he urged the Colonial Governments to think in terms of a joint force instead of separate action by each colony to satisfy its own needs. Tryon's outline of a scheme for a

1 ibid.
2 ibid.
force of six-cruiser-catchers followed that of the New South Wales Government in most respects; but there was a vital distinction in Tryon's suggestion that the Admiralty should provide the ships. The Colonial Governments were willing to examine in principle the provision of a joint force, and Sir Alexander Stuart, the Premier of New South Wales, suggested that the expenses of a joint scheme might be defrayed by the colonies in proportion to their population.

The first steps taken by the Imperial Government in response to representations by the Colonial Governments and Admiral Tryon completed the change from the prospect of separate agreements with each colony to a scheme based on joint participation by the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. The Admiralty's earliest proposals, known as the Cooper Keys scheme, were superseded before they were submitted to the Colonial Governments. In September, 1885, the Admiralty sent a revised scheme to Admiral Tryon and to the Colonial Office. Whereas the Cooper Keys scheme was based fairly closely on the degree of colonial participation adopted by the New South Wales Government as a basis for negotiation, the Admiralty now sought to provide for greater imperial control over the additional vessels. If the Imperial Government undertook the cost of construction, the

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1 Ibid. Tryon suggested that the cruiser-catchers might be of the "Scout" class, and eight torpedo vessels should also be provided.
2 Loftus to Derby, N.S.W. No. 93, 10 June, 1885. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol. 39.
3 Circular Despatch (secret) from Derby, 19 June, 1885; and minute by Lord Loftus. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
The Cooper Keys scheme was dropped when the Gladstone Government was replaced by the first Salisbury Government in June, 1885, and the new Board of Admiralty wanted to modify the scheme.
ships would more clearly form part of the imperial navy than if the colonies undertook the capital cost. The Admiralty accepted in principle that the vessels of the auxiliary squadron should operate in Australian and New Zealand waters, but insisted that they should be solely and entirely under the command of the Admiral on the Station. The possibly contentious issue of the use of the ships beyond the limits of the Australian Station in peace or war was not raised. A force of five cruisers of the "Archer" class and two torpedo vessels was recommended. This would provide a more powerful force than that suggested earlier by Admiral Tryon. The Australian Colonies and New Zealand would pay an annual contribution to cover interest on capital cost, depreciation, equipment and the annual maintenance of the vessels. The colonies would share these charges in proportion to population.

Admiral Tryon was instructed by the Admiralty to negotiate directly with the Governors and the Colonial Governments. Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the first Salisbury Government, asked Sir Henry Loch, the Governor of Victoria, to arrange a conference of Governors and Premiers with Admiral Tryon. This seemed to be a procedure which emphasised the role of the Governors as imperial officers at the expense of their constitu-

2 The items of interest, depreciation, and maintenance together were expected to involve a total expenditure of £126,000 by the Australian Colonies and New Zealand for 5 cruisers and 2 torpedo vessels. The cost of maintenance alone was estimated at £90,000 per
tional position as the Queen's representatives. Despite Sir Henry Loch's efforts, it was not surprising that the proposed conference of Governors and Premiers did not take place.

Although some of the Colonial Governments had separately given Admiral Tryon an indication of their attitude towards the Admiralty's proposals, no real progress was made until an informal meeting of the Premiers of New south Wales, Victoria and Queens-

land took place on board the "Nelson" at Sydney in April, 1886.

The toughest problem which still had to be solved was the difference of opinion among the colonies whether they should or should not contribute towards the first cost of the vessels. To a large extent this was a result of the difference between the vessels recommended in the Admiralty's scheme and the smaller vessels which some of the colonies had had in mind at first. From this stemmed the contentious issue of the relative importance of the imperial interests to be defended in Australian waters in comparison with Australian interests. On the grounds that there were large imperial interests at stake, the Victorian Government disagreed that the colonies should contribute to the interest on capital cost and depreciation. In line with its earlier proposals,

1 See correspondence filed in Vict.Premier's Dept records, in-letters 86/915. Also, Loch to Granville, Vict.No.31, 10 March and No.59, 13 May, 1886. Records in the office of the Governor of Victoria, Letterbooks of Despatches to Secretary of State, vol.10. Some of the opposition can only be attributed to intercolonial jealousy between New South Wales and Victoria; but the most important objection to the conference was the constitutional impropriety of a meeting of Governors and Premiers. Carrington to Granville, N.S.W. No.54, 13 March, 1886. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Despatches to Secretary of State, vol.39.

2 Memoranda by Duncan Gillies, Premier of Victoria, 20 and 25 May, 1886. Copies in N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters in Box 164 (Archives of N.S.W.).
the New South Wales Government, supported by the Queensland Government, was prepared to contribute to these items up to 5% of the capital cost as well as to undertake payment for the maintenance of the ships. The Queensland Government thought it was equally undesirable that the vessels should be the joint property of the colonies or that they should raise loans for the purchase of vessels which would be the property of the Imperial Government.

At the end of 1886, some details and the major problem of whether or not the colonies should contribute towards the interest on capital cost still remained to be settled between the Imperial and the Colonial governments. Otherwise the latter had gone a long way towards accepting the Admiralty's proposals for the creation of an auxiliary naval force. Among the colonies themselves no agreement had been reached on the basis of assessment for the contributions from each participating colony. On both of these major issues some hard bargaining was still likely. In some respects a spur towards reaching agreement had come in October, 1886, when, at a time of increasing French and German activity in the South Pacific, the Australian Colonies had asked the Imperial Government whether the existing imperial squadron on the Australian Station was at all adequate. Considering the fact that the

1 Minute by Sir Patrick Jennings, 15 May, 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 164 (Archives of N.S.W.).
2 Minute by Sir S. Griffith, 3 May, 1886. Copy in N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 164.
3 Some of the correspondence between the colonies following the submission of memoranda by Jennings, Gillies and Loch on the "Nelson" conference is to be found in the N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers (Box 164); and much of the further correspondence between Tryon, Loch and Gillies on the Victorian position is in the Vict. Premier's Dept. records.
4 The initiative for this inquiry came from Sir Samuel Griffith in
Victorian attitude had mainly prevented an agreement on the auxiliary squadron from being reached during 1886, there was some justification for a hope expressed in the Colonial Office that the existence of such fears might encourage Victoria to be less obdurate and lead her to compromise on her previous attitude. The inclusion of defence among the subjects to be discussed at the Colonial Conference in 1887 was eminently practical in intention. By January, 1887, the Admiralty was ready to send a revised offer to Admiral Tryon's successor on the Australian Station; but, in response to a suggestion from the Colonial Office, the finishing touches to the agreement were left to be settled at the Conference. The limited scope and intention of the proposals to provide an auxiliary naval force in Australian and New Zealand waters had already been firmly established. There was no likelihood of any fresh departure at the Conference in the direction of a general contribution to the imperial navy.

During the course of the negotiations for the auxiliary force, the Imperial Government had shown much willingness to meet the colonies as liberally as possible; but any additional burden

Queensland. After the other Premiers had agreed to the terms of the proposed message, it was forwarded to the C.O. by the Governor of Victoria. Inquiries were also made at the C.O. by the Agents-General. Griffith to Jennings, 21 Oct., 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 168 (Archives of N.S.W.). Also Loch to Stanhope, telegram, 28 Oct., 1886. C.O. 309/I30.


2 The C.O. had pointed out that several of the Premiers would be on their way to London before Admiral Fairfax could take any action. It would be unwise to create the appearance that the whole thing had been settled before the Conference met. Admiralty to C.O., 25 Feb., 1887, and draft reply. C.O. 201/606.
this force might impose on Great Britain had to be viewed within the framework of the naval defence of the Empire. In the circumstances of the depression of the 1880s there was both a demand and a need to limit overseas commitments as far as was consistent with the safety of the most vital imperial interests. An Australian contribution to the auxiliary naval force was justified in British eyes on the grounds that the greater percentage of commerce to and from Australian ports was Australian rather than British. On the other hand, the Victorians contended that the greater part of the shipping which the auxiliary squadron would be defending was British-owned, and a smaller colonial contribution was therefore justified. The two different points of view on the proportion of imperial and colonial interests sometimes led to acrimonious exchanges between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments. The Imperial Government was particularly dissatisfied with the Victorian attitude; but it did not necessarily follow that the Victorian Government’s quibbling showed any lesser appreciation of the importance of naval defence to Australia than the other colonies.

The Victorian contention that large imperial interests were involved in the defence of Australia was not solely confined to the auxiliary naval squadron. A distinction between imperial and local interests also applied to coaling stations which were beyond the means of the colonies to defend. Where imperial interests primarily were concerned, the Imperial Government generally held that it was responsible for both the fortifications and the provision of a fleet; but where mixed imperial and colonial interests were concerned, the Colonial Governments usually provided the defence works and the Imperial Government the armament and ships. In line with this reasoning, Halifax and Esquimalt in Canada were maintained solely at imperial expense. In the mid-1880s, the problems associated with the defences of King George’s Sound in Western Australia and Thursday Island in Torres Strait highlighted the difficulty of deciding the preponderance of
Although the Australian Colonies were only prepared to share in the cost of that part of their naval defence which was specifically for their own protection, they recognised their great dependence on Great Britain for defence in and beyond Australian waters. They realised that this must necessarily be framed in imperial and not in Australian terms. In particular the Australian Colonies and New Zealand recognised their vulnerability to naval raids in time of war. The main function of the auxiliary squadron would be to prevent the success of any such raids.

IV

Although the Sudan contingent and the auxiliary naval force were specific matters in themselves, they opened up several wide questions in imperial relations. In the Australian Colonies an important distinction was made between a spontaneous offer to send a contingent to assist Great Britain in the Sudan and colonial military aid being taken for granted in any subsequent war in which the mother country might be engaged. On the whole, those with radical or republican tendencies were most outspoken against the Sudan contingent because it created a precedent for the offer of colonial aid in each and all emergencies which Great Britain might

*Imperial* or colonial interests. A similar difficulty arose when the South Australian Government advocated Port Darwin as an imperial coaling station. The *imperial* Government took the view that defences were needed at King George's Sound and Thursday Island to protect shipping which was mainly colonial. Although the Imperial Government appreciated the need for defences at those two points as part of the overall defence of the Empire, its attitude was more uncompromising in comparison with the readiness it showed to meet the colonies as liberally as possible in strengthening the naval forces in Australian and New Zealand waters.
I have to face. Even if the colonies were determined to decide on
the merits of each emergency whether they would or would not sup-
port Great Britain militarily, the precedent which had been created
was a dangerous one. In the future it would be more difficult for
the colonies not to offer to assist Great Britain. Further, French
and German encroachments in the Pacific made it more than likely
that any armed conflict in Europe would have repercussions in the
Pacific in the form of naval raids against Australian coastal
cities and towns. To avoid such an eventuality it was sometimes
suggested that the Australian Colonies should declare their neutral-
ity in time of war, or that they should take the status of "neutral
dependencies" to avoid being dragged into Britain's wars. One of
the reasons for opposition to an imperial federation was that the
colonies would automatically be drawn into hostilities. If any of
these issues had been put to the test, it is doubtful whether the
colonies as dependencies could have exercised any option on neutral-
ity had they desired to do so. Control of foreign policy and the
determination of peace or war were the last and most strongly
held limitations on colonial autonomy. In 1914 it was generally
held that the Dominions were at war once Britain was involved in
hostilities.

1 e.g. D. Buchanan, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 17 March,
1885, vol.16, p.22.
2 e.g. A. Norton, Queensland Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 17 Nov.,
3 e.g. Bulletin, 29 Sept., 1883, and 28 March, 1884.
4 e.g. Bulletin, 9 August, 1884, and 7 March, 1885.
W.B. Dalley and his supporters saw the precedent created by the despatch of the Sudan contingent in a very different light. Dalley's belief in imperial unity was implicit in his statement that his action had "shown to the world under a new light the strength which England may command in a great struggle". This attitude was put more openly by another supporter who claimed: "We have got into a new position altogether in our relations with England. We have established a precedent which if acted upon will...have a most material bearing on the fortunes of Great Britain in the future... that the colonies shall in times of war and distress to the mother country assist her as far as they are able..." Another supporter, viewing the effect of the despatch of the contingent on relations between the mother country and the self-governing colonies, claimed that New South Wales had been raised "from the status of a mere dependency to rank as an integral portion of the greatest Empire in the world".

In 1885 the majority in New South Wales made no exaggerated claims that the colonies had won a new status for themselves in the Empire or had achieved recognition as a factor in world affairs. Neither did they utter dire warnings about the dangers of their being dragged unwillingly into all imperialist wars. Instead the majority most probably saw the offer of the contingent as signify-

ing no more than a community of feeling with the mother country, and perhaps refuting the old charge that the colonies were a drain on her. Should it appear that an obligation had thereby been created to offer colonial forces to assist the mother country, those who formed this majority would in all probability soon come to have second thoughts about the wisdom of Dalley's action.

In 1888 Dalley claimed that in a similar situation to that of February, 1885, he would act in the same way again; but it is doubtful whether he would have gained as much public support in the more critical climate of opinion towards the imperial connection which by then had developed. There was more opposition in New South Wales in 1885 to the despatch of the contingent than was ever officially admitted; and one of the opponents in 1885 might not have been guilty of too much exaggeration two years later when he claimed that nine-tenths of the population would now oppose such an action. In 1889 this change was noted by an outside observer, Sir Charles Dilke, who was then visiting the Australian Colonies. He thought; "It would require a real and grave catastrophe before any colony in the future would venture to offer direct aid to the Home Government, and it may be safely asserted that, when such offers come, New South Wales is not likely to take the lead..."

By that time more colonists were asking if the benefits

conferred by the imperial tie on Australia outweighed the dangers and disadvantages. The naval agreement, more so than the Sudan contingent, could be attacked on the ground that it detracted from colonial autonomy. In 1887 a number of colonists, radicals and others, advocated an Australian navy as the ultimate and only adequate way of ensuring the defence of the colonies and of satisfying national self-respect. In particular, Australian attitudes towards colonial involvement in Britain's wars sharpened between the time of the despatch of the Sudan contingent in 1885 and the ratification of the agreement for the auxiliary naval squadron at the end of 1887. This issue could be debated more calmly in 1887 than in 1885, a few weeks after Gordon's death and during the excitement surrounding the despatch of the contingent. Unlike the Sudan contingent, the naval agreement was the equal concern of all the Australian Colonies. Moreover, the purpose of the naval agreement was far more practical as far as Australian interests were concerned. Despite the arguments that most of the sea-borne traffic in Australian waters was British, there was a ready acceptance by many in the Australian Colonies that the auxiliary squadron would help to safeguard Australian interests and defend her shores. On the other hand, there were many who were passively acquiescent or indifferent to the issues which were raised by the agreement. Among the minority, appreciably larger than in 1885, the prospect of colonial involvement in imperial wars raised its head again in a somewhat different form. This time the debate centred on the use of the
auxiliary force in time of war. Supposing the control of the vessels
was vested solely in the Admiralty, it was asked, would Australian
needs in time of war be put before those of the Empire as a whole?
Or would the ships be moved from Australian waters just when they
were needed most to guard against naval raiders? Such an argument
formed another variation on the theme of "continentalism".

In the main the "continentalists" and the critics of the
imperial connection were identical. The exceptions were those who
opposed Australian expansionism in the Pacific but supported the
despatch of the Sudan contingent, the naval agreement and continu-
ing ties with Great Britain. The most noisily vocal of the "conti-
nentalists" believed that the immediate or future independence of
Australia from Great Britain was the only way to ensure Australia's
safety. Otherwise, they argued: "England in the midst of European
complications is always liable to be immersed in war with some of
the great European States, and the misery to us is that from our
political connection - which has yielded us nothing - every enemy
of England becomes an enemy of ours; that the enemy which is fight-
ing England may strike a blow at us..."

There was much wishful thinking in these arguments against
Australia's involvement in the consequences of Britain's imperial

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I Among these was Henry Copeland.
2 D. Buchanan, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 17 March, 1885,
vol. 16, p. 25.
policy. They were carried to an extreme when Dalley was taken to task for not having borne in mind the difference between an Australia of three millions and a future Australia of thirty millions. Would it "be advantageous for a populous Australia, capable of holding her own against all comers, to be bound to any European nation and mixed up in European brawls"? Neither did the auxiliary naval force escape criticism which stemmed from the radicals' propensity to exaggerate Australian strength and wear blinkers to look at Australia's isolated position in the Pacific. In doing so they denied the very basis of the need for an additional naval force in Australian waters: "We are off the track of Royal or Imperial marauders... and have only to keep the peace ourselves to ensure perfect freedom from risk of attack... There is only one circumstance demanding from Australia any effort in the way of defence, and that is the circumstance of being a British dependency..."

The despatch of the Sudan contingent might well have raised another broad but significant question in imperial relations. If the colonies accepted unquestioningly the responsibilities attending Britain's foreign relations and participated in imperial wars, should they have a voice in determining imperial foreign policy? This question was only implied and not posed explicitly in the Australian Colonies in 1885. The colonies might find themselves

2 Bulletin, 7 May, 1887.
involved in Britain's imperial wars, so the argument ran, but they had no part in determining peace or war and in deciding on the rightness and justice of Britain's cause.

Between 1885 and 1887 the Australian Colonial Governments were much more concerned with the practical problem of ensuring that Australian interests were not sacrificed in imperial diplomacy. In particular they wanted Australian interests in New Guinea and the islands of the South Pacific to be safeguarded against Germany and France. By the Imperial Government's failure to sanction the Queensland Government's attempt in 1883 to establish a British protectorate over New Guinea, part of that territory had been lost to Germany. The irritation in the Australian colonies and their suspicion of imperial policy were not removed by the protectorate which the Imperial Government belatedly proclaimed over the southeastern part of New Guinea in 1884. There was a threat of French annexation of the New Hebrides where important Australian interests were claimed to be at stake. The Colonial Governments were also protesting strongly against the increased numbers of French criminals to be transported to the penal settlements in New Caledonia. Australian interests in the South Pacific, the presence of foreign Powers in those waters and the defence of the Australian Colonies were closely connected in these problems.

To the imperial federationists in Great Britain, a colonial share in the responsibilities of the defence of the Empire would be balanced in a federal structure by a colonial voice in determining foreign policy. Between 1885 and 1887, the Australian
Colonies rejected undertaking a specific and obligatory role in the defence of the Empire. They would only share in the very limited commitment of the auxiliary naval force by means of which important colonial interests would be more adequately defended. The Australian Colonies would have to find other means than an imperial federation to secure the recognition of colonial interests in the conduct of imperial foreign policy. The New Hebrides and French transportation to the Pacific provided the circumstances in which those means were sought.
CHAPTER 5

A COLONIAL VOICE IN IMPERIAL POLICY: THE NEW HEBRIDES AND THE TRANSPORTATION OF FRENCH CRIMINALS TO THE PACIFIC

When self-government was granted to the Australian Colonies in the 1850s, the conduct of foreign policy as well as defence was reserved to the Imperial Government. As long as the self-governing colonies were entirely dependent on Great Britain for their land and sea defence, there could be no question of their conducting their own external policies. In the 1870s, when the Australian Colonies took over responsibility for their own land defence and sought the removal of the constitutional disability which prevented them from imposing differential tariffs, they did not take the next logical step and claim power to conduct an independent foreign policy.

The Canadian Government also made no such claim; but Canada's geographical position, with her long, common land frontier with the United States, was very different from that of the isolated Australian continent in the South Pacific. Because of her position, Canada was bound to assume an important place in British relations with the United States. During the nineteenth century several of the most difficult diplomatic questions at issue between Great Britain and the United States involved Canada. The extent to which Canadian

Among these were the settlement of the Oregon boundary dispute in 1846, Fenian raids from the United States into Canada in the 1860s, the settlement in 1892 of the lengthy and complex problem of the Behring Sea fisheries, and the settlement of the Alaska boundary question in 1903-4.
interests might be secured or sacrificed depended on the over-
riding needs in Anglo-American relations at a particular time. Yet,
despite the existence of some very difficult questions, relations
with the United States in the latter part of the nineteenth century
did not hold the same vital importance for Great Britain as rela-
tions with European Powers, and particularly with France, Germany
and Russia. Further, Canada's involvement in Anglo-American rela-
tions did not raise the question of new British annexations of
territory. In the 1880s the Australian Colonies found their inter-
est involved in both Great Britain's reluctance to annex further
territories in the South Pacific and in her relations with France
and Germany at a particularly difficult time.

Australia's isolation in the South Pacific ended when France
and Germany entered that area as colonial Powers. France proclaimed
sovereignty over New Caledonia in 1853, and she went on to acquire
interests in several other groups of islands in the Pacific, in-
cluding the New Hebrides. German firms acquired trading interests
and land in Samoa in the late 1850s and 1860s. By the late 1870s
there were international repercussions to German claims. In 1884
Germany proclaimed a protectorate over the northern part of New
Guinea. These activities, as well as periodic "Russian scares",
caused increasing concern in the Australian Colonies about their
external defence. During the 1870s and the early 1880s the Austra-

I W.P. Morrell, Britain in the Pacific Islands (Oxford, 1960),
Chapter 9.
lian Colonies had been developing interests of their own in the South Pacific through trade and missions. In addition, there was the French policy of transporting criminals overseas, and the French Government's decision in 1884 to increase the number sent to New Caledonia. This was unanimously regarded in the Australian Colonies as vitally affecting their well-being. In the early 1880s the defence of the Australian colonies, and their interests in the South Pacific, became more closely involved in British policy towards France and Germany.

Between 1883 and 1887 the questions which held priority of place in British relations with Germany and France did not include New Guinea and the New Hebrides. Outside of Europe, Egypt was the main question on which British policy had to take cognizance of important French interests. Related to this problem was the need to safeguard the Suez route to India and also the long-standing policy of containing Russia at the Straits. Further, German support or antagonism could have a decisive bearing on the course of Anglo-French negotiations on the Egyptian and Suez problems. For these reasons, the British Government could not deal with the New Guinea and New Hebrides questions in isolation. This was something that the Australian Colonies, and particularly the Victorian Government, found very hard to understand or accept.

In 1881 the Australian Colonies obtained an unequivocal statement from the Imperial Government that Great Britain was still responsible for the naval defence of the Empire; but there was a great difference between responsibility for the defence of existing
British possessions and undertaking further commitments through new annexations in areas, such as the South Pacific, where vital British interests were not involved. The reluctance of Liberal or Conservative Governments in Great Britain to undertake further commitments of this kind, even if important interests were claimed by the Australian Colonies, was clearly shown in the 1870s and early 1880s in connection with Fiji, New Guinea and the New Hebrides. The argument between the Imperial Government and the Australian Colonial Governments centred, therefore, on whether or not British policy was safeguarding colonial interests. That this was the case, and not that the Australian Colonies set out to demand the power to conduct an independent foreign policy, is implicit in the second and third resolutions of the Intercolonial Convention which met in Sydney in 1883.

In comparison with its disregard of colonial representations on New Guinea in 1883-4, the Imperial Government showed much greater readiness in 1885-6 to take notice of colonial interests as they were affected by French transportation of criminals to the South Pacific and French activities in the New Hebrides. But

2. Australian interests in New Guinea, the agitation for annexation and the Imperial Government's reluctance to extend its commitments to include all or part of New Guinea have received detailed treatment and will not be discussed here.

the memory of the Imperial Government's attitude over New Guinea was a bitter one in the Australian colonies; and, where Australian interests were concerned, suspicion of imperial policy died hard. The conduct of the Imperial and the Colonial Governments between 1884 and 1887 on the New Hebrides question and the problem of French transportation to the South Pacific was to show, first, the increasing extent to which imperial policy was prepared to take cognizance of colonial interests in the exercise of foreign policy, and, secondly, the possibility that Australian external interests could be adequately safeguarded without a demand from the colonies for either a direct voice and a share in the responsibilities of imperial policy or the power of conducting their own foreign relations.

II

The forceful advocacy of Australian interests in the South Pacific from 1883 onwards may be regarded as an expression of unbounded belief in Australia's destiny in the Pacific, a belief which was in itself a form of Australian imperialism. The agitation by some colonists for the declaration of an Australian "Monroe doctrine" was linked with their belief in the development of Australia as a colonising power. Such a belief was implicit in claims

that the New Hebrides were "the natural dependencies of Australia", and that Australia had a "manifest destiny" in the Pacific. The expression of such ideas shows the way in which American thought and achievements sometimes influenced Australian thought, and how the differences in American and Australian strength were disregarded. The view, that the Australian Colonies were "the fee-simple proprietors of all the unappropriated islands scattered over these seas", found its critics. Among them was W.B.Dalley. To others in the Australian Colonies, the demands that Australian interests should be safeguarded in imperial policy were defensive in aim rather than aggressive and expansionist. For them, the assertion of a "Monroe doctrine" for the Pacific was a policy in defence of Australian interests.

Another factor in Australian concern for the South Pacific islands was the existence there of commercial and mission interests. The island trade was one of the foundations of the prosperity of several Sydney mercantile firms; but the mission influence, mainly

3 W.B.Dalley, speech at Nundle, 23 Jan., 1885. Extract forwarded in Loftus to Derby, Confidential, 3 Feb., 1885. C.O.201/603.
5 As early as 1873 a Sydney firm of Scott, Henderson & Co. was urging British annexation of the New Hebrides on the grounds that N.S.W. had already established important industries in those islands. Scott, Henderson & Co. to Parkes (Col.Sec.), 20 June, 1873. Parkes Correspondence, vol.38, A 908, pp.351-2 (Mitchell Library).
Presbyterian, was stronger in accounting for Victorian agitation to safeguard Australian interests in the islands, and especially in the New Hebrides. To some extent trade and missions went hand in hand, and the future prospects of trade with Australia were viewed optimistically. In urging British annexation of the New Hebrides, the Rev. J.G. Paton, one of the foremost Presbyterian missionaries in islands argued: "The mercantile value of these islands ought to lead all the Australian Colonies to put forth every possible effort to get these islands annexed by Great Britain... they would, if secured by Great Britain, give profitable employment to many of the people of Australia for ages to come". In the meantime commercial interests could not flourish unless there was some form of stable government to ensure law and order. Hence there was the desire to extend imperial commitments in the South Pacific for the benefits of colonial commerce. The Colonial Office had long been aware of this motive. In the same way, the French claimed that they landed troops in the New Hebrides in June, 1886, in order to protect French settlers there, although it appears that some of these, such as John Higginson, were British but had taken French nationality.

Another vital Australian interest in the Pacific islands resulted from the penal settlement which the French had established.

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1 This is particularly true with regard to James Service.
2 Public meeting in St. Stephen's Church, Sydney, 1 April, 1886. Reported in S.M.H. 2 April, 1886. See also J.G. Paton to Parkes, 23 March, 1887, Parkes Correspondence, vol. "P", A 926, pp. 623-8 (Mitchell Library).
3 e.g. Minute by Herbert on F.O. to C.O., 30 June, 1871. C.O. 309/102.
4 Higginson was one of the most influential of the settlers in the New Hebrides. He took a lead in urging French annexation. W.P. Morrell, op. cit., pp. 198-202.
in New Caledonia. However much opinion might be divided on other issues connected with the islands in the 1880s, this was one on which the eastern Australian Colonies were unanimous: that they should be protected from an influx of escaped French criminals or of libérés. The Colonial Office never denied the justice of colonial complaints on this question; but the New Hebrides had been the subject of a "self-denying" agreement between Britain and France.

In 1878 Britain and France had agreed that each should respect the neutrality of the New Hebrides. British settlers and missionaries, from the Australian Colonies for the most part, were already active in the islands, and it was a moot point whether legally the jurisdiction of the British High Commissioner for the Western Pacific extended to the New Hebrides. By 1883 there were reports of imminent French colonisation of the islands and of the establishment of a penal settlement. As a result of British representations, the French Government stated in 1883 that it would adhere to the 1878 agreement. In the British Government's view, the terms of the French reply removed the need for any action to forestall a French annexation. Although the Australian Colonies appear to have made no protests at either time, the Victorian Government later contended that both the 1878 agreement and the

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re-affirmation in 1883 had been made without any reference to the
Australian Colonies. The existence of the agreement did not stop
James Service, the Premier of Victoria, from claiming that it
should not be regarded as binding for all time. Changed circum-
stances would make British annexation a necessity.

In 1883 the French Government determined to increase the
number of convicts transported overseas. This decision presented
a double threat to Australia and New Zealand. The new legislation
provided for the continued use of the penal settlement in New
Caladonia, and foreshadowed an extension of transportation to the
New Hebrides should those islands be annexed by France. At the
1883 Intercolonial Convention in Sydney, the latter threat formed
the basis of James Service's sweeping and peremptory demands for
further British annexation in the Pacific.

In London the Agents-General of the Australian Colonies and
New Zealand were very active between 1884 and 1886 in urging on
the Imperial Government their Governments' views on both the trans-
portation and the annexation issues. As a result the Colonial

1 Memo. by E. J. Thomas, 6 March, 1886. Vict. premier's Dept records,
in-letters 86/512.
2 Service to R. Murray Smith, 22 Jan., 1883; quoted in ibid.
3 The bill passed the Chamber of Deputies in 1883, and was altered
by the Senate in 1884. It finally became law in 1885.
4 The resolutions adopted by the Convention were much less demand-
ing. N.S.W. V. and P., 1883-4 Session, Legis. Assembly, vol. 9,
5 These is voluminous correspondence with regard to collective
and separate interviews with the various Secretaries of State
for the Colonies between 1883 and 1886 in the despatches from
the Agents-General in the archives in Queensland, N.S.W., New
Zealand and especially Victoria. See also the relevant C.O.
series.
Governments were informed that no French proposals for annexation would be entertained without ascertaining colonial opinion. This marked a significant step forward in the direction of Australian interests being recognised in the exercise of British foreign policy, even though the decision whether or not to act in accordance with Australian views still rested with the Imperial Government. The Imperial and Colonial Governments were least able to see eye to eye on what action the former could take on the transportation issue. The Imperial Government maintained that this was really a question of French domestic affairs, and it was, therefore, a much more difficult matter on which to reach any agreement with the French Government and the more so when the over-all state of Anglo-French relations was considered.

Early in 1886 Granville informed the Agents-General of a French proposal for the settlement of both questions: that France should be allowed to annex the New Hebrides in return for an undertaking to discontinue transportation to the South Pacific. Some of the Colonial Governments had already had an inkling that the French were thinking along these lines. When he was in France in 1884, Sir Francis Dillon Bell, the Agent-General for New Zealand, had privately discussed a similar idea with Félix Faure, the French Under-

1 Granville confirmed an earlier statement by Derby at an interview with the Agents-General on 23 February, 1886. Samuel to Jennings, 26 Feb., 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec. papers, in-letters in Box 157 (Archives of N.S.W.).

2 Notes of an interview between Granville and the Agents-General, 23 Feb., 1886, forwarded by Samuel to Jennings, 26 March, 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 157 (Archives of N.S.W.)
Secretary for Colonies, and later with R. Murray Smith, the Victorian Agent-General. Somewhat unfairly to Lord Rosebery, then Foreign Secretary, the proposal which originated from the French Government in 1886 came to be known as the "Rosebery scheme". Rosebery's contribution was to suggest to the French that the island of Rapa should be ceded to Great Britain as part of the agreement. A little later in 1886, the French offered to suspend transportation to New Caledonia temporarily until the Australian Colonies had considered their proposal. Rosebery had little hope that the Australian Colonies would be favourably inclined.

The Victorian and Queensland Governments rejected it out of hand because they opposed French annexation of the New Hebrides on any ground, and they wanted each question settled on its own merits. Dillon Bell urged his Government to accept because the acquisition of Rapa, an island on the route from New Zealand to


Bell personally knew Félix Faure and some other French politicians. Through correspondence with them in 1883 on the Récidiviste Bill, he had early become aware of the possible effects of the new transportation law on the Australian Colonies and New Zealand.

2 Samuel to Jennings, Confidential, 26 February, 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 157 (Archives of N.S.W.).

3 Herbert (for Granville) to Carrington, N.S.W. No. 39, 16 April, 1886. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

4 Rosebery to Waddington, 7 July, 1886, copy enclosed in Granville to Carrington, N.S.W. No. 62, 22 July, 1886. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

Rosebery here refers to a conversation with Waddington, the French Ambassador, on 30 April, when he had been "unable to hold out any hopes of a reply being given in the sense desired by Your Excellency".

5 Sir S. Griffith, as Chairman of the Federal Council, replied on behalf of Victoria and Queensland. Telegram, Griffith to Carrick, 19 March, 1886. Copy in N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 157 (Archives of N.S.W.).
Panama, would eventually be of importance to New Zealand; but the Premier, Sir Robert Stout, finally rejected the proposal after the Presbyterian Church had made strong representations against it. The New South Wales Government, led by Sir Patrick Jennings, was favourable in part. It placed greater emphasis on the cessation of transportation, and, to secure this, was prepared to take the transportation and the annexation issues together. However, its acceptance of the "Rosebery scheme" was made dependent on the cession of Rapa to Great Britain in addition to facilities for trade and security of religious freedom in the New Hebrides.

The difference of opinion among the Australian Colonies on the primacy of the annexation question or the cessation of transportation was not easily removed. The Victorian Government continued to contend: "there exists no reasonable connection between the transportation of récidivistes to New Caledonia and the annexation of the New Hebrides. Each question should be dealt with on its own merits, and, therefore,... [the Victorian Government] declined to complicate the clear and separate issues involved in each". Further, the Victorians maintained that the colonies were entirely within

1 Stout to Jennings, 8 May, 1886, and enclosure. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 157 (Archives of N.S.W.).
2 Memo. by Jennings, 13 March, 1886; and telegrams to Samuel, 29 March and 6 May, 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec Papers, copies with in-letters in Box 157.
3 Berry to Sir Robert Herbert, 1 Sept., 1886. Copy in Vict. Premier's Dept. records.
Sir Graham Berry succeeded R. Murray Smith as Agent-General for Victoria.
their rights to legislate against an influx of escaped criminals. They could, therefore, thank the French for nothing in offering to cease transportation.

Such an attitude showed a fundamental misreading of what was possible in Anglo-French relations at that time. In a certain section of the French press, the Australian agitation was blamed for the failure to reach a settlement. For their part, the Victorians were inclined to blame the New South Wales Government as much as the Imperial Government for the unsatisfactory situation in the New Hebrides. In London, colonial opposition to the "Rosebery scheme" was weakened to some extent when the Agents-General could not always preserve a united front, but had to present the conflicting attitudes of their separate Governments. Sometimes strong jealousy was aroused when one colony attempted to speak for all in London on such a contentious issue as the New Hebrides.

In the long run, the attitude of the New South Wales Government did not weaken the Australian standpoint to any appreciable extent. This was because of the dwindling likelihood that the conditions for a settlement, including the cession of Rapa to Britain,

1 Service to Smith, 5 May, 1884; quoted in Memo. by E. J. Thomas, 6 March, 1886. Vict. Premier's Dept. records, in-letters 86/512.
2 E.g. the République française was quoted in the S.M.A., 24 August, 1887, as having declared that an agreement "might easily be arrived at if the British Government would stop the absurd calum­nies and rhodomontade of the Australian Colonies".
3 E.g. Service to Smith, 6 Feb., 1885. Vict. Premier's Dept. records, copy with in-letters 85/352.
4 E.g. Sir Patrick Jennings took objection to a report that Sir Graham Berry, the Victorian Agent-General, was speaking for all the colonies with regard to the New Hebrides. The N.S.W. Agent-General was instructed to make sure that the Secretary of State
would be met. Of much greater significance, for a possible community of interests in the future between colonies distant from each other, was the presence of the Canadian High Commissioner when the nature of the "Rosebery scheme" was communicated by Granville to the Agents-General of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Sir Charles Tupper associated himself with the Australian and New Zealand protests against a French annexation of the New Hebrides on the grounds that Canada also had Pacific interests.

In June, 1886, while the Imperial Government was still waiting for the last of the colonies' replies to the "Rosebery scheme", the Governor of New Caledonia despatched French troops to the New Hebrides. This was in response to a request for annexation from French settlers who claimed that their lives and property were in danger. The Governor apparently acted without authority from the French Government, but his action was not repudiated. The Presbyterian missionaries in the islands renewed their efforts to urge the Australian Governments to spur the Imperial Government towards annexing the islands.

The Imperial Government's formal refusal to reach an agreement understood that he alone could speak on behalf of N.S.W.

Telegrams from Jennings to Samuel, 7 and 10 Sept., 1886, and Samuel's reply of 10 Sept., 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 157 (Archives of N.S.W.).

I Samuel to Jennings, 26 March, 1886, enclosing Sir F.D. Bell's notes of the interview of 23 Feb., 1886, with Granville. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 157 (Archives of N.S.W.).

2 The last reply, that from the New Zealand Government, was not made until May, 1886. Copy enclosed in Stout to Jennings, 3 May, 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 157.
ment with the French by means of the "Rosebery scheme" was made at
the beginning of July. From that time onwards, the Australian
Colonies were agreed in demanding the withdrawal of the French
troops from the New Hebrides; but they were less unanimous in de-
manding either as return to the 1878 neutral status or, what was
preferable, British annexation. The Imperial Government recognised
that the colonies would be within their rights to adopt stringent
legislation against an influx of libérés and escaped convicts from
New Caledonia; but the Colonial Office was reluctant to see such
extreme action taken in the colonies because of the unfortunate
repercussions it might have on other difficult questions at issue
between Britain and France. Once the "Rosebery scheme" had been
rejected, the only way to avoid colonial legislation against a
possible influx of French convicts and libérés was for the Imperial
Government to reach an agreement with France on a matter which
concerned the use of islands where she was in legal occupation.

Undoubtedly both the Gladstone Government and the Salisbury
Government which took office in August, 1886, sincerely desired to
reach a settlement with France on both questions; and, moreover,
to find one that would be acceptable to the Colonial Governments.
Although the Imperial Government made strong protests against the
French occupation of the New Hebrides, it was itself favourable.

I Rosebery to Waddington, 7 July, 1886. Copy enclosed in Granville
to Carrington, N.S.W. No. 65, 22 July, 1886. N.S.W. Govt. House
Papers.
to the "Rosebery scheme" because the French had taken the initiative in proposing a means of securing the end of French transportation to the Pacific. The Imperial Government's policy caused some criticism in the English press that colonial interests were being sacrificed; but it was mainly in the conservative press at a time when the theme of colonial unity was being fostered through the Colonial and Indian Exhibition and the Home Rule issue was reaching a crisis. Undoubtedly, the Colonial office was concerned about the possible effect on colonial loyalty of dissatisfaction with imperial policy, and especially so in the case of Victoria. On occasions the Victorians went so far as to make threats of separation. On the other hand, the Colonial office was not entirely without hope that in time the Australian Colonies would come to realise the advantages offered by the "Rosebery scheme". This hope faded when the French occupied the New Hebrides. From that time onwards, New South Wales was as hostile as Victoria and Queensland to any arrangement which would allow French annexation of the islands.

By the end of 1886 the possibility of any progress towards a settlement which would be acceptable to the Australian Colonies seemed remote. The immediate problem was to obtain the withdrawal of the French troops from the New Hebrides. Because the French claimed that the occupation was to safeguard French settlers,

2 Minutes on Smith to C.O. 31 March, 1886. C.O.309/130.
3 e.g. Carrington to Stanhope, telegram, 23 Sept., 1886. C.O.201/605.
there seemed little likelihood of a return to the status of 1878. The only alternative to annexation by France or Britain was some form of joint control. The French Government first suggested this when it seemed likely that the Imperial Government would refuse to acquiesce in French annexation; but little definite progress had been made in any negotiations by the end of 1886. On the other hand, although the "Rosebery scheme" had been rejected, the French had not withdrawn their temporary cessation of transportation to New Caledonia. In the months preceding the opening of the Colonial Conference in 1887, the New Hebrides question continued to make almost imperceptible progress at the diplomatic level. Although the Australian Governments did not see it at the time, by the beginning of 1887 they had gained one significant success. The Imperial Government had not, and, indeed, in the interests of imperial unity dared not recognise the French occupation of the New Hebrides as a step towards forcing British acceptance of French annexation of the islands.

At no stage during the negotiations with France did the Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand seek the power to negotiate directly with the French Government on their own behalf. In 1883 the Intercolonial Convention in Sydney had quickly rejected Sir Francis Dillon Bell's suggestion that the

I Minutes on Loch to Granville, Confidential, 24 June, 1886; and on Loch to Stanhope, Vict. No. II5, 2 Sept., 1886. C.O. 309/130.
Berry to Gillies, 26 Nov., 1886. Vict. Premier's Dept records, in-letters 87/II.
Agents-General should seek contact with the French Government over Pacific issues. This decision was in keeping with the tone of the resolutions adopted by the Convention. Yet, through the medium of the Imperial Government, there was some contact between certain of the Agents-General and the French Government. Special circumstances of an education in France, and personal friendship with Félix Faure and other French politicians, formed the background of Sir Francis Dillon Bell’s contacts with the French Government in 1883 and 1884, and of his conversations with Félix Faure in London late in 1886. The initiative for Bell’s visit to Paris came from himself, but the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office were both favourably inclined; and Bell was requested to report on his conversations with French Ministers. Through the good offices of Derby and then Granville, as Secretaries of State for the Colonies, R.Murray Smith, the Agent-General for Victoria, had interviews with Lord Lyons, the British Ambassador in Paris, and M.Waddington, the French Ambassador in London.

In 1886, after Bell had spoken with Félix Faure in London, Sir Graham Berry, by then Agent-General for Victoria, asked his

2 Bell to Premier of N.Z., 21 May, 1884, enclosing a copy of confidential notes for Sir Robert Herbert on his visit to Paris; also despatches dated 12 May, 15 July, 11 August, 19 Nov. and 1 Dec., 1884. Archives of P.M.Dept., N.Z. 5/3. Sir Graham Berry reported Bell’s conversation with Félix Faure towards the end of 1886 in a despatch to Duncan Gillies, the Premier of Victoria, dated 26 Nov., 1886. Vict.Premier’s Dept. records, in-letters 87/II.
3 Service to Smith, 6 May, 1884, commenting on these interviews. Vict.Premier’s Dept. records, in-letters 84/1063. Also Bell to Premier of N.Z., 9 April, 1884. Archives of P.M.Dept., N.Z. 5/3.
Government's opinion about a visit to France so that he and Sir
Francis Dillon Bell might negotiate directly with Freycinet, the
French Prime Minister. Nothing came of this, and, indeed, it is very
hard to visualise the aristocratic Salisbury at the Foreign Office
countenancing a visit to France by the pushing, out-spoken and
reputedly roughly-spoken Graham Berry.

In the long run, these direct contacts with French Ministers
and diplomats did not constitute a precedent for an Australian or
New Zealand representative being present or forming part of a
British mission during negotiations for an agreement in which
colonial interests were in any way affected. There was no Australian
or New Zealand counterpart to Sir John Macdonald's role on behalf
of Canada at the negotiations leading to the Treaty of Washington
in 1871. Although such a development did not take place, the Agents-
General remained an effective means of impressing Australian and
New Zealand views and interests on the Imperial Government; but,
after Salisbury took over the Foreign Office, they again had to
work through the intermediary of the Colonial Office. There is no
reason to suppose that they approached Salisbury directly in the
same way as they had called on Rosebery.

I Berry to Gillies, 26 Nov., 1886. Vict. premier's Dept. records,
in-letters 87/II.
It is probably to this same visit that Lady Gwendolen Cecil
refers in her account of an attempt in 1887 for one of the
Agents-General to go to France to negotiate directly with the
French Foreign Office. G. Cecil, Life of Robert, Marquis of Salis-
bury (London, 1932), vol. IV, p. 34. After Berry's despatch of 26
Nov., 1886, there is no further reference in the records of the
Premier's Dept., Victoria, or the P.M. Dept., N.Z.
III

The varying attitudes in the colonies on Australia's external interests, and the place of those interests in the imperial relationship, were demonstrated more clearly in New South Wales than in Victoria where there was much greater unanimity in demanding British annexation of the New Hebrides. For this reason, attitudes in New South Wales merit separate treatment.

The policy of the Jennings Government in 1886 towards French annexation of the New Hebrides was a continuation of that followed by Sir Alexander Stuart at the 1883 Intercolonial Convention and afterwards. Stuart had once gone so far as to say that in the natural course of things the New Hebrides could be expected to fall to France. This inevitability, and the New South Wales Government's acceptance of it, was vigorously opposed by Victoria and Queensland, and by certain sections of the community in New South Wales.

In April, 1886, Sir Henry Parkes introduced a motion into the Legislative Assembly against French annexation of the New Hebrides. The motion was widely regarded as a means of testing whether or not public opinion in New South Wales supported the Government. This led Duncan Gillies, the Victorian Premier, to think that the Imperial Government's action in the New Hebrides question might depend on the vote in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly.

1 Stuart to Service, Confidential, 8 June, 1883. Vict. Premier's Dept. records, 83/210.
2 Gillies to Parkes, 9 April, 1886. Parkes Correspondence, Autograph Letters of Notable Australians, pp. 319-322, A 69 (Mitchell Library).
Parkes did not frame his motion in terms of a vote of censure; but the Premier, Sir Patrick Jennings, turned it into one. For this reason, the vote cannot be taken as a true expression of the feeling of the House on the New Hebrides issue. The fall of the Government was involved; and, because the colony was passing through a financial crisis at the time, an election had to be avoided. The sectarian issue was also raised during the debate, and Parkes himself seems to have been personally unpopular at that time. For these reasons, the majority of twenty-five votes against Parkes' motion is not the most important aspect of the debate. The real significance lies in the way in which the views expressed reflected a strong division of opinion in the colony. They illustrate on a specific question how complex and contradictory Australian attitudes were towards the question of external relations.

Parkes opposed Jennings' policy because he thought that the defence of the Australian Colonies necessitated British action in the New Hebrides. In line with his argument at the time of the Sudan contingent, that vital colonial interests must take precedence over imperial interests, he stated: "Times might arise when it would be the duty of Englishmen in Australia... to sacrifice property and even life itself on behalf of the mother country; but in ordinary times it is our duty to look at our portion of the Empire to which we particularly belong. Looking at it in that light then, can it be to our advantage to say that we have no voice, we have no interest,

I Jennings was a Roman Catholic.
no pretention, no aspiration, no aim in the fate of this group of islands?.."

Jennings saw the future of the New Hebrides as being bound up with overall imperial interests and with what the Australian Colonies were prepared to do in terms of money towards British control of the South Pacific. Since New South Wales was going through a depression in the mid-1880s, in comparison with Victoria and Queensland, reluctance to consider the possibility of having to undertake any financial commitments might have influenced the policy of the New South Wales Government. In 1883 both Service and Griffith had made statements about Australian contributions to the administration of territories in the South Pacific which were acquired by Britain in accordance with Australian wishes; but it seems that no offers were made to the Colonial Office about the New Hebrides specifically. More than a little justification was to be found in the actions of the Australian Colonies between 1885 and 1887 for Jennings' assertion that "the Australian Colonist, who like most other people, is very sensitive in a certain part of his anatomy, will not be found going in for the spread-eagle

2 By the beginning of 1886, N.S.W. had not yet voted her contribution towards the expenses of the administration of the New Guinea Protectorate.

The resolutions, as finally adopted by the Convention, went no further than to state that any necessary legislation to enable the colonies to contribute towards the expenses of administration would be submitted to the colonial Parliaments. ibid. pp. 13-4. In the end, only N.S.W., Victoria and Queensland contributed to the 1887 agreement with the Imperial Government concerning the expenses of the New Guinea administration.
idea of taking up the whole of the Pacific, if he finds he has got to pay for it...

Jennings distinguished between the ideal, that both New Caledonia and the New Hebrides belonged to Australia, and the possible, Australia did not have "a divine right of inheritance in these particular islands": only British and not Australian policy could determine whether or not the New Hebrides might be obtained by Great Britain by means of an exchange of territory. These arguments did not necessarily imply that Jennings was taking up a different point of view from that he had expressed a year earlier. At the time of the despatch of the Sudan contingent, he had said that the colonies had reached a stage in their development where they had to exercise a foreign policy with regard to New Guinea, the New Hebrides and French transportation to the Pacific.

Even if Australian aspirations in the Pacific were not satisfied by the Imperial Government, Jennings saw no reason for loyalty to the mother country to become conditional. In Jennings' view, anything that served the interests of the Empire as a whole would serve the interests of the Australian Colonies. Therefore, these joint interests would be served if France agreed to end the transportation of criminals to the Pacific and ceded Rapa to Great Britain in return for British recognition of French annexation of the

1 N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 8 April, 1886, vol. 19, p. 1236.
3 Speech at public meeting in Sydney Exhibition Building, 20 Feb., 1885. Reported in S.M.H., 21 Feb., 1885.
New Hebrides. This argument was in keeping with Jennings' opinion
that the cessation of transportation was the important question, be-
cause "the public opinion of this Colony does not in anyway favour
colonial enterprises for colonising these islands".

Jennings was supported in this contention by several members of
the Legislative Assembly. Indeed, before the French sent an occupying
force to the New Hebrides in June, 1886, the transportation issue
seemed to be more important in New south Wales than the annexation
issue. Others in the Legislative Assembly denied this. They and an
influential section of the press in the colony claimed that the Jen-
nings Government had misrepresented the real attitude of the people
of New South Wales. Although the Sydney Morning Herald asserted that
there was great public interest in a British annexation of the New
Hebrides, it is difficult to find much support for this viewpoint
apart from those interested parties, the merchants and the missionar-
ies. In addition to one public meeting in Sydney, and even here a
member of the Legislative Assembly claimed that it was not unanimous
as it was reported to have been, there were five public meetings in
the suburbs and two in the country. At these meetings the transporta-

2 Memo. by Jennings, 13 March, 1886. Copy in N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers,
with in-letters in Box I67 (Archives of N.S.W.).
3 e.g. Sir John Robertson, N.S.W. parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 8 April
4 e.g. J.H. Young and James Inglis, ibid., pp.1250,1262.
S.M.H., editorials, 5 and 9 April, 1886.
5 N.Melville, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 8 April,1886, vol.19,
p.1264.
6 These were in the suburbs of Balmain, Randwick, Glebe, Leichhardt
and Newtown; and at Wollongong and Mudgee in the country.
tion issue was stressed rather than that the islands should become British. Little or no comment from the public appeared in the press. It seems likely, therefore, that the majority of the colonists in New South Wales were indifferent towards the fate of the New Hebrides. The amount of public interest was certainly much greater in Victoria where the Presbyterians, whose missionaries were most concerned in the New Hebrides, led the agitation.

It is probable that in New South Wales those who proclaimed "continentalist" views in the House and in the press reflected the opinion of the majority of those who thought about the matter at all. The "continentalists" expressed great faith in Australia's role in the future; but they contended that at the present time all Australian energies should be put into developing the vast resources of that continent. They argued that it was not a good Australian policy to become entangled with islands some distance away. Trade and commerce could still flourish between the Australian Colonies and the Pacific islands no matter whether they were French, German or British. Carried to an extreme, these arguments led to an assertion that the Australian colonies did not need to make any moves to control the Pacific. Through contact with the

ISee the large number of petitions forwarded from Melbourne suburbs and country towns to the Colonial Office by the Governor in 1885-6. Many of them repeated Paton's and Service's claims for Australian "imperialism" in the Pacific. C.0.309/I29 and I30.
3 e.g. H.Copeland, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 8 April, 1886, vol.19, p.1255.
3 e.g. G.H.Reid and H.Copeland, ibid., pp.1253,1257.
Australian Colonies, the colonies of other Powers would be so attracted towards Australia that they would become Australian of their own free will.

Both before and after the French occupation of the New Hebrides in June, 1866, and if the New Hebrides issue is separated from the transportation issue, it is not always clear what the colonists of New South Wales were demanding: whether they wanted the maintenance of, and later a return to the 1878 neutral status of the islands or British annexation. In contrast, the agitation in Victoria was consistently for British annexation. Neutrality was very much a second best solution. In contrast with Victoria again, there was support in New South Wales for Jennings' argument that Great Britain should be left to do what she considered best in the interests of the Empire as a whole.

This argument in turn provoked two counter ideas. First, imperial policy must protect specific Australian interests. As one member of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly expressed it: "While we are proud to belong and want to belong to Great Britain - while we are prepared to render filial obedience, we at the same time demand her protection. She has a claim upon our obedience, but we have a claim upon her protection." Secondly, if Australian interests were sacrificed in imperial policy, the only alternative to acquiescence was independence. Unlike the majority in New

1 e.g. E.W.O'Sullivan, N.S.W. Parl.Deb., Legis. Assembly, 13 April, 1886, vol.19, p. 1300.
2 D.O'Connor, ibid., 8 April, 1886, p.1276.
South Wales, the Victorians sometimes seemed to be prepared to consider that alternative. Among the minority in New South Wales, the necessity for independence seemed to be implied in the argument that "Great Britain cannot work the Monroe Doctrine, because she has interests all over the world, - and as long as we form part of the British Empire we must abide by her foreign policy..."

The agitation over the New Hebrides between 1883 and 1887 has been regarded as an unmistakable expression of Australian nationalism; but this is far too simple an explanation. Attitudes on the New Hebrides cut right across any division of opinion on lines of British or colonial birth. Moreover, material interests need not be allied with national feeling. Missionaries, such as the Rev. J.G. Paton who was so influential in Victoria, or merchants, such as those in Sydney, were not necessarily activated by national interests.

Among those who opposed the extension of Australian commitments in the Pacific were some staunch defenders of the imperial link, no matter whether they favoured stronger imperial ties or a loose connection. Sir Alexander Stuart and Henry Copeland, both British born, and the colonial born W.B. Dalley were among the most outspoken against Australian adventures in the Pacific. With some justification, the radical groups, and particularly those in Sydney, are usually termed nationalists. They too were opposed to Australian expansion in the Pacific. On the other hand, if nation-

I E.W.O'Sullivan, ibid., 13 April, 1886, p.1301.
alism and expansionism go hand in hand, a very mixed company, including James Service, Alfred Deakin, Sir Thomas McLlwrath, Sir Henry Parkes, Sir Graham Berry, Duncan Gillies and R. Murray Smith, become Australian nationalists on the grounds that they desired to extend Australian dominion in the Pacific. In 1887 some members of the Queensland Legislative Assembly designated Deakin as an Australian nationalist solely on account of his stand at the Colonial Conference on the New Hebrides issue; but Deakin's national feeling was composed of more elements than this. Moreover, if the Victorian attitude on the New Hebrides question is to be taken as a true form of Australian nationalism, the signs in 1886-1887 indicated that such nationalism would lead to disloyalty to the imperial connection, and, therefore, to independence. Such an assumption would clearly be a misreading of the Victorian attitude towards the imperial link. For these reasons, nationalism has to be rejected as an explanation of Australian attitudes towards the New Hebrides. The explanation has to be sought in the specific interests of trade and missions, and less specifically, and for differing reasons, in defence of the isolation of the colonies from the evils of a penal system of transportation and the encroachments of other Powers in the Pacific.

IV

Despite their partial disunity, the Australian Colonies had attempted to ensure that, even if they had no control over British policy, the Imperial Government was kept well aware of the vital interests of the Australian colonies in the New Hebrides. Hence the Australian Governments and the Agents-General emphasised the activity of the latter in London in asserting colonial views more forcefully than was thought to be possible through the Governors. The right of the colonies to express their views was undoubtedly recognised by all Governments in power in Great Britain, and from 1885 onwards their representations were considered with great attention. His belief in the Empire, and his experience as Foreign Secretary in 1886, led Rosebery to tell his compatriots that they would have "to admit the Colonies to a much larger share in your affairs than you do at present. You will have to give them a right to prompt the voice of England when it speaks abroad to a much greater extent than you do at present. You must be prepared for demands, sometimes unreasonable, such as spoiled children sometimes make. You must be prepared, in some respects, to diminish your insular freedom of action of behalf of your great offspring abroad".

For their part, the Australian Colonies did not sometimes sufficiently realise in the 1880s that Great Britain's policy in the South Pacific was so often dependent in the long run on her

relations with France and Germany in Europe and elsewhere, particularly Egypt. In the same way as the Victorians, Service and Berry, denied the existence of any connection between French transportation to the Pacific and the annexation of the New Hebrides by Britain or France, so they also saw both those separate issues as being totally unconnected with French fishing rights in Newfoundland or French interests in Suez. On the other hand, the British and French Foreign Offices saw all these as related questions in Anglo-French relations. In the same way, Egypt, Angra Pequena, New Guinea and Samoa were far from being unrelated in Anglo-German relations.

On these grounds, there could be a clear distinction between what was the best policy from a colonial point of view, and what was possible in Great Britain's overall foreign policy. The important point was whether or not the Imperial Government tried to find a solution which was compatible with both. The Australian Governments always maintained that in pressing their particular views on the Imperial Government they were well aware of overall imperial responsibilities, and of the possibility that the two might not be in accord. But the awareness of imperial responsibilities sometimes

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1 See minutes on telegram from Carrington to Granville, 25 March, 1886, for an expression of the connection between the New Hebrides and the Newfoundland fisheries question. C.O.201/605. During 1887, the British Foreign Office agreed to negotiate simultaneously on the New Hebrides and the Suez questions.

meant different things to different Colonial Governments. It could mean consideration for British difficulties, as in the case of the New South Wales Government between 1885 and 1886; or it could mean the adoption of an attitude that loud, persistent and even insolent colonial demands had to be made. The latter was the attitude of the Victorian Government from 1883 onwards. The abstention of New South Wales, also South Australia and New Zealand, from the Federal Council in 1885 was related to the fundamental divergence of policy between the New South Wales and Victorian Governments between 1884 and 1886 on the question of the New Hebrides, even though New South Wales was just as strongly against the extension or the continuance of French transportation to the Pacific.

The connection between British colonial and foreign policy also meant that not only had the Australian Governments to make their views known and understood in the Colonial office, but also in the Foreign Office. Neither in the 1870s nor in the 1880s is there much to show that the Foreign Office was unaware of Australian interests in French transportation to the Pacific and the annexation of the New Hebrides. The number of protests made by Lord Lyons, the British

I e.g. see the exchange of communications between James Service and Sir Alexander Stuart, 29 Sept., 1884. Printed in N.S.W. V. and P., 1885-4 Session, Legis. Assembly, vol. 9, p.179.

2 e.g. Smith to C.O., 30 Jan., 1885, 10 Feb., 1886, 12 Nov., 1885. C.O. 309/129. Also 31 March, 1886. C.O. 309/130.

Ambassador in Paris, bears witness to this; and the Colonial Governments and the Agents-General paid tribute to Lord Lyons' efforts, within his instructions from the Foreign Secretary, to support the Australian contentions. Among the more important of Lord Lyons' communications was his warning to Jules Ferry of the possibility of colonial legislative enactments against French convicts and libérés, and his attempts to obtain a definite assurance that under the new law of 1884 no récidivistes would be sent to New Caledonia or the Pacific. Even so, the question remained one of how strongly the Foreign Office was desirous of pressing these views in the light of the relative position of the Pacific in Great Britain's overall foreign policy.

James Service and the Victorians at the Intercolonial Convention in 1885, and afterwards, probably made a tactical mistake of linking the New Guinea question with the wide question of Pacific island annexation, and so bringing Anglo-German and Anglo-French relations into these matters at one and the same time. After 1884 no British Government wanted to act so that the agitation and bitterness in the Australian Colonies over the German annexation of part

Sir James Garrick to Griffith, 26 June, 1885, Q'Id. Agent-General Letterbooks, vol. 26 (State Archives of Q'Id).
of New Guinea would be repeated with the New Hebrides. The Victorian Government was reluctant to recognise this change in the British attitude; but the interdepartmental correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office on the specific questions of French transportation to the Pacific and French annexation of the New Hebrides does not bear out the Victorian doubts of Britain's good faith. The imputations contained in some of the despatches from the Victorian Agents-General, first R.Murray Smith and later Sir Graham Berry, were probably responsible to a large extent for strengthening the critical attitude of Service and Deakin towards the British Government. Indeed, on occasions the Colonial Office took up the maintenance of colonial interests without any prompting from the colonies. There was also Rosebery's and Childers' interest in the Australian Colonies which, up to August, 1886, could be advocated at Cabinet level.

A possibility, or even a threat, of future Australian action without reference to the British Government, such as M'Ilwraith had attempted in April, 1883, may be seen in the Victorian attitude I See Derby's assurances in 1885, and Granville's and Rosebery's in 1886, that no settlement would be agreed upon with the French Government until the Australian Colonies had expressed their views.

2 e.g. Smith to Service, 28 Nov., 1884, and 6 Feb., 1885; and Berry to Gillies, 4 Nov., 1886. Vict.Premier's Dept. records, 85/23 and 85/2, 86/33I4.

By March, 1886, Smith had come round in favour of accepting French annexation of the New Hebrides in exchange for the cessation of transportation to the Pacific on the ground that the latter was the more important question for the Australian Colonies. Smith to Herbert, private, 31 March, 1886. C.O.309/150.

3 A case in point is the Colonial Office's request to the Foreign Office, during the course of the Colonial Conference, to inform the French Government that if France had any intention of annexing Wallis Island in the Pacific, the British Government hoped that it would not be used for penal purposes. Yet Carrington
towards the New Hebrides question from 1885 onwards. This was in addition to discussions among the colonies in 1884 and again in 1886 on stringent colonial legislation against both libérés and escaped convicts from New Caledonia who reached Australia. Both James Service and Sir Graham Berry were reported on separate occasions to have declared that if the British Government refused to act in the interests of Australia, Victoria would act alone although this would mean her separation from Great Britain. It is doubtful whether the Colonial Office took these threats very seriously; but they led to attempts to find means of encouraging New South Wales to continue her moderate attitude. An unofficial account of the New Hebrides discussion at the Colonial Conference in 1887 mentioned a threat by Deakin of independent Victorian action; and subsequently Deakin recounted a Victorian plan in 1888-1889 to take military action to secure the New Hebrides.

These were all ways of forcing the British Government to act in accordance with colonial wishes. Imperial federalists in Great

had not mentioned colonial fears of transportation. Carrington to Holland, telegram, 13 April, 1887; and C.O. to F.O., 19 April, 1887. C.O. 201/606.

4 On Childers, see Smith to Service, 31 July, 1884, and 14 Nov., 1884, Confidential.

On Rosebery see Rosebery to Service, telegram, 4 April, 1885, and Smith to Service, 13 Feb., 1885, Confidential.

Sir A. Clarke, Acting-Agent-General for Victoria, had personal contacts with Gladstone on the New Hebrides question. See Clarke to Gillies, 6 April, and 11 May, 1886.

Vic t.Premier’s dept. records, in-letters 84/2118 and 3766; 85/921, 86/928, 944 and 1323.

I See correspondence in the C.O. records, the Vict. Premier’s Dept. records and the Queensland Agent-General and Chief secretary records (State Archives of Queensland).

2 e.g. Berry at the Royal Colonial Institute, 9 Nov., 1886. Proc.
Britain thought such methods would be unnecessary if the policy of
the Empire was shaped by an Imperial Cabinet which either included
colonial members or was advised by a Council of the Empire. One
major flaw in such federal machinery was often overlooked, and
colonists did not fail to draw attention to it. On such a question
as the annexation of the New Hebrides, the Australian representa-
tives could be outvoted by the others, even if they were united
among themselves, and the vital interests of the Australian Colon-
ies would thereby still be disregarded.

The issues involved in the New Hebrides and related questions
in 1884, and again in 1886, undoubtedly assumed an importance in
Australian eyes out of all proportion to their significance in
British eyes. This was a point Lord Carnarvon appreciated when he
reflected that "the circumstances and conditions of their life in
the South Pacific are so far different from ours, that objects
which seem to us of minor, are to them of the highest importance,
and that dangers upon which some here look as remote, if not
visionary, appear to them to be real and near".

R.C.I. 1886-7, vol.18, p.21; also press reports and editorials in
3 e.g. minutes by Herbert on Loftus to Derby, telegram, 2 Jan., 1885,
C.O. 201/603; and on Smith to C.O., 31 March, 1886, C.O. 309/130.
4 British Australasian Supplement, 1887, History of the First Colo-
nial Conference. Also Standard, 5 May, 1887. There were no offi-
cial published proceedings of this discussion. (See Chapter 6)
Deakin himself makes no reference to this in The Federal Story
(Melbourne, 1944), p.21.

1 This was one of Sir Alexander Stuart's arguments against a Council
of Advice composed of Agents-General. Memo. on Imperial Federa-
tion. Copy in N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers with in-letters in Box 146
(Archives of N.S.W.).
2 Earl Carnarvon, "Annexation and Confederation in Australasia",
Contemporary Review, Jan., 1884, p. II.
The presence of foreign Powers in the Pacific caused foreign relations and their place in imperial affairs to be very much bound up with the external defence of the colonies. For this reason, the short period between 1885 and 1887 is of such importance in relations between the Australian Colonies and Great Britain. Although points of view in the Australian Colonies could differ widely because of all the factors conditioning those views, there is an essential unity in the despatch of the Sudan contingent, the negotiations for an Australian auxiliary naval force and the agitation over the New Hebrides. However, it did not follow that this unity took the form imperial federationists wished it to take. The Australian Colonies did not see colonial commitments in imperial defence as the key to finding the means of safeguarding their interests in imperial foreign policy. Although they appeared to have little in the way of concrete achievement to show between 1884 and 1886 with regard to the New Hebrides and French transportation, they had, possibly without conscious intent, found a means of pressing their views and interests on the Imperial Government, and, moreover, one which was unconnected with their assuming a share in the general burden of imperial defence.

In 1887 the first Colonial Conference was held. It was far more than an expression of imperial sentiment. It had practical and limited aims. For the Imperial Government, these were based on consultation and co-operation with the Colonial Governments jointly on specific issues. For the Australian Colonial Governments, the Conference would provide another means of impressing important
Australian interests on the Imperial Government, and of showing a willingness to share in certain responsibilities which involved well-defined Australian interests. Final agreement still had to be reached on details of the scheme for an auxiliary naval squadron; the negotiations with France on the New Hebrides appeared almost as if they were in abeyance. Therefore, defence and certain aspects of imperial foreign policy, as they affected colonial interests, were necessarily among the subjects to be discussed by the conference.
CHAPTER 6

THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE OF 1887: A SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF EMPIRE?

During 1886 imperial federationists in Great Britain enjoyed one of their most active and encouraging years. The Colonial and Indian Exhibition, which they sponsored, was successful in helping to awaken the interest of the British public in the Empire. The Colonial Governments willingly collected and despatched exhibits. They also appointed eminent public men to act as commissioners and take part in the activities connected with the exhibition.

The imperial federationists had intended that a conference of colonial representatives should be one of the activities; but Gladstone refused to call an official conference because his Government had no formal proposals to submit to the colonies. The imperial federationists did not, therefore, need to resolve their own division of opinion: whether or not the conference should go beyond discussing imperial federation in general terms and examine ways and means of establishing an imperial executive and a parliament having powers of taxation. They perforce contented themselves with an unofficial conference where some of the most enthusiastic of their speakers expressed their views on the future organisation of the Empire.

1 Among the commissioners appointed by the Australian Colonial Governments were the Agents-General and two ex-Premiers, Sir Alexander Stuart for N.S.W. and James Service for Victoria.

2 In reply to C.E. Howard Vincent in the H. of Commons, 22 March, 1886. Hansard 3 Ser., vol. ccc, 1500-I.

3 e.g. Childers, who was not at that time in Parliament, wanted colonists to have general discussions on imperial federation. Labillièrè wanted the conference to discuss some of the specific problems of an imperial federation, including the powers of an imperial parliament. Imperial Federation, Jan., 1886.

4 See reports of the I.F.L. Conference held at the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, 1 and 2 July, 1886, in The Times, 2 and 3 July, 1886, pp.10, 12.
Conferences on imperial themes were very much in the air during 1886. The Royal Colonial Institute held one during the time of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, and this provided imperial federationists with further opportunities to expound the theme of imperial federation. Colonial delegates were welcomed to a Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire. Being wary of attacks on free trade, The Times noted that this congress could do much useful and practical work without raising the question of tariff policy. The enthusiasts for imperial defence were less successful in arranging a conference. In all probability they wanted to provide an opportunity when the colonies could be asked to contribute towards the cost of imperial defence and discuss comprehensive defence schemes. Gladstone rebuffed them when they asked for an official conference to be called to discuss imperial defence. They were unable to do more than address gatherings at which colonists were present.

In refusing to call a colonial conference, Gladstone was careful to point out that his objections did not mean that he opposed discussions between Great Britain and the colonies on specific matters which might help to strengthen imperial ties.

2 This conference had been planned since June,1885. See copy of letter from the Secretary of the London Chamber of Commerce enclosed in Dicken (Sec. to Agent-General) to Under Col.Sec., 26 June,1885. Q'ld. Chief Sec. in-letters 85/778 (State Archives of Q'ld.).
3 The Times, editorial 3 July,1886,p.9.
4 In reply to C.E.Howard Vincent in the H. of Commons, 4 June,1886. Hansard 3 Ser.,vol.cccvi, 1015-6. The Times was among the supporters of a colonial conference to discuss imperial defence, e.g. editorial I June,1886,p.II.
5 e.g. Capt.J.C.R.Colombo's address at the Royal Services Institu-
During the first half of 1886, Gladstone's attention was not focused on colonial questions but on Ireland and Home Rule. The elections in July resulted in the defeat of his Government on this issue. Irish Home Rule, and the strong feelings it aroused on both sides, had an important influence on imperial relations because the integrity of the Empire was involved. Home rule for Ireland raised anew the question whether legislative independence and imperial unity were compatible. On the analogy of colonial self-government, they were compatible. Gladstone, Granville and some of their fellow Liberals came to accept Home Rule as the only solution to the Irish problem, and to have no fear that it would adversely affect imperial unity. The radical Chamberlain, the "Whig" Liberal Hartington and the Conservatives contended that the Irish aim was not colonial self-government, but complete independence. Home Rule, therefore, might lead to the disruption of the Empire should the colonies follow the Irish example.

This awareness of the new danger to which imperial unity was exposed as a result of the Home Rule issue, as well as the success of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, probably encouraged the Imperial Federation League to make another attempt to urge the
Imperial Government to call a colonial conference or appoint a Royal Commission to examine imperial defence, communications and the means whereby imperial unity, or the federation of the Empire, I might be secured. After the Liberal Party's split on Home Rule, and its subsequent election defeat, Salisbury became Prime Minister. On II August, 1886, he met an influential deputation from the Imperial Federation League at the Colonial Office, and promised 2 that Cabinet would consider the League's representations. Here the matter rested until October, 1886, when a hint that a colonial conference would be called was contained in the Queen's speech proroguing Parliament.

Although the Imperial Federation League always claimed the credit for the calling of the first Colonial Conference in 1887, it is likely that the League's prompting was not the sole or even the main reason which motivated the Salisbury Government. Edward Stanhope and Sir Henry Holland, his successor as Secretary of State for the Colonies, were active if cautious imperial federationists; but it would so obviously be good policy to show the unity of the Empire in an unmistakable form during the Queen's jubilee year, and the Conservative Party as the upholder of that unity. Further, the

1 The decision to send a deputation to the Prime Minister was taken by the Executive Council of the League on 17 July.
2 For a full account of the deputation see The Times, 12 August, 1886, p.8. or Imperial Federation, I Sept.,1886.
James Service was one of the chief speakers for the deputation. He used the opportunity to include some remarks on the Victorian attitude towards the New Hebrides and the Imperial Government's lack of consideration for Australian interests.
Conservatives might also thereby gain the support of the Liberal Unionists.

The terms under which the conference was called must have been disappointing to the Imperial Federation League. It was to be consultative only: in other words, the colonial representatives were not expected to have wide powers to commit the colonies to any policy or to the acceptance of any resolutions. Even with regard to imperial defence, there was no intention of committing Great Britain and the colonies "to new projects entailing heavy expenditure, but rather to secure that the sums which may be devoted to imperial defence may be utilised to the fullest extent with complete knowledge of all the conditions of the problem". In this respect the Colonial Office showed far better judgment than the Imperial Federation League of colonial attitudes towards political federation and schemes for imperial defence. The Colonial Office did not see the conference as one between Premiers. Nor was it entirely limited to the self-governing colonies, although on most days only the representatives of those colonies were present. Western Australia and Natal were on the threshold of

2 Ibid., and also Holland's statement in the H. of Commons that there would be no formal exchange of powers at the conference. Hansard 3 Ser., 31 March, 1887, vol. ccxiii, p. 66.
4 The difference is apparent in 1897 when the conference was described as one between the Secretary of State and the Colonial Premiers.
5 Where there were no official representatives of the Crown Colonies in England, any leading colonists who happened to be in England, whether or not they held any official position in their
being granted self-government, and so they were the exceptions of Crown colonies taking part in discussions on matters concerning the self-governing colonies.

It was immediately apparent to the Colonial Governments that the conference would be a useful means of gaining the collective opinions of the colonies on matters which had already received much attention. The provision of an Australian auxiliary naval squadron had been given close imperial and colonial attention for almost two years; and the question of imperial communications, postal and telegraphic, had been discussed over a considerable period. Only a few points of difference remained to be settled between the Imperial Government and the Australian Colonies on the future administration of New Guinea. The Colonial Office itself did not suggest that the conference might discuss topics which involved British relations with other Powers; but, through the invitation to the Colonial Governments to submit further subjects, the New Hebrides, sugar bounties and preferential trade within the Empire came before the conference. One topic, that of the political respective colonies, were to be invited to attend the conference. Onslow in H. of Lords, 18 March,1887. Hansard 3 Ser.,vol.cccxii, p.705-6. In the H. of Commons on 31 March,1887, Holland stated that unofficial persons had been chosen rather than members of the colonial civil service. Hansard 3 Ser.,vol.cccxiii, p.71-2.

I Victoria therefore suggested the deportation of criminals to the Pacific, the occupation of the New Hebrides, and the future administration of New Guinea; Griffith and Downer suggested preferential trade within the Empire; and, on New Zealand's initiative, the conference discussed the revision of the Governor's Instructions with regard to the prerogative of mercy and the dissolution of Parliament. C.5091, vol.II, Papers laid before the Conference, pp.3-5.
federation of the Empire, was expressly forbidden. In view of the
colonies' unwillingness and unpreparedness to discuss this matter,
Stanhope's decision was wise. Individual colonists might have
welcomed such a discussion at the conference; but, had imperial
federation been suggested initially as one of the topics for dis-
cussion, the Parkes Government in New South Wales, and possibly
some other Colonial Governments, would have been even more cautious
in conferring powers on its representatives and might have refused
to be represented.

Although the Colonial Office continued to adhere strictly
to this policy of excluding imperial federation from the agenda,
colonial apprehensions that the conference might commit the colon-
ies to new policies or expenditure were not easily or completely
allevied. Shortly before the conference opened these fears were
quickly reawakened by an incorrect report that imperial federation
would be discussed after all; and one Colonial Government went so
far as to forbid its delegates to discuss imperial federation in
any form. On the whole, colonial apprehensions were sufficiently
lulled for most of the Australian press to declare that little

2 e.g. statement by Sir Henry Holland in the H. of Commons,
3 e.g. the incorrect report published in the S.M.H., 30 March, 1887,
of Holland's statement that the conference would not discuss
imperial federation, but an unofficial discussion would probably
be arranged "by those influential persons who have taken an
interest in the subject." (H. of Commons, 28 March, 1887)
4 Parkes to Samuel, telegram, 1 April, 1887. Printed in N.S.W.
harm would come from the conference; but a minority continued to express their fears that the delegates would commit the colonies or be bought by titles and decorations to favour imperialist schemes.

The Colonial Office did not seem to have any clear idea of the kind of men, apart from the Agents-General, that the colonial Governments might appoint as their representatives. The term "leading public men" did not necessarily mean members of the Governments, but in all likelihood it would cut out those ex-colonists in London who so readily saw themselves as spokesmen for the colonies. From the outset, the Governments in the Australian Colonies and New Zealand favoured sending the Premier or at least a Cabinet Minister to attend the conference with the Agents-General. Stanhope had stated that the number of representatives at the conference would not be decided on any equal or proportional basis. As it was the first attempt to call such a conference, this decision was probably wise. It is also possible that the Imperial Government was anxious to avoid all connection between the conference and political feder-

1 e.g. S.W.H., 3 Feb. and 4 April, 1887; Age, 21 Jan. and 24 April, 1887; Brisbane Courier, 8 Dec., 1886; S.Aust. Register, 6 Jan., 29 Jan. and 6 April, 1887.
2 e.g. Bulletin, 16 April, 1887; (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, 9 Dec., 1886.
3 On the grounds that he would not be accredited by the N.S.W. Govt., Holland refused a request from John Norton (N.S.W. Labour delegate to the International Trades Union Conference) that he might attend the conference. Memo. of interview between Holland and Norton, 2 Feb., 1887. C.O.201/607.
4 Some of them sought to represent the self-governing colonies, e.g. J. Henniker Heaton and a Dr. Joseph Campbell, who claimed that while in England he had lectured widely on the subjects suggested for the conference. Letter from Heaton in The Times, 29 Jan., 1887; and Campbell to Samuel, 7 Dec., 1886. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 87/777.
The decision on representation might, therefore, have been taken so as to give imperial federationists no grounds for claiming that the conference was a rudimentary Council of the Empire.

The Queensland Cabinet quickly decided that the Premier, Sir Samuel Griffith should attend the conference, and the south Australian Government followed suit in arranging for the Premier, Sir John Downer, to go to London. Likewise, Sir Robert Stout, the Premier of New Zealand, at first intended to represent that colony. The appointment of the Victorian and New South Wales representatives shows how the consultative nature of the conference influenced the choice of delegates. After some hesitation, the Victorian Government appointed Sir James Lorimer, the Minister of Defence, in addition to James Service, an ex-Premier then in London, Alfred Deakin, the Chief Secretary in the Gillies-Deakin coalition Government, and the Agent-General, Sir Graham Berry. Deakin later claimed that Lorimer, as a member of the Legislative Council, and himself, as a member of the Legislative Assembly, had been appointed so that the Victorian delegates at the conference would be representative of Parliament, but without having any authority to bind Parliament.

In New South Wales the appointment of representatives was delayed and complicated by a general election in January, 1887, and the consequent replacement of the Jennings Government by one formed

Queensland, Tasmania, Western Australia and New Zealand appointed two representatives each; N.S.W. appointed three and Victoria four.

2 When the date of the conference proved inconvenient, the Speaker of the Legislative Council, Sir William Fitzherbert, was appointed with the Agent-General to represent New Zealand.
3 Memo. from Gillies for the Governor, 26 Jan., 1887. Vict. V. and P.
by Sir Henry Parkes. Jennings had either intended to go to London himself or to send a Cabinet Minister. Somewhat surprisingly, considering Parkes' interest in possible changes in the imperial relationship and his recognition of the need for the colonies to speak with authority in London, there is nothing to show that he had any intention of going himself. Perhaps he still too vividly remembered his earlier experience of the dangers which might face the absent Premier of a colony where parliamentary majorities were unstable.

Beyond a formal expression of his belief that the conference would have beneficial results, he does not appear to have shown any particular interest in it or regarded it as important. Parkes stated that he asked Jennings to represent New South Wales because the discussions on the naval proposals and on the administration of New Guinea had taken place during his Premiership, and he would be able to speak with knowledge about those negotiations. Yet some difficulty still remains in understanding why Parkes appointed his political opponent as a delegate. He had opposed Jennings' policy with regard to the New Hebrides; and, as the Victorians were un-

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1 Jennings to himself, 27 Jan., 1887. In a Cabinet minute Jennings had stated that a Cabinet Minister should go. N.S.W. V. and P., Legis. Assembly, 1887 Second Session, vol.5, pp.1126,1133.
2 Parkes to N.S.W. representatives, II Feb.,1887. ibid., p.1134.
3 Parkes to Jennings, 27 Jan.,1887. ibid.,p.1133.
4 See Chapter 5, p.194 ff.
likely to let slip a chance of bringing the islands before the conference, it seemed doubtful whether Jennings would put forward a point of view for New South Wales which would be acceptable to Parkes. In addition to Jennings and the Agent-General, Sir Saul Samuel, Parkes appointed Robert Wisdom, a former Attorney-General and one of his political supporters, and an opponent of the Sudan contingent. Little enthusiasm was shown in the colony about the choice of delegates. There was some feeling that they were not really representative; but the most outspoken criticism came from some of Jennings' former supporters who felt that he had forfeited their respect by accepting an appointment at the hands of his political adversary.

The instructions given by Parkes to the New South Wales representatives show clearly the very limited extent to which one Colonial Government was prepared to go towards allowing a colony to be committed at the conference. They were not to commit New South Wales to any new expenditure by word or implication, and were to refer any matters requiring a decision to the Government. They were expressly forbidden to enter into any discussions relati-

1 Wisdom's appointment was not a sudden choice. In a letter dated 19 Jan., Parkes referred to at least one earlier conversation with Wisdom on the subject of his going to London. Parkes to Wisdom, 19 Jan., 1887. Parkes Correspondence, vol. 46, pp. 89-90, A 916 (Mitchell Library).
2 The appointments were announced on 31 January.
3 e.g. S.M.H., editorial 3 Feb., 1887.
4 e.g. H. Copeland, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, vol. 25, p. 136; also N. Melville, ibid., p. 166.
ting to political federation. The weakness of these instructions lay in the fact that they only told the delegates what they were not to do. Little positive guidance was given to them about the views they should put forward. Parkes' insistence on the letter of these instructions, and his reiteration of them in the Legislative Assembly, was to be of some significance when his acceptance of the proposals for the auxiliary naval squadron was requested.

The representatives of the other Australian colonies and New Zealand similarly understood that they were not to commit their colonies in any way. Those from New Zealand were in a position most nearly comparable with that of the New South Wales representatives, but with one major difference. The New Zealand Government, unlike the New South Wales Government, instructed its representatives to bring certain matters before the conference. The Chief Secretary of Victoria and the Premiers of Queensland and South Australia would be held directly responsible by the Parliaments should they agree to adopt any policies while they were in London. Their own political judgment, rather than formal instructions, was their guide.

As soon as the representatives of the Australian Colonies

I Parkes to Samuel, telegram, I April, 1887. Printed in ibid., p. II35. In their report on the conference, the delegates claimed that they had adhered strictly to their instructions. In cases where the discussions took a wider range, or where new matter was introduced, they abstained from taking part in the proceedings. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 87/I250I (Archives of N.S.W.).

2 This was recognised by the S.M.H. when it commented that the N.S.W. delegates were hardly representative of that colony "there having been no policy laid down by the Government for them to follow". Editorial 4 April, 1887
and New Zealand began to arrive in London, they attempted to meet together to find out how far they could act in concert at the conference. The Victorian delegates were the first to draw up a programme of subjects to bring before the conference; but it was not until the beginning of April that all the delegates met together after the last of them had arrived from New South Wales and New Zealand. The Victorian representatives then proposed united action on the New Hebrides and transportation questions. A report reached the Australian Colonies that the New South Wales representatives objected to the formulation of a united Australian attitude before the Imperial Government had had a chance to explain its position. Duncan Gillies, the Premier of Victoria, was apprehensive that Jennings would continue to press the views he had held while Premier of New South Wales. Gillies, therefore, sought Parkes' assistance in gaining the co-operation of the New South Wales representatives on the two questions in which the Victorians were especially interested. Indeed, Deakin regarded the New Hebrides as the most important question before the conference. In response to Gillies, Parkes instructed the New South Wales representatives to act in accord with the other Australian representatives whenever

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2 This had been done by 26 March. The subjects suggested by Victoria for the conference to discuss were forwarded to Holland on 31 March. Procs., C.5091, vol.II, papers laid before the Conference, p.3-4.

3 A meeting on 30 March, under the chairmanship of Sir Samuel Griffith, was adjourned until all the delegates had reached London. Reported in the S.M.H., 1 April, 1887.

4 In S.M.H., 5 April, 1887.

From the start the Victorians, rather than the representatives of New South Wales, were in a strong position to dominate the conference. Deakin, Service and Berry had for the past three or four years been closely involved in the formulation of Victorian attitudes and policies on the important matters which the conference was to discuss. There was also a fair degree of accord and identity of interests between the Victorians and Sir Samuel Griffith, the Premier of Queensland, through their co-operation in the Federal Council since 1885. Of the New South Wales representatives, Sir Saul Samuel, the Agent-General, had been away from the colony since 1880, and Wisdom went to the conference thinking it was likely to be a fiasco. Jennings and Wisdom represented different political views; and, although Wisdom was one of Parkes' supporters, he did not hold office in the present Government. Jennings, like James Service, was an ex-Premier; but Service had been the chief formulator of the attitudes which the Victorians would put forward at the conference, whereas Jennings and Parkes were just as unlikely in the future as in the past to follow similar policies.

I See correspondence between Gillies and Parkes printed in N.S.W. V and P., 1887 Second Session, Legis. Assembly, vol.5, p.1136; and in N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters in Box 168 (Archives of N.S.W.).

Parkes' instruction to the N.S.W. delegates to co-operate with the Victorians was sent a few days after he had received a long statement of the Presbyterian view on the New Hebrides from the Rev. J. G. Paton. Paton to Parkes, 28 March, 1887. Parkes Correspondence, vol. "P", pp.623-7, A 925 (Mitchell Library).

2 Wisdom to Parkes, 8 April, 1887. Autograph Letters of Notable Australians, A 70, p.555-8 (Mitchell Library).
Further, it must not be forgotten that the attempt to form a united voice for Australia and New Zealand in the Federal Council had resulted in the refusal of New South Wales, South Australia and New Zealand to take part in a council dominated by James Service and the Victorians. Something of this division seemed to flow over into the different approaches adopted by Deakin and Dillon Bell at the first session of the conference and in some subsequent sessions. In London Deakin seemed to lose his sense of statesmanship and play the Australian nationalist to the colonial "gallery". He immediately attacked what the Victorians regarded as the Imperial Government's lack of consideration for the Australian viewpoint on the New Hebrides. Bell urged the conference to assist and not embarrass the Imperial Government, and to advocate the views of their Governments with moderation in face of the difficulties involved in many of the questions which the conference would discuss. Above all, Bell saw the benefits which would accrue to the colonies from being taken into consultation with the Imperial Government. He and his fellow representatives had a chance to see matters in a larger perspective and bury all their "petty vanities, jealousies and provincial distinctions".

When the significance of a delegate's contribution to the deliberations of the conference is assessed, the criterion must be whether or not he conscientiously tried to serve the interests

2 Ibid., p.23.
of the colony he represented. Among those who were neither Premiers nor leading Ministers, like Griffith, Downer and Deakin, the constructive attitude of Sir Francis Dillon Bell stands out. There was consultation between him and his fellow representative, Sir William Fitzherbert. He kept in close contact with the Premier, Sir Robert Stout, and in New Zealand's interest suggested to him some further matters that could usefully be discussed by the conference. At the same time he took care that his actions did not commit the colony to anything with which the Cabinet might not agree.

In a consultative conference, where the giving of information rather than reaching decisions was its prime purpose, the divisions between the colonies and the different attitudes among the representatives of a colony were not of such great significance as might otherwise have been the case, in affecting the deliberations of the conference as a whole or in weakening the position of a particular colony. It was recognised from the start that the colonial representatives could speak as individuals as well as on behalf of their colonies. The confidential nature of the proceed-

1 There is a great difference between the way Bell kept his Government informed of the discussions and progress of the conference and the brief communications sent by Samuel to Parkes. The N.S.W. delegates did not send a full report until Oct., 1887.

2 This is another indication that the idea of the colonial conference had not passed beyond a rudimentary stage. e.g. Proc. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.5091, p.177 (Fitzherbert) and p.552; p.38-9 (Dodds and Douglas). Also Bell and Jennings on the New Hebrides, British Australasian Supplement, 1887.
ings of the conference possibly encouraged the delegates to speak sometimes as individuals. In the long run, it was the degree of unanimity displayed by the representatives of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, and not their divisions, which stood out. Holland's tact and skill as chairman of the conference probably contributed to this.

Although Stanhope and Holland, the Colonial Governments and the colonial press insisted that the conference was consultative, the British press, as well as imperial federationists, half hoped that the conference would prove to be something more and perhaps become the basis of a Council of the Empire. It was realised that the time was not yet ripe for imperial federation to be discussed; but even so the conference was regarded as having a more definite function than to exchange information. There were expectations that it would reach conclusions and adopt resolutions. This attitude in the press contrasted with Holland's determined attempts during the sessions of the conference to keep it from adopting resolutions.

I The Colonial Office decided before the conference began that the proceedings, following the opening meeting would be confidential. Holland to the colonial delegates, 19 March, 1887, copy enclosed in Bell to Stout, 25 March, 1887. Archives of P.M.Dept., N.Z. 5/9. When a report reached England that this secrecy was deprecated in the Australian Colonies, Holland defended the decision on the grounds that defence, tenders for mail contracts and telegraphic communications, and relations with foreign Powers would be prejudiced by premature publication. Holland in the H. of Commons, 25 March, 1887, Hansard 3rd Ser., vol. cccxii, p. 1473-4.


3 e.g. The Times, editorial 7 Dec., 1886.

4 Procs. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C. 5091, p. 474. The exceptions,
On one question in particular the Imperial Government saw the conference as having more than a consultative function. This was with regard to the negotiations for the Australian auxiliary naval squadron. The Imperial Government seemed to expect the agents-general and the other colonial representatives would be in a position to make decisions. How far then could the conference be expected to be useful if the delegates were not fully empowered by their Governments to reach an agreement which could be referred to the colonial Cabinets and Parliaments? Or had the Imperial Government's attitude changed when it was found that in general the colonies had thought it worthwhile to send their Premiers or other members of the colonial Cabinets as representatives?

II

Two broad questions may be borne in mind when examining the proceedings of the conference on those subjects which had particular reference to the Australian colonies and New Zealand: the Australian when the conference adopted resolutions, were in connection with sugar bounties (p.398), and the Canadian resolutions on the Pacific Cable (pp.617-8).

I see minutes on Admiralty to C.O.,25 Feb.,1887. C.O.201/606. The Colonial Office advised against Admiral Fairfax's continuing the negotiations for the auxiliary squadron in the Australian Colonies. Meade thought it would be "impossible, even if it were politic, to attempt to keep the subject from discussion by the Conference.... It is by consultation and discussion between H.M. Government and the representatives of the dissentient Colonies that their objections are most likely to be removed."

A further reason for continuing the negotiations in London was "to prevent the Colonial members from saying that they were summoned thousands of miles to discuss, inter alia, the defence question, only to find that, so far as the Imperial Government is concerned, they had dealt with it only five weeks before the assembly of the Conference..."The Admiralty adopted the Colonial Office's point of view, and the negotiations were renewed in London and not in the Australian Colonies.
tralian auxiliary naval squadron, the defence of coaling stations, postal and telegraphic communications, trade within the Empire, the New Hebrides question, the administration of New Guinea and alterations in the Governor's Instructions. First, given its composition, the nature of the subjects under discussion and the powers of the representatives, how far was it able to reach any useful conclusions? Secondly, did it depart in any way from the original intention that it should not take any action which would involve Great Britain or the colonies in additional expenditure?

The opening session of the conference seemed designed to show the limits within which useful work could be done towards finding ways of strengthening the unity of the Empire without the formation of a political federation. This was the keynote of Salisbury's address. He hoped that the conference would be "the parent of a long progenitor". As he saw it, the task before the conference was one of discussing the means by which the scattered parts of the Empire could be brought more closely together, and not of indulging in "any ambitious schemes of constitution making" as these were "for the future and not for the present". As relations stood between the Great Powers of Europe, no part of the Empire could be considered safe from attack. Salisbury, therefore,

1 Procs. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.5091, p.5.
Holland upheld Salisbury's view, and declared "the effect of this first meeting is not to be gauged by the results of a single year". ibid., p.8.
2 ibid., p.5.
thought "that the Colonies had a very real and genuine interest in
the shield which their Imperial connection throws over them, and
that they have a ground for joining with us in making the defence
of the Empire effective, a ground which is not purely sentimental,
which does not rest merely on their attachment to this Country, but
which is based on the most solid and reasonable foundations of self-
interest and security".

However, Salisbury and his colleagues had no comprehensive
scheme for a kriegsverein to put before the conference. This would
have impinged on imperial federation. Instead, only practical ques-
tions were to be raised, such as the Australian auxiliary naval
squadron and the defences of King George's Sound and Thursday Is-
land. On these matters, negotiations were already far advanced; but
something more than discussion was required if the conference was
to be of any practical use. From the opening session onwards, Holl-
land pressed for a settlement. As he put it, colonial Ministers
"could not have left their colonies for any other purpose than the
settlement of matters of urgent and practical importance".

As Salisbury's and Holland's remarks showed, the Imperial
Government clearly intended to use the opportunity afforded by the
conference to reach a final settlement on matters already fully
discussed, to negotiate on matters affecting several or all of the

\[1 \text{ibid., p.6.} \]
\[2 \text{ibid., p.16.} \]
Australian Colonies and New Zealand and if possible to speed up the process of reaching a final agreement and obtain a provisional acceptance from the Colonial Governments. This purpose was aided by the way in which many of the sessions of the conference were concerned with particular problems which related to certain colonies only. The Australian Colonies and New Zealand therefore figured largely in such sessions. On other matters, where a final agreement was by no means near, or even the matter itself fully discussed, Holland deprecated the adoption of resolutions by the conference. The danger was not only that a colony might be committed to new action, but that resolutions on subjects initiated by the colonial delegates might involve Great Britain in possible new departures, especially in the field of protective duties. Holland was determined to avoid this, and skilfully did so.

As the Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand had already accepted in principle the Imperial Government's proposals for an auxiliary naval force, the conference was concerned solely with reaching agreement on certain details. Negotiations

There had already been communications between the Imperial Government and the Australian Colonies regarding the fortifications at King George's Sound and Thursday Island, e.g. Derby to Loftus, N.S.W. No.65, 12 June, 1885, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. Holland wanted the conference to reach some agreement on the colonial share of the expense involved in improving the fortifications at these two places. Similarly he wanted the amount of the contributions from the Australian Colonies towards the cost of the administration of New Guinea to be settled.

See Chapter 4, pp.160-1 for a summary of the Admiralty's proposals of Sept., 1885, on which the negotiations in the colonies in 1886 had been based.
on these had so far proved to be the most difficult of all because two important principles were involved. The discussions at the conference to a large extent were concerned with reaching an interpretation of these principles which would be acceptable to the Imperial and to the Colonial Governments: first, how far should the colonies contribute towards the defence of their own coasts and of floating trade which was mainly British, although it was vital to the Australian economy; and secondly, whether the Colonial Governments should have any control over the disposition of the squadron. The Colonial Governments themselves had not yet resolved their differences of opinion whether or not they should contribute to the capital cost of the ships by means of a five per cent depreciation fund. The Victorian and South Australian representatives maintained their Governments' opposition to any contribution towards capital cost. From this arose a further difficulty. Some of the vessels in the auxiliary force were to be kept in reserve. In an emergency extra costs would arise in placing all the ships on a war footing. The colonies were opposed to their bearing the liability for covering the extra cost. An impasse was reached.

After a visit to Portsmouth dockyard, the Australian and New Zealand representatives met together in an attempt to remove their differences; but they failed to do so. At this meeting Sir Francis

1 Procs. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.509I, pp.35-8 (Deakin); pp.32-4 (Downer).
2 This was at the session of the conference on 5 April.
3 The visit to Portsmouth took place on 13 April, and the Australian and New Zealand representatives met on 15 April.
Dillon Bell took the lead in putting the issues and their contingencies before the other representatives. He was asked to raise them in the conference in the hope that the delegates would thereby find out exactly what was implied in the difference between peace and war footing. It almost seemed as if some of the representatives had doubts that the conference was discussing the same proposals as those the Colonial governments had already gone a long way towards accepting in 1886. As Bell understood the position, the cost of maintenance might increase sharply in time of war because the two ships in reserve would then have to be placed on a war footing. He contended that a new principle would be established if, on the one hand, a reversion was made to the 1885 Cooper Keys scheme under which the colonies would pay the whole cost of building and maintenance. In that case, the colonies could insist on being consulted about the type of vessels to be built, because the ships would belong to the colonies and be in commission in peace and war. On the other hand, if the colonies were being asked to contribute to the imperial squadron in Australian waters, this would be a contribution to the defence of the Empire. If such were the case, the question of imperial federation would be opened up, and the Australian Colonies and New Zealand could not alone be contributors.

1 Bell to Stout, Nos. 591, 592, 18 April, 1887. Archives of P.M. Dept., N.Z. 5/9.
2 Minute on Naval Defence, 15 April, 1887; enclosed in Bell to Stout, No. 592, 18 April, 1887. Archives of P.M. Dept., N.Z. 5/9. The question of a general contribution to the imperial navy also had special applicability to New Zealand. Bell and Fitzherbert felt it necessary to argue that, in asking for two of the auxiliary ships to be stationed in New Zealand waters, New Zealand
In the event, the important issues Bell had raised were not put before the conference. When it met again, the Admiralty had further modified its proposals in the hope of gaining Australian and New Zealand agreement. In addition to capital cost, the Imperial Government would also carry the extra cost between peace and war footing. Finally, after a private discussion while the Imperial Government's representatives had withdrawn, the Victorian and South Australian delegates offered to remove their objections, accept the Admiralty's latest amendments to the scheme. It was obvious that the Admiralty could go no further towards meeting the colonies without jeopardising the necessary vote for funds in the Imperial Parliament. On behalf of the Australian and New Zealand representatives, Griffith informed Holland that they would immediately consult their Governments and urge that the proposals be accepted.

Steering from the principle of a colonial contribution to the auxiliary squadron was a further point on which the Victorian and South Australian Governments differed from the others. This concerned the basis of the contributions from the colonies: should the colonies pay solely in proportion to population, or, as the Victorian Government argued, should revenue, shipping and trade be included also. New South Wales was the staunchest supporter

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1 At the session of the conference on 18 April.
3 Ibid., p. I61.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p.30I et seq.
of population being the sole basis of contribution because, it was argued, her trade and commerce was proportionately so much greater than that of some of the other colonies.

Intercolonial feeling apparently did not motivate the major difference of opinion between the colonies. It arose mainly from the Victorians' belief, and Deakin's in particular, that a more equitable sharing of the responsibilities of defending the Empire must be balanced by the privilege of an increasing colonial role in imperial policy and control. This did not mean imperial federation; but that as the Australian Colonies developed they should undertake increased responsibility for their own defence and eventually provide an Australian navy. Also, through the continued growth of their economies and population, they would be in a better position to secure their interests independently or through imperial policy. In line with this argument, the Victorians stressed how much they had already spent on defence.

As far as the principle of colonial control over the movements of the ships was concerned, the colonies had from the beginning recognised that the ships were not to be distributed in ownership among the contributing colonies. Neither did they want collect.

1 *Ibid.*, p.302 (Samuel). No decision was reached on the basis of contribution, and the temporising expedient was adopted of suggesting that the Board of Trade should act as arbitrator. In the end, the colonies came to their own conclusion on the basis of contribution. See Chapter 7.


3 e.g. see Deakin's subsequent remark that he supported the 1887 and 1902 naval agreements as "temporary measures" until Australia could have a navy of her own. Presidential Address to I.F.L. (Victoria), 14 June,1905.
ive ownership. This is understandable. The Federal Council, to which such control could then be expected to fall, did not include New South Wales, South Australia and New Zealand. Therefore, since ownership remained with the Imperial Government, it followed that the control of the disposition of the squadron would be vested there also. This had not been accepted by the Colonial Governments without the expression of fears that the ships might be absent from Australian waters just when they were needed most.

The Imperial Government tried to meet colonial susceptibilities by stating that the ships would generally be used at the discretion of the Admiral within the limits of the station; but during an emergency in time of war they might be employed elsewhere. When Wisdom raised the question of control during one of the early sessions of the conference, he sought an assurance on behalf of New South Wales that colonial consent would be obtained before the ships were sent outside the limits of the Station. Holland could not give such an assurance, and Wisdom received no support from the other representatives when he argued that it would be difficult to get the colonies to agree to such a wide discretion being given to the Admiral on the Station. Wisdom's attitude undoubtedly reflected colonial fears, which were particularly strong in New South Wales, of being bound to commitments where the Colonial Govern-

1 Procs. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.5091, Article IV of draft agreement, pp.506-7.
2 ibid., pp.41,44.
ments would have no power of decision. During the final revision of the text of the agreement, after the Colonial Governments had notified their provisional acceptance, the Admiralty made a concession to quieten these colonial fears by including a stipulation that the consent of the Colonial Governments would be sought before the vessels were used beyond the limits of the Australian Station.

The Queensland, Victorian, South Australian, Tasmanian and New Zealand representatives soon notified their Governments' acceptance of the proposed auxiliary naval force agreement subject to parliamentary sanction. Sir Francis Dillon Bell had strongly urged his Government to accept because he believed that, with the provision in the agreement for two ships to be stationed in New Zealand waters, that colony had satisfied her specific needs.

The New South Wales Government did not respond so readily. Parkes delayed until the other Colonial Governments had committed themselves, and even then he only gave something less than a qualified approval. The difficulty partly arose from Parkes' instruction to the delegates that they were not to commit the colony by word or implication. Anything less than such a clear instruction would not have satisfied the radical element in the New South Wales Parliament; and on a number of occasions Parkes had assured Parliament that the colony could not be committed. In addition to this,

1 This was shown by several speakers during the debates in the N.S.W. Legis. Assembly on the Australian Naval Force Bill, eg. N.Melville, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., 17 Nov.,1887, vol.29,p.15334. Also J.Garland and E.W.O'Sullivan, ibid., pp.1557, 1541.
2 Article IV of the revised draft agreement, 6 May,1887. Procs. of I887 Colonial Conference, C.5091, p.508.
3 The South Australian acceptance was provisional to dispensing
Parkes was a firm upholder of the autonomous rights of a colony. At first he attempted to prevaricate by affecting surprise that the conference had proved to be more than consultative in purpose. In view of his assurances to Parliament, Parkes obviously felt himself cornered now that he was asked for the Government's formal acceptance of the terms of the naval agreement. He tried the tactic of claiming that no specific mention had been made of naval defence when the conference was called; and suggested that the Government should see the full proceedings of the conference before parliamentary sanction was sought because he could give no decision without consulting Parliament. At the same time, he did not want to act in opposition to the other Colonial Governments. Samuel urged Parkes to accept the agreement on the grounds that in the previous year the Colonial Governments had already approved the greater part of it; and the Imperial Government had now modified it so that the question of naval defence might be decided as quickly as possible.

with the colonial vessel "Protector". Col.Treasurer to Elyth, I9 April,1887. Letterbooks Treas. to Agent-General, vol.28. S.Aust. Archives 634.
5 e.g. in the Legis. Assembly on I3 April following a question by A Cameron whether the delegates had any power to commit the colony. N.S.W.Parl.Deb., vol.25,p.712. At the same time Frederick Gibbes brought up the matter of colonial control over the ships. ibid.,pp.714-6. Parkes repeated his assurances on 21 April. ibid.,p.955.

I Parkes to Carrington, 21 April,1887. Parkes Correspondence, vol.45, pp.100-103, A 916 (Mitchell Library).
2 Samuel to Parkes, 21 April,1887. Printed in ibid., p.1131.
Parkes' final decision was that he would submit the proposals to Parliament. He could not see that the Imperial Government gained any advantage from a conditional acceptance of the agreement by the colonies, and to him there was nothing specially urgent about the matter. The significance of the last remark lies in the key it gives to understanding Parkes' attitude when he submitted the naval agreement to the New south Wales Parliament in November, 1887. On the whole, his hesitations about giving the Government's conditional acceptance of the agreement were not shared by the press in New south Wales. Usually the colonial press was only too ready to speak out against a colony's being committed in advance.

The Imperial Government's determination to reach an agreement on the Australian auxiliary naval force scheme probably went beyond the consultative nature of the conference; but the delegates, by reference to their Governments, kept within the limits of their instructions. On the other hand, both the Imperial Government and the Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand had shown their willingness to reach a final agreement on a matter of vital interest to those colonies. The agreement did not in effect involve either the mother country or the colonies in new action.

1 Parkes to Samuel, telegram, 26 April, 1887. Printed in N.S.W. V. and F., 1887 Second Session, Legislative Assembly, vol. 5, p. 1181.
2 See Chapter 7.
3 e.g. the S.M.H. in an editorial on 28 April, 1887, regretted Parkes' hesitation to accept the agreement. Although the conference had gone a step beyond consultation, provisional acceptance by the Government would compromise neither the authority of Parliament nor the future settlement of the basis of contribution.
or additional expenditure, because all the Governments concerned had previously accepted the scheme in principle. The conference settled the final details of the division of expenditure on capital cost and maintenance between the mother country and the colonies.

The colonies had not been treated illiberally by the Imperial Government. The total capital cost of £850,000 for five cruisers and two torpedo vessels was to be borne by Great Britain. The colonies were to pay no more than £35,000 per annum as interest on capital cost, and £91,000 per annum for maintenance on a peacetime footing. This made a total of £126,000 per annum for the ten years' duration of the agreement. The vessels would not be used beyond the limits of the Australian Station without the consent of the Colonial Governments. For their part, the colonies had entered into an agreement which was purely local in purpose. It bore little or no reference to the question discussed by imperial federationists - that of a contribution to the general upkeep of the imperial navy.

I To a large extent, the same considerations applied to the improvements in the defences of the coaling stations at Thursday Island and King George's Sound. It was mainly a question of gaining the Imperial Government's acceptance of commitments which the colonies thought Great Britain should undertake. From the colonial point of view, the protection of British commerce as much as Australian, or even more so, was involved. This had been a cause of major differences of opinion since the question was opened in 1885. (i)

No decision was reached during the conference because the Imperial Government contended that it would be committing itself to further defence expenditure; but the Secretary of State for War promised that the Imperial Government would give full consideration to the possibility of providing more and better equipment at both places. (ii) Dillon Bell thought that, after learning by means of the conference how much the Australian Colonies were already spending on their defences, the Imperial Government would be more likely to assist in the defence of the two coaling sta-
The conclusion of the naval agreement had some significance also with regard to the development of the Colonial Conference as an institution. It showed the Colonial Conference as a means of completing negotiations with a number of colonies at one and the same time. Further, it showed the way in which the Imperial and Colonial Governments could compromise and reach agreement on specific matters affecting imperial policy. In the long run, this empirical approach held more significance for the future than any wide discussions on the principles on imperial co-operation or imperial consolidation could have done. Those imperial federationists, who believed that they should aim "at concert among governments rather than at an Imperial Parliament", would probably gain a much better appreciation than their fellows of the real significance of the completion of the details of the Australian and New Zealand naval agreement at the Colonial Conference.

(iii) This question will not be discussed further in this study. It formed the subject of much correspondence between the Imperial and Colonial Governments after 1887, and is not without significance as an example of the ways in which those Governments sought to reach a compromise that would satisfy the imperial and colonial interests involved.

(ii) Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1887. C.5091, pp.529-531, 560; also the second Colonial Office Memo. in vol. II, p.277.
(iii) Bell to Stout, No.6II, 22 April, 1887. Archives of P.M.Dept., N.Z. 5/10. See also the statements of colonial expenditure on defence which were submitted to the conference. C.O.Confidential Print, Misc. No.68, Proceedings of Colonial Conference, 1887, pp.354-407.


In the final draft of the agreement, the Admiralty stipulated that the vessels would be an improved type of those suggested in the earlier proposals. Procs., C.5091, pp.493,508. Two cruisers and one gun-boat were to be kept in reserve.
The discussions on communications, postal and telegraphic, show how closely Holland kept to the terms under which the conference was called. If a particular question had already been well discussed or negotiations were far advanced, a settlement was urged. This was the case with regard to the Australian mail contracts and the negotiations with the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company for reductions in cable rates. Very different was the treatment of the scheme for an Imperial Penny Postage, which J. Henniker Heaton had been advocating for some time, and about which he addressed the conference. The same was true of the proposals for laying a cable across the Pacific so as to complete an all-British cable system around the world. This project was ably supported by Sandford Fleming, a Canadian engineer who had been closely connected with the laying of the Canadian Pacific Railway. The conference showed interest in both these schemes, and also in proposals for an additional all-ocean mail service to Australia and a mail service to Australia via Canada. All these projects would tend to cheapen and improve imperial communications; but they would involve additional expense, and even the adoption of new principles, for the Governments concerned. Having just completed new mail contracts, the Aus-


2 Ibid., pp. 164–186.


4 Reference will be made to the subsequent development of both the Pacific Cable and the Canadian-Australian mail route in Chapter II.
Australian Colonies and Great Britain were reluctant to embark on an Imperial Penny postage scheme. The laying of a Pacific Cable would almost certainly involve the Imperial Government, as well as Canada and the Australian Colonies, in a large new expenditure; and for the Imperial Government it would also mean a new departure to share in laying, owning and operating a cable as a government venture. The colonies were wary of all these proposals and looked for a lead from the Imperial Government, a lead which Holland was unable to give. On the other hand, the New South Wales delegates hoped that at some future time the Australian Colonies would favourable consider the alternative postal route to Australia via Canada.

Similarly, with regard to trade matters, the conference could easily have gone beyond its terms of reference but for Holland's determination to keep the discussions within practical bounds. Although Sir Samuel Griffith, the Premier of Queensland, introduced the subject of preferential trade to the conference, J.H. Hofmeyr, one of Cape Colony's delegates, attracted the most attention. Griffith only asked the conference to discuss the extent to which the principle of preferential trade within the Empire might be adopted. Hofmeyr presented a scheme to the conference whereby the returns from an imperial preferential duty could be used to improve imperial defence. In practice the colonies would then be making contributions to the defence of the Empire without any

infringement of their powers of taxation.

Any proposal to introduce a form of imperial preference faced two major difficulties: first, there were the differing fiscal policies of the mother country and the colonies - Great Britain and New South Wales remained firmly in favour of free trade whereas Canada and Victoria had taken the lead in imposing protective duties; and, secondly, imperial preference could not be discussed without raising the question of imperial federation. Holland was not alone in deprecating that the conference should adopt a resolution. Dillon Bell opposed any endorsement of countervailing duties by the conference; and from this he was led to argue that the delegates had no instructions to interfere with the United Kingdom's trade policy or to discuss imperial federation.

In 1887 New Zealand was interested in reaching direct agreements with other countries, and especially with France, in order to supply frozen meats. On occasions the Imperial government had already granted Canada the privilege of a Canadian participating with British representatives in negotiations for commercial treaties between Canada and foreign Powers. When Dillon Bell sought the extension of this privilege to New Zealand and the Australian Colonies, the Australian delegates did not give him any support. Apart from fears that such agreements would weaken imperial unity, the Australians' lack of interest was probably due to two reasons.

First, the Australian Colonies, both free trade and protectionist, as yet had felt no need to seek wider markets beyond the United Kingdom; and, secondly, the New South Wales delegates refused to discuss the question because it went beyond their instructions and "involved important principles of public policy". Both Griffith, in introducing the principle of preferential trade, and Dillon Bell, in seeking the means of making separate colonial agreements with other countries, had gone ahead of attitudes in the Australian Colonies on imperial fiscal issues and of the needs of those colonies. As yet imperial preference had not been discussed in the Australian Colonies; and, in the existing climate of opinion on imperial federation, it would have been condemned almost out of hand had it been connected too obviously with a scheme to provide colonial contributions to imperial defence.

Since the rejection of the "Rosebery scheme" in 1886, negotiations between the British and French Governments on the evacuation of French troops from the New Hebrides and the transportation of récidivistes had more or less come to a standstill; but the possibility of a settlement was not quite barred. The French had not renewed transportation to New Caledonia after the temporary cessation in 1886, and late in the year communications had

2 e.g. S.M.H., editorial 9 May, 1887. Canada's case in negotiating a treaty with Spain was regarded as exceptional. To grant such a privilege to other colonies "would multiply Imperial difficulties", and the unity of the Empire could hardly stand such a strain.
passed between the two Governments on joint British and French control of the New Hebrides. At the beginning of 1887, Dillon Bell was under the impression that the Imperial Government would not attempt to revive the negotiations until after the views of the Australian and New Zealand representatives had been heard at the Colonial Conference. In view of Great Britain's international difficulties, he also thought that a satisfactory settlement in the South Pacific would depend to a large extent on the united front shown by the Australian Colonies and New Zealand.

The discussion on the New Hebrides at the conference proved to be unsatisfactory to the delegates and to the colonies they represented. It took place at a secret session, and no record of it was included in the published proceedings of the conference. The delegates were also restrained from sending their own confidential reports to the Colonial Governments, and they received no official report either during the conference or later. An unofficial report was published in the Standard while the conference was still sitting. The Victorians in particular were most dissatisfied.

3 At the session of the conference on 25 April.
4 This decision appears to have been taken after consultation with the delegates concerned, and when the difficulties of editing a rather outspoken discussion were considered. Bell to Stout, 13 July, 1887. Archives of P.M.Dept., N.Z. 5/II.
Sir James Fergusson's announcement of the decision was made in the H. of Commons on 26 June, 1887. Hansard 3 Ser., vol.cccxvi, pp.1164-5. See also G.Cecil, op. cit., vol.IV, pp.33-4.
Onslow, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, regretted the decision not to publish. Minutes on Loch to Holland, telegram, 6 July, 1887. C.0.309/151.
5 Bell to Stout, No.787, 18 April, 1887; No.1156, 20 July and No.1210,
fied with the Imperial Government's failure to find a solution to the problem which was favourable to Australian interests, and they might well have thought that their case would be strengthened by the publication of an unofficial account of the session of the conference. Charges were sometimes made in the Australian Colonies that some, if not all, of the Victorian representatives were the source of the information given to the Standard; but such charges are as hard to refute as to prove. The Imperial Government admitted that the account in the Standard was true in most respects, but misleading in several important matters. When Service subsequently attempted to reopen the subject of the New Hebrides in the conference, Holland prohibited any further discussion on the grounds that negotiations with the French were still in hand, and would be prejudiced by the publication of another unauthorised account of the attitudes of the Imperial and Colonial governments.

During the session when the New Hebrides question was before the conference, it appears that Holland, and especially Salisbury,
suggested that the Australian attitude had hampered negotiations with the French; and they expressed their regret that the colonies had rejected the so-called "Rosebery scheme" because it would have settled the transportation of récidivistes to the South Pacific as well as the New Hebrides problem. In the discussion which followed, Dillon Bell continued to support the Imperial Government. Jennings maintained his personal views in favour of the "Rosebery scheme"; but was willing to support the attitude of the majority of the representatives. Both the Standard and the British Australasian stressed the critical stand taken by the Victorian delegates, Service, Berry and Deakin, as well as by Griffith, the Premier of Queensland. Yet Dillon Bell, in reporting to his Government, mentioned Berry and Service as having opposed Salisbury, but said nothing about Deakin. In his own account, Deakin gave himself a very large role and at the same time was unfair to the New South Wales representatives. He also suggested that Salisbury was attempting to reopen negotiations with the French on the basis of the "Rosebery scheme", whereas the negotiations by then were concerned with securing French evacuation of the islands and the setting up of a joint naval commission. Both Salisbury and Holland had indicated that a joint naval commission to uphold the status quo of 1878 and 1883 was in process of being negotiated with the French.

1 Bell to Stout, No. 704, 6 May, 1887. Archives of P.M. Dept., N.Z. 5/10.
Government. Although the Australian representatives insisted that the views of the Australian Colonies had been ignored by the Imperial Government, it appears that they unanimously indicated that they would accept the establishment of a joint naval commission because there seemed to be no chance of obtaining any better terms for a French evacuation of the New Hebrides. The existing temporary cessation of transportation remained unchanged.

Despite the seemingly unsatisfactory outcome, the conference had been used for a full discussion of both the imperial and the colonial viewpoints on the New Hebrides question; but the Imperial Government still reserved its discretion in dealing with foreign Powers. The conference marked a significant stage in the growing practice of consultation with the colonies when Great Britain's relations with foreign Powers affected colonial interests. As yet there was no question of the participation of the colonies in framing or in implementing an imperial foreign policy; and, indeed, the colonies did not demand it. Perhaps the most important aspect of the New Hebrides discussion at the Colonial Conference in 1887 was the opportunity given to the colonial representatives to put their views directly to Salisbury as Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

Before British sovereignty could be proclaimed in the southeastern part of New Guinea, which had been a British protectorate

I Report of the N.S.W. representatives, N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in letters 87/12551; and also the accounts in the Standard, 6 May, 1887, and the British Australasian Supplement, 1887.
since 1884, the amount of imperial and colonial contributions to the cost of administering the territory had to be determined. Once more the conference did not exceed its powers of reaching a decision on details which had already been accepted in principle by the Colonial Governments. On behalf of the Governments of New south Wales, Victoria and Queensland, Griffith submitted to the Colonial Office proposals which they themselves had accepted in April, 1886. One difficulty remained. The colonies wanted the Imperial Government to undertake an increased financial liability. During the course of the conference, the Imperial Government agreed to increase the amount it was prepared to contribute. Its doubts were also overcome whether the colonial grant of £15,000 would be sufficient to cover the expenses of the administration. Under an agreement lasting ten years, the three colonies were to pay £5000 each per annum with a proportionate reduction should South Australia decide to contribute after all; but this she refused to do. The Administrator of New Guinea would be responsible to the Government of Queensland. The Imperial Government's interests were to be exercised through the Governor of Queensland, who, in New Guinea affairs, was placed in a unique dual relationship to the Government of Queensland and to the Imperial Government.

1 Griffith's draft proposals. Copy forwarded to Jennings, II June, 1886; and minute by Jennings on the meeting of the Premiers, April, 1886. N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters in Box 156 (Archives of N.S.W.).
3 Ibid. pp.367-8 (Downer).
Although three of the Australian Colonies had agreed to undertake a share in the cost of administering New Guinea, and the Government of Queensland would in practice administer the territory on behalf of the participating colonies, it did not follow that the Australian Colonial governments were keen to be responsible for administering other territories in the South Pacific. There is little reason to suppose that had Great Britain acquired the New Hebrides, the Australian Colonies would have been eager to undertake financial and administrative responsibility for those islands. Their lukewarm willingness to undertake such responsibilities was likely to evaporate almost completely should it be found that the benefits of colonial acquisitions were much less than were expected. By the late 1890s, New Guinea and the Solomon Islands were cases in point; and the New Hebrides would have been another had they been acquired by Great Britain in the late 1880s.

### III

With two exceptions, the matters in which some or all of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand had shown interest at the conference had as a common denominator an awareness that the colonies as well as Great Britain had responsibilities in upholding and possibly strengthening imperial unity. One exception was I see the attitudes of the three participating colonies in 1898 when the New Guinea agreement was due for renewal; and the lack of response to Chamberlain's suggestion in 1897 and later that the Australian Colonies might take over responsibility for the British Solomon Islands.
New Zealand's interest in commercial treaties between a British self-governing colony and a foreign Power. Some of the other representatives had seen this as a threat to imperial unity. The other exception had the strengthening of colonial autonomy as its major object. This was New Zealand's request for a revision of the Governor's Instructions on the lines of the changes which had been made in 1878 in the Instructions to the Governor-General of Canada. The Instructions would then be more in accord with current practice in the Australian Colonies and New Zealand or with what the Colonial Governments wanted to put into practice.

For too long there has been an unqualified acceptance of Richard Jebb's description of the Colonial Conference of 1887 "as a meeting between the Colonies (collectively, sectionally, or individually) on the one hand and the British Government on the other; the former being in the position of vassals invited to confer with their overlord, who would graciously listen to their representations..."

An examination of Holland's chairmanship of the conference, the attitudes of the representatives and of the discussions themselves will not support this contention. To find support for Jebb's

I Because of this different purpose, the proposed changes in the Governor's Instructions will be discussed in Chapter 8.

2 R.Jebb, The Imperial Conference (London,1911), vol.I,pp.II-I2. Jebb was also incorrect in his assertion (p.I2) that sectional questions would have been discussed outside a Colonial Conference at any of the later meetings. At one session in 1897 and 1902 only the Australian and New Zealand representatives were present.
remarks, it is necessary to take the assertions made by Deakin, Service and Berry as the only true indication of the position of the colonies at the conference. These assertions are disproved not only by the course of the discussions at the conference, but also by the relations which existed between the Imperial Government and the Governments of the Australian Colonies from 1885 onwards. What appeared at the time to be assertions of an independent colonial viewpoint on the part of Deakin, Service and Berry, and also of Robert Murray Smith during his term as Agent-General, were on several occasions little more than expressions of pique or brashness. It is doubtful whether this attitude should continue to be taken unquestioningly as the expression of a growing Australian nationalism, and that the other delegates were, therefore, anti-Australian.

In assessing the role and attitudes expressed by the Australian representatives in 1887, one basic factor has to be borne in mind. This was the lack of a united Australian policy for the delegates to follow. In some cases the various Colonial Governments did not even provide a clear definition of their individual policies. The differences between the colonies were not sudden ones which appeared during the conference. On several questions

I.e.g. the letters from R. Murray Smith to the Colonial Office, 22 and 30 Jan., 10 Feb., and 12 Nov., 1885. C.0.309/I29. In these Smith was repeating Service's arguments. In comparison with Bramerton, it was not until the last mentioned communication that Herbert was provoked to comment "An insolent letter". Deakin's sweeping condemnation of the Colonial Office at the opening session of the conference was in a similar vein. Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1887. C.509I,p.24.
they arose from the particular circumstances of a colony. This was especially true of the attitude adopted by South Australia with regard to telegraphic communication, by New South Wales with regard to the Pacific islands and by New Zealand with regard to her special place in the auxiliary naval scheme.

Another limiting factor was the representatives’ uncertainty of support from the Governments which had appointed them as well as from the Parliaments. The uncertainty of parliamentary support is a vital factor in any consideration of the position of the New South Wales representatives. In South Australia, the Downer Government was defeated on a domestic issue during the Premier’s absence in England. Any implementation of the naval agreement, the New Guinea agreement (should South Australia decide to participate) and of decisions with regard to the mail contracts would have to be carried out by a succeeding Government. In Queensland, the Griffith Government lost a certain amount of popular support during the latter part of 1887, and in particular it aroused the opposition of Sir Thomas McIlwraith and B.D. Morehead on "nationalist" and other less reputable grounds.

In terms of political standing, as well as in ability, the Victorian delegation probably had an advantage. The implementation of any policy adopted by the conference was subject to parliamen-

I Sir A. Musgrave, the Governor, informed Holland in August, 1887, that the Griffith government might have to resign.

tary sanction; but within the limits of this restriction they appear to have enjoyed a wide latitude. During the course of the conference they made little reference to the Premier, Duncan Gillies. As Premiers, Sir Samuel Griffith and Sir John Downer probably had greater freedom of action than Deakin, who, as Chief Secretary, was the leader of one political group in the Victorian coalition Government. By comparison, the New South Wales, Tasmanian and New Zealand delegates appeared at a disadvantage in not being ministers. However, in viewing the conference as a whole, and in seeking to determine the most valuable and constructive attitudes in so far as the future development of relations between the Imperial Government and the Governments of the Australian colonies and New Zealand was concerned, a representative's status in his own Government or in the political life of his colony need have little effect on the positive contribution he might make to the success of the conference. Holland certainly made no such distinction between the delegates. The contribution of the Australian and New Zealand representatives can, therefore, be considered solely on the merits of the individual.

In the long run, the most constructive contributions to imperial relations were not made by the Victorian representatives, despite the notice and applause which they gained in England and in the colonies at the time. By comparison, Griffith and Dillon

I Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1887. C.5091,p.32.
tary sanction; but within the limits of this restriction they appear to have enjoyed a wide latitude. During the course of the conference they made little reference to the Premier, Duncan Gillies. As Premiers, Sir Samuel Griffith and Sir John Downer probably had greater freedom of action than Deakin, who, as Chief Secretary, was the leader of one political group in the Victorian coalition Government. By comparison, the New South Wales, Tasmanian and New Zealand delegates appeared at a disadvantage in not being ministers. However, in viewing the conference as a whole, and in seeking to determine the most valuable and constructive attitudes in so far as the future development of relations between the Imperial Government and the Governments of the Australian colonies and New Zealand was concerned, a representative's status in his own Government or in the political life of his colony need have little effect on the positive contribution he might make to the success of the conference. Holland certainly made no such distinction between the delegates. The contribution of the Australian and New Zealand representatives can, therefore, be considered solely on the merits of the individual.

In the long run, the most constructive contributions to imperial relations were not made by the Victorian representatives, despite the notice and applause which they gained in England and in the colonies at the time. By comparison, Griffith and Dillon

I Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1887. C.5091, p.52.
Bell, and also Jennings with regard to the naval agreement, showed
a more statesmanlike awareness of what advantages could be achieved
by a colony through patient negotiation and discussion. In addition,
they could appreciate what was immediately possible or impossible.
The major difference between Griffith and Bell, on the one hand,
and Deakin, Service and Berry, on the other, lies in the rejection
or acceptance of the idea that the colonies must assert their
maturity by demanding rights and concessions from the mother coun-
try on the ground that Great Britain was reluctant to grant them
to the colonies. This difference stands out clearly if Deakin's
and Griffith's remarks on the opening day of the conference are
compared. Deakin's subsequent criticism of Griffith's role at the
conference stemmed from this difference. Yet Griffith had taken a
stand on New Guinea, the New Hebrides and French transportation
to the Pacific that was just as "nationalistic" as the attitude
of the Victorians.

It is impossible to overlook some of the pettiness in the
statements and criticisms made by the Victorians in England. Several

An examination of Jennings' role at the conference shows little
justification for the Brisbane Courier's criticism that he was a
nonentity at the conference. 6 May, 1887.
2 Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1887. C.5091, pp. 24-5.
4 e.g. There are obvious contradictions in Deakin's reference to
the colonial contributions to the auxiliary naval squadron as a
free-will offering, his haggling over the basis of contribution,
his assertion that the British interests to be defended were
much greater than colonial interests, and his insistence on point-
ing out how much Victoria had already spent on defence. Procs.
Then there is Service's charge that Great Britain's policy to-
wards the colonies was determined by party politics rather than
from the standpoint of what was important for the colonies.
of Deakin's remarks during the conference contrast unfavourably with the breadth of view he could show in the colonial environment. Although in the colony he would not compromise on his determination that imperial policy in the South Pacific should be based on Australian recommendations, he could recognise the value of co-operation between the Imperial and the Colonial governments. This broader view reasserted itself in London when Deakin and the other Victorian representatives decided to withdraw their objections to a colonial contribution towards depreciation on the capital cost of the ships in the auxiliary squadron. The difference between Deakin's general attitude in England and in the colonies may perhaps partly be found in the need to show that an Australian "nationalist" could resist the temptation of Imperial "bribes".

The Australian Colonies had little reason to be dissatisfied with what they had achieved at the conference. They had obtained improved offers from Great Britain with regard to the auxiliary naval squadron and the administration of New Guinea. They had hopes of greater imperial assistance to strengthen the defences of King George's Sound and Thursday Island. The views of the colonies had been heard on a number of topics with wide ramifications, such as postal and telegraphic communications, sugar bounties and preferen-

I e.g. in the Victorian Legislative Assembly on 6 July, 1887, when he said: "If we cannot agree to act together, and in conjunction with the Imperial Government for our mutual benefit, it is idle to talk about Imperial federation.... The late conference was the first test of the sincerity of the cry for union within the Empire". Vict. Parl. Deb., vol. 54, p. 284.
tial trade. On all new questions the colonies had not been committed, and the colonial Parliaments had the final power of decision to accept or reject the agreements for the auxiliary naval squadron and the administration of New Guinea.

These were specific matters. Had the conference itself provided a solution to the problem of Empire as it concerned the self-governing colonies? There was little difference of opinion in Great Britain and in the colonies that the conference had been extremely useful and other conferences were bound to follow. Perhaps the most encouraging feature of conservative and liberal comment in Great Britain was the indication that the hopes Griffith had expressed at the opening session of the conference, that continuity in colonial policy would be accepted by both parties, were in process of being realised. The major divergence of opinion in Great Britain was whether or not the conference would lead to some form of imperial federation. High hopes were raised among imperial federationists that the colonies would soon undertake to share proportionately in the burden of imperial defence and agree to the setting up of an Imperial Council or a Parliament in which they would be represented. To these enthusiasts for imperial unity, the colonial conference was not an alternative to federation but a stage in the achievement of the former.

I e.g. the S.M.H.'s view that other conferences would follow "because enough has been done to justify the meeting, and... enough has been left open to justify a second whenever the various questions are ripe for settlement". Editorial, 9 May, 1887. 2 e.g. Imperial Federation, 1 April, 1887, and 1 June, 1887; Morning Post, 5 April, 1887; Standard, 5 April, 1887; and F.P. Labilliére, Federal Britain (London, 1894), p. 33.
In such an expectant atmosphere, statements by Salisbury, Holland, Rosebery, Carnarvon and Stanhope, pointing out the strictly limited objectives of the conference, were doubly necessary. Salisbury and Holland came very close to understanding colonial attitudes when they expressed their belief that the Colonial Conference might be the means of developing a form of co-operation which would not be channelled into a pre-determined pattern, but be allowed to develop freely so as to meet existing situations and needs as they arose. Salisbury's caution in embarking on schemes of imperial federation was well justified. He realised that a true imperial federation would place restrictions on Great Britain's freedom of action. Two years after the conference he pointed out to Sir Henry Parkes how difficult it would be to persuade English statesmen that in an imperial federation they would "have to ask the consent of others before reaching a decision whether or not to follow a line of policy.

Rosebery perhaps more than any other English statesman saw the Conference as a possible means of extending co-operation between the mother country and the colonies on common objects. The need for a formal federation would then be precluded. For this reason, he favoured a colonial conference at two or three year intervals for the purpose of producing recommendations and not legislation. Rosebery, and to a lesser extent Carnarvon, had some

1 Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1887. C.5091, pp.5,8.
awareness of the connection between a sentiment of Empire, colonial loyalty, colonial nationalism and an ill-defined sense of the increasing degree of equality between the mother country and the colonies.

By 1887 no demand had been made by the Australian Colonies for equality of status with Great Britain, but only for the right to be consulted. On the other hand, the rapid development of the colonies seemed to indicate that eventually there must be a changed relationship between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. Some Australian colonists were therefore led to suggest that separation might be only a prelude to a close alliance with Great Britain on terms of equality. In any case, co-operation between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies would have to be based on a much looser form of unity than a formal federation.

In the Australian Colonies there was less unanimity of viewpoint than in Great Britain with regard to the future development of the Colonial Conference. Some of this must be attributed to the aspirations which imperial federationists in England expressed concerning the future development of closer imperial ties. On the other hand, certain of the critical points of view, particularly

I e.g. Carnarvon at Melbourne, Dec., 1887; reported in S.M.H., 10 Dec., 1887. Rosebery at Third Annual Meeting of the I.F.L. Imperial Federation, I Apr., 1887, Supplement, p. 1.

2 One of the clearest statements on this point was made by Deakin during his account of the conference to the Victorian Legislative Assembly. Vict. Parl. Deb., vol. 54, p. 284.

3 e.g. the slogan of the National Party in Queensland in 1888, and later of the Bulletin - "Alliance not Dependence".
in New South Wales and Queensland, must be seen in relation to the
growing radical and republican groups, and to factional opposition
to Griffith in Queensland although this was supposedly based on
nationalistic grounds. Apart from this opposition, the view most
often expressed in the colonial Parliaments and in the press was
that, within its limits, the conference had proved useful.

Sir Samuel Griffith saw the Colonial Conference as an addition
to the machinery of Empire. In London he described it as
having "the rudimentary elements of a Parliament". After his
return to Queensland, he regarded it as a means whereby Great
Britain and the colonies, "meeting all on an equality", could
reach an understanding on matters of common concern. This assessment stressed the role of the conference in providing an opportunity for presenting colonial views and thereby reconciling the divergent interests of Great Britain and the colonies. At the same time, the conference did not detract in any way from colonial autonomy. The Colonial Conference could also contribute towards maintaining and strengthening imperial unity.

These were aspects of the first and later Colonial Conferences to which Deakin paid tribute several years after his visit

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I e.g. Q'ld. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 17 Nov., 1887, vol. 53, pp. 1625-7, 1635 (Morehead); p. 1628 (Macrossan); p. 1633 (A. Norton)
3 Proc. of Colonial Conference, 1887, c. 5091, p. 56.
4 In the Queensland Legis. Assembly, 19 July, 1887, Q'ld. Parl. Deb., vol. 52, p. 4.
to London in 1887: "They occasioned no trenching upon the local
government of the States. Nothing has been done by them, or
through their recommendations, without the consent of the local
Parliaments. They have proved extremely useful in arriving at
temporary agreements, and paving the way for reciprocal legisla-
tion..."

How far were all or any of these assessments justified
with regard to the 1887 Colonial Conference? This vital question
can best be considered in relation to certain issues which the
Colonial Governments and Parliaments had to face between 1887
and 1895. Some of these issues had their basis in the discussions
of the 1887 Colonial Conference, and others raised anew the prob-
lem of safeguarding colonial interests in imperial policy.

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I First Presidential Address to the I.F.L. (Victoria), 14 June, 1905.
PART II
SOME PROBLEMS INVOLVING IMPERIAL AND COLONIAL INTERESTS, 1887-1895

CHAPTER 7
AFTER THE CONFERENCE: THE AUXILIARY SQUADRON AND THE NEW HEBRIDES CONVENTION

After the Colonial conference of 1887 relations between the Australian Colonies and Great Britain passed through a comparatively quiet period. The years between 1887 and 1895 seem to mark a pause before the Chamberlain era at the Colonial office and the important imperial issues which then arose to confront both Great Britain and the Australian Colonies. No spectacular issues arose between 1887 and 1895; no great crisis tested imperial unity. There was nothing comparable with the interest, the excitement and the controversies aroused between 1883 and 1887 by Queensland's attempted annexation of New Guinea and its repudiation by the Imperial Government, the despatch of the Sudan contingent, the French occupation of the New Hebrides and the concentration on improving the defence of the Australian Colonies.

Relations between the Australian Colonies and Great Britain continued to build on the foundations laid at the Colonial Conference in 1887. Agreements then reached had to be sanctioned by the colonial Parliaments. The Australian auxiliary naval force agreement was the most important and the most controversial of these. While the colonial delegates were in England, no final settlement had been reached on several difficult issues discussed by the
conference. French troops were still in the New Hebrides and the future control of the islands remained a matter for negotiation by the British and French Governments. Because of the differences of opinion among the Australian and New Zealand representatives at the conference, the Colonial Office hesitated to meet the Victorian and New Zealand requests for changes in the Instructions to the Governors.

Other issues arose from old problems which took on a new form or from entirely new matters as a result of the colonies' political growth and economic development. Among the former were new phases of the problem of Chinese immigration into the Australian Colonies; the effects of increasing colonial autonomy on the position of the Governor as an imperial officer and on the method of his appointment; and the statutory disabilities which prevented the Australian Colonies from imposing differential tariffs except among themselves and New Zealand. Among the latter were the problems arising from adherence to the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894. For the first time an imperial commercial treaty had been made with a country comparatively near to Australia; and, moreover, with one whose economic and industrial progress might affect Australian industries and whose population might present a similar problem through immigration into the Australian Colonies as the Chinese previously had done.

The Colonial Conference of 1887 had brought the widely scattered self-governing colonies into closer relations with Great Britain. It had also for the first time brought them into
direct contact with each other. Between 1887 and 1895, the Canadia
gian Government sought the co-operation of the Australian Colonies
and New Zealand in providing new steamship and telegraphic commu-
nication across the Pacific. These in turn would provide the means
for opening up new opportunities in inter-imperial trade. The
Australian Colonies’ inability to enter into differential tariff
agreements outside their own group and New Zealand thus became
relevant to the wider question of expanding inter-imperial trade.

For the most part, the decisions taken on all these matters
had little or no relevance to each other; but, viewed in the con-
text of the period from 1885 to 1902, they had great significance
in the whole pattern of relations between Great Britain and the
Australian Colonies. Public agitation was only aroused to any
appreciable extent in the Australian Colonies by the apparent
threats of large scale Chinese and Japanese immigration and to a
lesser extent by fears of unfair competition from imports of cheap
manufactured goods from Japan. The solutions to all the problems
that arose between 1887 and 1895 were worked out between the
Imperial and the Colonial Governments. Moderation and compromise
generally predominated over more rash counsels. Sometimes deci-
sions were not consciously taken. For this reason, public opinion,
as expressed in the colonial Parliaments, the press and through
political and other organisations, showed little awareness of the
real significance of these developments.

Important changes took place between 1887 and 1895 in atti-
tudes towards the imperial connection and in the political and economic progress of the Australian Colonies. During the first two or three of those years, there was more likelihood than at any other time that separation might become an open question. Those who wanted to see an independent Australia were more numerous than previously and more markedly hostile to the existing ties with Great Britain. Others who thought about the future of the imperial connection were in two minds. Much would depend on whether imperial control appeared irksome or imperial interference threatened colonial autonomy. If the colonies were left alone by the Imperial Government to manage their own affairs, and their interests were safeguarded in British relations with foreign Powers, the prospect appeared more likely that the existing loose imperial tie could continue. As the 1890s progressed, and provided no stronger and more formal imperial ties were instituted, there was an ever lessening danger of imperial interference with colonial autonomy. Should the bonds of Empire be increased and strengthened, more occasions for interference and misunderstanding would be likely to arise.

From 1890 onwards the alternatives of separation or imperial

I As G.H. Reid explained this attitude to an English audience: "The Australian is a very difficult person to have any relations with except on the condition that he is left alone to do just as he likes..." If that condition is fulfilled, he "likes" England.

Interview published in the Daily News, 16 June, 1897.
federation lost much of their sharpness. A new movement for the federation of the Australian Colonies began. Republicanism was rejected by the Australian Natives' Association as a basis for a federated Australia, and it found no place in the political platforms of the Labour Parties. At the same time it became obvious that neither the Salisbury Government nor its Liberal successor was likely to attempt to implement any of the schemes advocated by the Imperial Federation League or by other bodies. In 1892-1893 the Home Rule question again became a vital issue in Great Britain. The Imperial Federation League began to decline in Great Britain almost at the same time as the Australian federation movement began to win support in the colonies. Its demise came during the financial and economic crisis in the Australian Colonies.

Both the Australian federation movement and the great depression in the colonies had an important effect in lessening not only the desire for independence among some colonists but also the feeling among others that eventual separation from Great Britain was inevitable. The end of the first phase of the imperial federation movement in Great Britain and the Imperial Government's policy towards the Australian Colonies were two other factors of major importance in lessening the possibility of separation. Separation was no longer a live issue in 1896 and the continuation of the existing connection between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies was assured. By that time also, the colonies were ready to examine ways of strengthening their ties with Great Britain.
Loyalty to the Crown remained one of the strongest bonds of unity; the ties of sentiment might be reinforced by material interests in preferential trade arrangements; and a federated Australia would be able to prompt the Imperial Government to safeguard her external interests with more force and authority than six separate colonies. These factors, in addition to the course of relations between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments from 1887 to 1895, contributed in no small measure to the satisfaction expressed in the Australian Colonies at Chamberlain's appointment to the Colonial Office.

II

How far were the decisions of the Colonial Conference binding on Great Britain and the colonies? This question was particularly pertinent when the Imperial and the Colonial Governments came to submit the auxiliary naval force agreement to the Parliaments. In Great Britain, the Colonial Office insisted that the Imperial Parliament was not bound; but was this anything more than a technical freedom if it was also believed that Great Britain, that is, Parliament, was almost obliged to approve the agreement? A failure to vote the funds necessary for the construction of the vessels of the auxiliary squadron would cause "great surprise and dissatisfaction" in the Australian Colonies and New Zealand.

When the delegates began to return to the Australian Colonies,

I Minute by Herbert, 12 August, 1887, on a question to be asked by Sir G. Campbell in the H. of Commons. C.O.201/606.
they had to face criticisms from those who feared that the colonial Parliaments had after all been committed to ratifying the decisions taken in London. Sir Samuel Griffith in Queensland and Alfred Deakin in Victoria took an early opportunity to set these fears at rest. "The members of the Conference, in their representative capacity," Griffith affirmed in the Queensland Legislative Assembly, "agreed individually or collectively to certain things which they considered to be wise to be recommended for acceptance by the Parliaments of the colonies...."

In the months before legislation was introduced to sanction the agreement creating an auxiliary naval squadron, the amount of opposition expressed in the legislatures of three of the eastern Australian Colonies showed unmistakenly that the colonial Parliaments in no way considered themselves bound by the Governments' provisional acceptance of the agreement. Indeed, in April, 1887, when Parkes had reluctantly agreed to bring the naval agreement before Parliament, Lord Carrington, the Governor of New South Wales, had warned Sir Henry Holland that those who favoured the scheme thought "that precipitate action on the part of this Government might endanger satisfactory results".

During August, 1887, the Admiralty became anxious to know

3 Carrington to Holland, 25 April, 1887. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of despatches to the Secretary of State, vol. 39.
when the colonial Parliaments would be likely to sanction the agreement. They had to do this before an amount to cover the capital cost of the ships could be included in the Estimates submitted to the Imperial Parliament. Later in the same month, Sir Samuel Griffith drew up a draft bill embodying the agreement and including alternative clauses to cover the basis of contribution, that is, on population alone or on population, trade and tonnage.

Neither the Admiralty's prompting nor Griffith's draft bill led to any speedy action in the colonies. By the end of August, the Victorian Government went so far as to declare its intention of introducing a bill sometime during the present session of Parliament. The South Australian Government, still faced with a financial depression, felt that the time was inopportune to bring the matter before Parliament and wanted to await a lead from New South Wales. Speedy and concerted action by the colonies, therefore, depended to a large extent on Sir Henry Parkes. His conduct was entirely in keeping with his attitude a few months earlier when he had been asked for his provisional acceptance of the agreement. He admitted that the importance of naval defence to the colonies made it impolitic to delay in implementing the agreement; but he

1 Holland to Carrington, telegram, 19 August, 1887; also N.S.W. No. 70, 22 August, 1887, enclosing a copy of Admiralty to C.O., 16 August, 1887. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
2 Musgrave to Holland, Q'd. No. 68, 29 August, 1887. Q'd. Govt. House Papers, Governor's despatches, vol. 7.
4 Playford to Parkes, telegram, 24 August, 1887. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 168. Thomas Playford had succeeded Sir John Downer as Premier.
5 Parkes to Playford, draft telegram, 26 August, 1887. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, Box 168.
was slow to take any positive steps to reach agreement with the other colonies on the basis of contribution, or even to state what basis of contribution New South Wales was prepared to adopt. Neither did he give any indication when the bill would be introduced into the New South Wales Parliament.

In September, 1887, Parkes visited Melbourne. He reached an understanding with the Victorian Premier, Duncan Gillies, that the draft bill "would, if possible, be brought simultaneously before the colonial Parliaments", and in the same form. This seeming progress was nullified by the failure to reach any decision on the basis of contribution. It seemed likely that the end of the parliamentary sessions would be reached before the bills had been introduced.

Griffith's action in preparing a draft bill also proved delusive with regard to its early introduction into the Queensland Parliament. Since August there had been increasing opposition to his Government, and there was a possibility that he would have to resign. Although his Government was still in office at the end of October, Griffith thought that the ratification of the naval agreement by all the colonial Parliaments was unlikely for some time to come because Parkes would still not commit himself on the basis of contribution. On 8 November Griffith told Parliament that he would not introduce any further contentious measures into a

2 A later exchange of correspondence confirmed this undertaking. Gillies to Parkes, 23 Oct., 1887; and draft of Parkes to Gillies, 3 Nov., 1887. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 87/I2050.
Parliament which was reaching the end of its life. This statement was to have a vital bearing on the fortunes of the Australasian Naval Force Bill in the Queensland Parliament.

In coming to this decision, Griffith had been forced by Queensland politics to leave the other colonies out of his reckoning. Towards the end of October, the Victorian Government withdrew its objections to population as the sole basis of contribution. By the beginning of November, the other colonies reached agreement on this important issue as well as on a date when the bill would be introduced almost simultaneously into the colonial Parliaments. At the same time, the other colonies rejected the South Australian Government's suggestion that they should request the Imperial Government to agree that the vessels should be manned by colonial crews, and that the colonies could exercise an option on acquiring the vessels themselves when the agreement expired.

Not only would the reopening of negotiations with the Imperial Government have postponed any immediate sanction of the agreement by the colonial Parliaments, but the cost of manning the vessels would have been doubled by the use of colonial crews.

As a result of the arrangements made by the other colonies

and pressure from the Governor, Griffith found himself more or less compelled as a matter of honour to introduce the bill into the Queensland Parliament. In the event, the Australasian Naval Force Bill was introduced into the Queensland Parliament on 16 November, and into the New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian Parliaments in 17 November.

So far the Australian Colonies had attempted to achieve uniformity in action and in the content of the bill embodying the naval agreement. In the end complete unanimity was not achieved. When the agreement was submitted to the colonial Parliaments, the differences in parliamentary and public opinion were too marked.

Among the four most important of the Australian Colonies, the agreement was sanctioned with the least difficulty and opposition in Victoria and South Australia. Although the Victorian Government had offered differing proposals both before and during the Colonial Conference, and agreement with the Imperial Government had been impossible before the Victorian delegates eventually compromised and accepted the Admiralty's final proposals, the Victorian Parliament adopted the bill unanimously. Some divergence of opinion was shown in the ideas that were expressed, but there were no differences on the principles of the bill.

In South Australia the bill passed without a division, but there was some opposition to the principles contained in it on the

I The Admiralty inquired again in November whether the colonial Parliaments were likely to sanction the agreement. Telegram from Holland, 16 Nov., 1887, and Musgrave's reply in Q'ld. No. 90, 15 Nov., 1887. Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Governor's despatches vol. 7.  
four main grounds. First, on account of the financial difficulties in South Australia, the colony would be undertaking too great a burden to contribute to the new auxiliary naval squadron and still maintain the "Protector" as a colonial vessel. Secondly, the danger of attack would be greater in times of war if the colonies participated in the naval defence scheme. Thirdly, because the squadron would be defending British and not colonial commerce, naval defence should be wholly the responsibility of Great Britain. Fourthly, the colony would have no power over the disposition of the auxiliary squadron.

At the Colonial Conference, Sir Samuel Griffith had without hesitation provisionally accepted the naval agreement on behalf of Queensland. Despite his very able defence before the Queensland Parliament of the principles of the agreement and its provisions, the bill was rejected more on account of other local questions than on the naval agreement itself. For this reason, expressions of opinion and the size of the vote against the naval bill are not

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2 Homberg, pp.1630,1640; Glynn, p.1644. Both these critics of the imperial connection looked to the eventual separation of the self-governing colonies from Great Britain.
3 Homberg, p.1640-I.
4 Custine, p.1628. C.C.Kingston, who introduced the bill into the House of Assembly, opposed any stipulation that the ships should be attached to particular Australian ports.
clearly indicative of attitudes in Queensland towards the naval question itself.

The opposition in the Queensland Parliament came from two main sources that were not entirely unconnected. The increasing numbers of radicals and republicans, with some who were neither, opposed the bill on several well-worn grounds: that naval defence and the protection of British commerce was Britain's responsibility; that the agreement was unlikely to reduce the cost of local defence; that the agreement would increase the dangers which arose solely from the colonies' connection with Great Britain, and, therefore, they should look forward to their eventual independence; that the naval bill was the thin end of the wedge of imperial federation and would lead to greater imperial control and the consequent loss of colonial autonomy; and, on rather newer ground, that if a fleet was necessary an Australian force should be created so that the colonies would have control over it. This genuine opposition to the principles contained in the naval agree-

1 In the division on the second reading in the Legislative Assembly there were 23 ayes and 19 noes in a House of 59 members. Murphy, a member who voted against the bill, said that he would have voted in favour had the vote been solely on the merits of the agreement because it was a good bargain. ibid., p.1838.
2 Morehead, p.1635; A. Norton, p.1638; Macrossan, pp.1713, 1747.
3 Kates, p.1702; Kellett, p.1711.
4 E. Palmer, pp.1634,1718,1755,1834; A. Norton, p.1638; Chubb, pp.1705,1750; Macrossan, p.1716; M.H. Black, pp.1720,1783.
5 This argument led to charges of disloyalty against the speakers, e.g. by Griffith, p.1746; Lumley Hill, p.1832; and H. Jordan, pp.1835-6.
The charges were refuted by Macrossan, pp.1747,1778,1841; Morehead, p.1732; Murphy, p.1838.
6 Morehead, pp.1764,1626,1698; E. Palmer, pp.1718,1774; Macrossan, p.1841.
7 Macrossan, pp.1741,1778,1841-2; Chubb, p.1705; M.H. Black, p.1720.
ment was used by the supporters of B.D. Morehead to strengthen their chances of defeating the Griffith Government. They used against Griffith the pledge he had given not to introduce any further controversial measures into a dying Parliament. Morehead's supporters in 1887 were a mixed group of radicals, planters, Irish and other interests who were united solely in their opposition to Griffith. It is, therefore, difficult to assess the sincerity of their argument that the naval agreement should be one of the questions put before the electors at the forthcoming election. As the opposition was strong enough to show that the committee stage might well be prolonged to such an extent that Parliament might be unable to deal with any other legislation during the remainder of the session, Griffith was forced to withdraw the bill.

After the defeat of the Griffith Government in June, 1887, a so-called National Government, led by Sir Thomas McIlwraith, took office. The National Party found its support among the diverse opponents of Griffith, the naval bill and closer ties with Great Britain. As long as there was some cohesive force to bind the various elements in the National Party together and McIlwraith remained in power, the naval bill would not be reintroduced into Parliament.

The Australian nationalist issue figured prominently in the

1 e.g. Morehead, ibid., pp. 1625-6.
2 e.g. Morehead, p. 1625; Macrossan, pp. 1633, 1716, 1744; A. Norton, p. 1699; E. Palmer, p. 1633; M. H. Black, p. 1720; Annear, p. 1719; W. Allen, p. 1839.
Several of Griffith's supporters used a similar argument, e.g. Dickson, pp. 1659, 1703; Brookes, p. 1633.
3 Ministerial statement in the Legislative Assembly, 29 Nov., 1887. ibid., p. 1827-9.
I

opposition to the naval bill in Queensland. Between 1888 and 1890, anti-British and separatist views gained increasing support in Queensland as they did in New South Wales. There were several reasons for this. The more important of them seem to have arisen from internal conditions, such as the economic and social development of the colonies and their increasing political maturity, rather than from external factors. Sir Charles Dilke, who visited the Australian Colonies in 1888-1889, attributed the anti-British and separatist feeling mainly to Irish influence. Although it is difficult to find clear evidence to refute Dilke's view, it is likely that he was mistaken or over-emphatic.

It was not until after one of those political turn-about, which were not unusual in the colonies, took place in Queensland and a Griffith -McIlwraith coalition Government was formed in August, 1890, that there was any likelihood that the naval bill would be reintroduced into Parliament. This was eventually done in June, 1891. Even then Griffith showed some concern lest Lord Knutsford's inadvertent disclosure of his intention to reintroduce the measure should cause opposition to organise itself.

3 e.g. during the debates on the naval bill only one speaker directly referred to the disloyalty of the Irish. Q'ld. Parl. Deb., vol. 55, p. I832.
On the other hand, one of Morehead's contentions against Griffith was that he was anti-Home Rule. ibid., p. I635. Some of the opponents of the naval agreement were Irish in origin, but they argued on Australian nationalist grounds rather than as Irishmen.
See also Knutsford to Norman, Q'ld. No. 55, 31 Oct., 1890, asking
Nearly four years had passed between the time when Griffith provisionally accepted the agreement and it was finally sanctioned by the Queensland Parliament.

In New South Wales, as in Queensland and South Australia, the opposition to the naval agreement came from a few who believed in Australia's ability to remain aloof from attack; who thought that the Australian Colonies should not pay to protect British commerce; or thought that the "naval tribute" was the thin end of the wedge of imperial federation; and disliked the prospect of Australia's being involved in European entanglements. As in Queensland, the arguments of the opponents of the bill led to charges of disloyalty being made against them. As in Queensland, the "nationalists" contended that the colonies should not contribute towards an auxiliary squadron; they should create an Australian navy under colonial control.

what were the Queensland Government's intentions concerning the naval agreement; and Griffith to Norman, 4 June, 1891, stating that the bill would be introduced during the present session of Parliament. Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Official Letters to the Governor, vol. 20 A.

5 Norman to Knutsford, telegram, 8 June, 1891, and Confidential, 12 June, 1891, stating that the Queensland Government was embarrassed by the premature disclosure of its intentions. Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Confidential Despatches to Sec. of State, vol.I.

Knutsford to Norman, telegram, 6 Sept., 1891, and Confidential, 6 Sept., 1891, explaining the cause of the disclosure. Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Confid. and Secret Despatches from the Sec. of State, vol.I.

The second reading of the Naval Bill was passed by the Legis. Assembly on 8 July, 1891, by 42 votes to 12. Q'ld. Parl. Deb., vol.64, p.72.


3 Melville, p. 1354; Garland, p.1538; O'Sullivan, p.1542.

4 Garland, p.1556; O'Sullivan, pp.1540,1544.
Parkes' ambivalent attitude was still in evidence when he introduced the second reading of the bill on 24 November. He maintained that full regard had been taken of the rights of the self-governing colonies because the agreement could be rejected or accepted; he claimed that his Government had not even provisionally committed the colony to accepting the agreement as the other colonial Governments had done; he attacked the radical and republican contention that the agreement would draw the colonies into imperial war; and he argued that only at a "quixotic sacrifice of treasure" could New South Wales provide a fleet of her own. On the other hand, Parkes showed a marked lack of enthusiasm for the bill, and he did not urge his supporters to vote for it. Indeed, after the first reading of the bill, one of Parkes' closest supporters, B.R. Wise, the Attorney-General, thought that the measure should not be pressed that session; and so he grudgingly voted in favour of the bill.

5 Haynes, ibid., p.1532; Garland, p.1536; O'Sullivan, p.1543.  
6 e.g. by Burdett Smith against Garland, p.1539.  

I ibid., p.1529. 
2 ibid., pp.1529-30. A similar radical view had been expressed by the Bulletin, e.g. 7 May, 1887.  
3 N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.29, p.1531.  
4 ibid., p.1534.  
5 B.R. Wise to Parkes, 21 Nov., 1887. Autograph Letters of Notable Australians, pp.284-5, A 69 (Mitchell Library). The first reading of the bill was on 17 Nov.
Only a small House voted on the second reading to give a majority of 41 to 9; but Parkes afterwards claimed that a fuller House would have meant a much larger majority for the bill. There seems little justification for Sir Charles Dilke's view that the vote against the bill would have been larger, and might have defeated the bill, had its rejection by the Queensland Parliament been known. As Parkes explained to the Governor, there had been two all-night sittings "though both sides professed to be in favour of the measure, the members of the late Government going quietly home and leaving us to the mercy of the fire-eaters". In the Colonial Office these "fire-eaters" were not incorrectly designated as "Young Australia".

Although the radical and republican opposition in New South Wales was strongest between 1887 and 1889, too much emphasis should not be placed on it. During those years in New South Wales, much more importance needs to be given to the far larger number who, with greater or less reluctance, felt that the ultimate separation of the self-governing colonies from Great Britain was inevitable.

1 N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.29, p.1652. There were 124 members of the Legislative Assembly. This lack of interest was paralleled in Great Britain on 14 May, 1888, when W.H. Smith introduced a resolution into the H. of Commons to ratify the Australasian Naval Agreement, and allow £850,000 from the Consolidated Fund for building, arming and completing the vessels. The H. of Commons adopted the resolution by 85 to 37 votes after an ineffectual attempt to count out the House. (Imperial Naval Defence Act, 1888) Hansard 3 Ser., vol.326, 14 May, 1888, pp.399-411.

2 Copy of telegram from Parkes to Gillies, Griffith and Playford, 28 Nov., 1887. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, Minutes for Executive Council, 1887.

3 C.W. Dilke, op. cit., p.646. The strength of the opposition in Queensland was obvious before the N.S.W. bill passed its second reading and reached the committee stage on 30 Nov. The withdrawal of the Queensland bill on 29 Nov. was known in Sydney the next day.

4 Parkes to Carrington, 16 Dec., 1887. Parkes Correspondence, vol.
If they were pressed to accept the naval agreement, there was a danger that a stronger movement might result among them in the direction of more immediate separation. This would be a natural reaction to any measure that could be regarded as a step towards a form of imperial federation. The increasing criticisms of the "naval tribute" after 1887, as well as other evidence, supports Sir Charles Dilke's observation that by 1889 the Naval Bill was almost as unpopular in New South Wales as the Sudan contingent.

During 1887 and afterwards, the Colonial Governments took care to stress the limited objectives which the colonies had accepted through the naval agreement, and the advantages which the colonies had secured. Among the latter was the development of facilities in Sydney for the repair and maintenance of Royal Navy vessels.

After the arrival of the auxiliary squadron in 1891, the Australian Colonies insisted on their right of being consulted before the ships were used for any purpose outside Australian waters; and, to obviate any criticism that the larger colonies were given preferential treatment, the Admiral on the Australian Station ensured that periodical visits were made by vessels of the

46, pp.72-9, A 916 (Mitchell Library).
5 Minute by Meade on Carrington to Holland, Confidential, 8 Dec., 1887, C.O.201/696.

I C.W.Dilke, op.cit., p.180. The debates in the colonial legislatures during 1888 on the restriction of Chinese immigration and on the appointment of Governors clearly show these trends.

auxiliary squadron to the smaller colonies. South Australia was particularly sensitive on this point. The limited role of these vessels in practice led to criticisms in England that they were not clearly a part of an overall imperial naval strategy; but this argument was not taken up by the Imperial Government until the Colonial Conference of 1897. By that time, Britain's naval power and its commitments were entering upon an even more dangerous period of competition with other European Powers.

The problems which were to arise during the time the agreement remained in force did not lessen the usefulness of the 1887 Colonial Conference in achieving combined action on naval defence among the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, as well as between the mother country and those colonies. On the other hand, the debates in the Australian colonial Parliaments in 1887 made it clear that the place of the Australian Colonies in overall imperial

1 e.g. Kintore to Ripon, S.Aust. No.100, 22 Oct., 1892, enclosing a memo from Sir John Downer; Ripon to Kintore, S.Aust. No.15, 10 April, 1893, enclosing copies of correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Admiralty; and Kintore to Ripon, S.Aust. No.33, 2 June, 1893. S.Aust. Govt. House Papers.

2 e.g. T. Brassey, "Imperial Federation for Naval Defence", Nineteenth Century, Jan., 1892, pp. 90-100; and pamphlets issued by the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee from 1894 onwards, especially Nos. 1, 2, 5 and 6.

3 To some extent there was a military counterpart in the desire among the Australian Colonies for more uniformity in their defences and defence forces, as well as in sharing with Great Britain the cost of improving the defences at King George's Sound and Thursday Island. This desire was aided on the imperial level by reports to and recommendations from the Colonial Defence Committee, and by the inspections and reports on colonial forces by high-ranking imperial officers. The last mentioned also had its roots in the Colonial Conference of 1887. The first of such inspections and reports was that by Major-General Sir Bevan Edwards in 1889.
defence, and colonial participation in strengthening their local
defence through the imperial navy, could never be regarded as
being distinct from the political issues involved in closer or
looser imperial ties.

III

The Australian and New Zealand rejection of the "Rosebery
scheme" had once caused the Colonial Office to think that the
recidiviste question would be much more difficult to settle by
itself than as part of an agreement with the French determining
the future status of the New Hebrides. During the middle of 1887,
certain developments seemed to give added weight to this view of
the difficulty of satisfying the Victorians by attempting to
settle each question on its own merits.

At the time of the Colonial Conference, the establishment
of an Anglo-French naval commission had been suggested as a possi-
ble solution to the problem of safeguarding the lives and property
of British and French settlers in the New Hebrides. The Agents-
General and others in Great Britain who were interested in the
future of those islands, expected that a settlement would soon be
reached. Yet by mid-July a settlement seemed as far off as ever
because the New Hebrides became further entangled in the overall

2 Bell to Stout, No. 787, 12 May, 1887, and No. 967, I July, 1887.
Archives of P.M. Dept., N.Z. 5/10 and II.
Also a statement by Sir James Ferguson, Parliamentary Under-
Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in H. of Commons, 29 July, 1887,
in reply to a question by Bryce. Hansard 3 Ser., vol. 318, pp. 529-
530.
pattern of relations between Britain and France.

The Victorian Government in particular had always feared that Australian interests in the South Pacific might be sacrificed so that Great Britain could gain an advantage elsewhere. Much might depend, however, on whether Britain or France was in a position to call the tune. In July, 1887 the French were in this position, rather than the British, when they determined to play for a simultaneous settlement of the neutralisation of the Suez Canal and the New Hebrides. Dillon Bell correctly gauged the importance of this new trend for the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. He felt that concurrent negotiations on such an important international question as Egypt and the Suez Canal could not but adversely affect the New Hebrides question.

In comparison with the great activity of the Agents-General at the Colonial Office, and even at the Foreign Office on occasions, between 1884 and the meeting of the Colonial Conference, the Colonial Governments appear to have made no further concerted representations to the Imperial Government when this new phase opened in the negotiations with France to secure the evacuation of French forces from the New Hebrides. Almost the only move was a representation from the Victorian Government to the Colonial Office, in response to a complaint from the Presbyterian Church, that the French New Hebrides Company was trespassing on mission

I Bell to Stout, No.1065, 17 July, 1887. Archives of P.M. Dept., N.Z. 5/II.
Ilands. At the same time, Sir Henry Loch, the Governor of Victoria, took what appeared to be independent action on his part. On account of the acute feeling in Victoria, he suggested that the allegations of the missionaries and others should be investigated on the spot, and offered to go to the New Hebrides himself. The Colonial Office liked the idea of a first-hand investigation, but felt that the French Government might object to Loch because of his connection with Victoria. The Admiral on the Australian Station was then ordered to carry out an investigation in the New Hebrides. The Colonial Office and the Admiralty might well have been spurred on to this action by the need to show the Colonial Governments that something was being done.

The Victorian Government had already suggested that a British force should be sent to the New Hebrides if the French did not withdraw by a certain date, and had hinted that the colonies might contribute towards the cost of this force. The implications of this suggestion were not ignored by the Colonial Office. Unfortunately the Colonial Office could do no more than inform Salisbury, and impress on him the urgency of reaching a settlement with the French.

3 C.O. to F.O., 30 August, 1887, draft; and minute by Herbert on Loch to Holland, telegram, 27 August, 1887; and minutes on Loch to Holland, telegram, 10 and 14 Sept., 1887. C.O.309/I31.
5 Draft letter C.O. to F.O., 30 August, 1887, based on minutes by Herbert and Holland on Berry to C.O., 26 August, 1887. C.O.309/I31.
Salisbury's sometimes leisurely methods of negotiation were ill-suited to colonial impatience for an immediate settlement; and the Colonial Office had the unenviable task of calming the colonies without having much satisfactory information to give them, or, indeed, having anything to show that the Foreign Office intended to press the French to come to an agreement. From the Foreign Office's temporising replies to questions in Parliament, Herbert thought that Salisbury could "be but imperfectly aware, that the continued failure of Her Majesty's Government to obtain any satisfaction from France in regard to the New Hebrides is causing increased ill-feeling in Australia and among those in this country connected with colonial interests".

Rosebery was among those in Great Britain who attempted to keep the New Hebrides in the public view; but any full and open discussion of the subject was stifled by the Government's claim that this might prejudice the success of the negotiations. Despite Salisbury's apparent inactivity, the negotiations were about to reach a turning point towards the end of September when Salisbury "intended to press the French Government strongly, if, after a short time which has now about expired, progress was not made".

I Minute by Herbert on Berry to C.O., 26 August,1887. C.O.309/131.
2 e.g. in the H. of Lords, 12 August,1887. Hansard 3 Ser. vol.319, pp.218-9. Also speech at Castle Douglas, 20 Oct.,1887, reported in The Times, 21 Oct.,1887.
3 Rosebery's question on 12 August, 1887, was withdrawn when Salisbury said that it would cause inconvenience to the negotiations then in hand.
4 Minute by Herbert on Loch to Holland, telegram, 14 Sept.,1887. Loch inquired if he could allay anxiety in Victoria by announcing that "negotiations are progressing favourably". C.O.309/131.
Although the Imperial Government had refused to admit that there was any connection between the neutralisation of the Suez Canal and the New Hebrides, no objection had been raised to discussions on the two different questions at the same time. In the event, the settlement of both questions was announced simultaneously. The French agreed to withdraw their forces from the New Hebrides within four months of the formal signing of the Convention, and regulations were to be drawn up for the exercise of the joint naval commission in the interests of safeguarding the lives and property of French and British settlers.

The English press was in the main satisfied with both the Suez and the New Hebrides agreements; but was doubtful whether Britain had gained the advantage. Dillon Bell had no doubts that in the New Hebrides Convention France gained all the advantages she had sought during the negotiations. Through Britain's relinquishment of any claims under an agreement of 1847, these advantages included the acquisition of Raiatea and other islands to the west of Tahiti.

1 The drafts of the Convention were signed on 24 Oct., 1887. A copy was forwarded to the Governors of the Australian Colonies in a circular despatch dated 26 Oct., 1887. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
2 The Convention was formally signed on 16 Nov., 1887. A copy was forwarded to the Governors of the Australian Colonies in a circular despatch dated 3 Dec., 1887. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. The regulations for the joint naval commission were agreed to on 22 Jan., 1888. A copy was enclosed in a circular despatch dated 9 Feb., 1888. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. The French evacuation of the New Hebrides was completed on 15 March, 1888. Circular despatch from Knutsford, dated 31 March, 1888. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
4 Bell to Stout, No. 1640, 2 Nov., 1887. Archives of P.M. Dept., N.Z. 5/II. As there was now no likelihood of a British annexation of
The colonial representatives at the conference, especially those of Victoria, had acquiesced reluctantly in the possibility of a joint naval commission; and the immediate response in the Australian Colonies also seemed to be one of reluctant acceptance of a not very satisfactory arrangement. The difficulties in framing the regulations for such a commission were only too clearly realised.

The only real advantage to be seen in the agreement was that, after an occupation lasting eighteen months, the French had at length agreed to a date by which the islands would be evacuated. It was noted that British trade and missions were not specifically mentioned in the Convention, and there was no reference to the transportation of French criminals to the Pacific.

The very limited advantages of the settlement, as far as the Australian Colonies were concerned, were only too evident a few weeks later when there was a report that, under new regulations promulgated by the French President, the French were preparing to renew transportation by sending three hundred convicts to New Caledonia. While the negotiations for a joint naval commission

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1 The Times, 7 Dec., 1887, and repeated in the Australian press.
2 The recidivistic law of 1884 remained in force, though no recidivists had been sent to New Caledonia since transportation had been halted temporarily by the French Government in 1886 while the British Government was awaiting the replies of the Australian Colonies to the French proposals of Feb., 1886. Dillon Bell was not surprised at the resumption of transportation; but he did not think that New Zealand was particularly concerned. Bell to Stout, No. 1902, 16 Dec., 1887. Archives of P.M. Dept., N.Z. 5/II.

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I e.g. S.M.H., editorial 10 Dec.,1887.

2 The Times, 7 Dec.,1887, and repeated in the Australian press. The recidiviste law of 1884 remained in force, though no recidi-vistes had been sent to New Caledonia since transportation had been halted temporarily by the French Government in 1886 while the British Government was awaiting the replies of the Australian Colonies to the French proposals of Feb.,1886. Dillon Bell was not surprised at the resumption of transportation; but he did not think that New Zealand was particularly concerned. Bell to Stout, No.1902, 16 Dec.,1887. Archives of P.M.Dept., N.Z. 5/II.
were still in progress, there had been a report that the French New Hebrides Company, through John Higginson, was buying up more land in the New Hebrides. In all likelihood, Higginson stood to gain most from French annexation of the New Hebrides and the possible use of convict labour; but, even without French control of the New Hebrides, the renewal of transportation to New Caledonia would probably supply him with a labour force in the form of libérés. The resumption of transportation also reopened the problem of the libérés in an acute form for the Australian Colonies because of their proximity to New Caledonia. For both these reasons, the Colonial Office was disinclined to oppose any legislative measures taken by the Australian Colonies.

When the news of the French intention to resume transportation reached the Australian Colonies, Duncan Gillies, the Premier of Victoria, immediately urged the Imperial Government to make strong remonstrances to the French. Sir Graham Berry, the Victorian Agent-General, was also active in London in pressing Gillies.


Higginson was also reported as intending to use 300 libérés on land he had acquired on the island of Santo in the New Hebrides.

2 Earlier in 1887, the Australian Colonies had refused to agree to any departure from a general French rule that libérés were not to go to the Australian Colonies or to land at Sydney as a means of taking ship for America. Circular despatch from Holland, II July, 1887. Records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria. Also Loch to Holland, Vict. No. I55, 6 Oct., 1887. C.O. 309/131.


arguments. In the course of these, Gillies used some curious reasoning. He seemed to assume that because the French had gained most from the agreement with Great Britain, they should be grateful and show friendliness towards the British Empire by discontinuing transportation. This argument did not quite seem to fall into line with the previous Victorian contention that the New Hebrides and transportation were separate questions, and each must be dealt with on its own merits.

When these representations were received in the Colonial Office, Herbert had good reason to think that the position taken up by the Victorian Government was "quite unsound". The settlement accepted by the French was contrary to that suggested by them early in 1866 to deal with the New Hebrides and transportation together. Further, the French could find a Jesuitical defence of their conduct in sending more "convicts" to New Caledonia, because technically there was no breach of their temporary undertaking not to send any more "recidivistes". However, such arguments did not

The fact that the Governor was not informed about the instruction to Berry led to another complaint from Sir Henry Loch that the Agents-General were usurping the position of the Governor as the channel of communication, and that Berry's reply to Gillies was published in a different form from that shown to the Governor.
Loch to Holland, Secret, 10 Feb., 1888. C.O.309/I32.

See Gillies' statement: "It was hoped that the recent settlement of the New Hebrides question, accompanied as it was by the abrogation in favour of the French of the Convention of 1847 respecting the Leeward Islands of Tahiti, would have established such a sentiment towards the British Empire, as would have prevented any such action as that now complained of, which it must be well known, will be regarded by the Australasian Colonies with feelings of the utmost bitterness..." Memo. by Gillies, 9 Dec., 1887, enclosed in Loch to Holland, Vict.No.190, 8 Dec., 1887. C.O.309/I31.
prevent the Colonial Office from asking that strong representations
should be made in Paris, although there was no certainty that
Salisbury would be willing to do so. Salisbury phrased the British
protest in terms that satisfied all the Australian colonies could
have desired. The grave evils inflicted on the colonies by the
transportation of criminals to the Pacific and the certainty of
colonial legislation were emphasised. Evidently the Foreign Office
felt obliged to point out in plain terms a self-evident cause and
effect to the French Government. Whether the French would accede
to colonial wishes was another matter. In view of the colonial
rejection of the French offer in 1886, both the Colonial Office
and the Foreign Office had little hope that the French would
agree to cease transportation.

Despite the action taken by Lord Lytton in Paris, the Victor-
ian Government must have felt little satisfaction when Holland
drew its attention to the previous Victorian contention that the
New Hebrides and transportation were separate questions. When the
colonies themselves had rejected a French proposal to deal with
both questions, Holland could not see that the New Hebrides agree-
ment provided any grounds for protesting against a resumption
of transportation. This did not prevent the Victorian Government
from urging a few months later that further protests should be

1 Draft of C.O. to F.O., 12 Dec., 1887; and minute by Pullen on
Loch to Holland, telegram, 16 Dec., 1887. C.0.309/151.
2 Salisbury to Lytton, Confid. No. 6, 5 Jan., 1888. Printed copy
enclosed in Circular Confidential despatch from Knutsford,
3 March, 1888. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
3 Holland to Loch, 27 Dec., 1887. Copy enclosed in Circular Confi-
dential despatch from Knutsford, 3 March, 1888. N.S.W. govt.
House Papers.
made to the French. By then the Colonial Office doubted the wisdom of pressing the Foreign Office to make another attempt to obtain a definite assurance from the French Government that no more convicts would be sent to New Caledonia, although a recent French Government had given such a promise verbally. Indeed, the Colonial Office understood that Salisbury was opposed to attacking the French Government any further on the subject.

Diplomatic methods, therefore, seemed unlikely to secure the end of French transportation to the Pacific. This left the means of restrictive legislation open to the Australian Colonies with all the complications such legislation would create in Anglo-French relations. The spectre of colonial legislation, said to have been roused by Deakin at the Colonial Conference, was certainly still present; and the Colonial Office had had it sufficiently in mind, when the French made their first announcement of the resumption of transportation, to inquire if the colonies had any immediate intention of adopting such legislation. The Colonial Office was most unlikely to recommend the disallowance of any colonial acts, and the French Government had been informed of this. The colonies, however, did not seem to be eager to take precipitate legislative

1 Berry to C.O., 9 and 23 March, 11 April, 1888. C.O. 309/I33. The cause was a press announcement that a further 322 convicts were to be sent to New Caledonia.
2 Minutes on Berry to C.O., 9 and 23 March, 11 April, 1888. C.O. 309/I35.
4 E.g. Holland to Carrington, N.S.W. No.106, 2 Dec., 1887, asking if the bill against French criminals was likely to be brought
The French completed their evacuation of the New Hebrides by 15 March, 1888. The regulations adopted for the joint naval commission appeared to some extent as if they would safeguard the lives and property of British and French settlers, and perhaps also satisfy trade and mission interests provided they were carried out in the same spirit by both French and British naval officers. Despite this, the Australian Colonies were unable to look with equanimity at the existing situation in the islands or at the prospect of further French transportation to the South Pacific. It was not for want of effort on the part of the Colonial Governments, especially those of Victoria and Queensland between 1884 and 1887, that an unsatisfactory situation still existed. Nor had it come about because the Colonial and Foreign Offices had been unwilling to listen to colonial representations and secure their interests as far as possible. The general state of Anglo-French relations had precluded a settlement of both issues as separate questions in ways which would have been wholly satisfactory to the Australian Colonies.

From 1886 onwards the New Hebrides question periodically

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Forward again. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. Also Samuel to Perkes, 2 Dec., 1887, and minute by Perkes that the bill would not be re-introduced into Parliament in its present form. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 87/I3531.

5 Circular despatch from Knutsford, 31 March, 1888. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

I Circular despatch from Knutsford, 31 March, 1888, enclosing a copy of telegram from the Admiral on the Station, 24 March. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

2 Copy of regulations enclosed in Circular despatch from Knutsford, 9 Feb., 1888. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
entered another phase of activity whenever Australian missionaries and trading interests stirred the Colonial Governments to protest to the Imperial Government against an expected French occupation, about the unfair application to British settlers of the regulations prohibiting the sale of arms, or against the expansion of French interests in the New Hebrides as a result of disputed land claims with which the naval commission was powerless to deal. At one stage there was a possibility, admittedly rather a remote one, that some of the Australians might appeal to force. The Standard, the London paper which had published an unauthorised but fairly well informed account of the New Hebrides discussion at the Colonial Conference, once went so far as to say that an appeal to force by the colonists on the New Hebrides issue was not as remote as many in Great Britain imagined. There is some support for this in

I On one occasion the "Rosebery scheme" was resurrected. While in London, Sir George Dibbs, the Premier of N.S.W., who had been one of Jennings' supporters in 1886, considered going to France to arrange for the cession of the New Hebrides to France in return for the end of French transportation to the South Pacific. The Victorian Government opposed any such proposal, and, on the advice of his colleagues, Dibbs relinquished this idea and addressed a Memo. to the Colonial Office. Memo. of 20 July, 1892, printed with some omissions in N.S.W. V. and P., 1892-3 Session, vol. 8, pp. 1256-7. Also telegrams between the N.S.W. and Victorian Governments, 13 July, 1892, and Dibbs to Barton, 9 July, and reply. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 92/9141 and 92/9143.


3 e.g. Dibbs' Memo. of 20 July, 1892; and Ripon to Jersey, 29 Aug., 1892, Confidential. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

4 Standard, 24 Oct., 1887.
Deakin's assertion that in 1888-1889 the Victorian Government was prepared to take unilateral action and despatch the Victorian Naval Force to the New Hebrides to prevent a new French occupation.

Despite rumours, and the agitation such rumours raised in the Australian Colonies, the French Government seemed to have no intention of upholding the schemes for expanding into the South Pacific from New Caledonia put forward on a number of occasions by certain French interests and colonists. For their part, the Australian Colonies showed no haste to adopt legislation against French convicts and libérés as they had threatened. To some extent this was because in calmer moments they were aware of the probable international repercussions of such legislation. In addition, the threat of large numbers of convicts and libérés reaching the colonies did not materialise, and early in 1888 attention was diverted to the far greater threat of large numbers of Chinese arriving in the eastern Australian Colonies. Most important of all was the fact that, despite all the disabilities concerning which complaints were periodically made, Australian interests in the New Hebrides increased appreciably, and especially so after the establishment of a regular direct steamship line in 1888 by New South Wales merchants and business firms. In the long run, this trade factor was just as important economically as settle-

I A Deakin, op.cit., pp.22-3.
2 In particular, John Higginson and the New Hebrides Company.


The Victorian Government subsidised a similar service.
ment in the New Hebrides. The islands never fulfilled the great expectations of their potentialities which figured so largely in the Australian agitation of the 1880s.

The differences between the French and British methods of enforcing the regulations governing the functions of the joint naval commission, the consequent disabilities under which British settlers claimed they suffered, and the powerlessness of the naval commission to deal with disputed land titles and claims between Europeans and natives, as well as between French and British settlers, brought the New Hebrides before the Colonial Conferences I of 1897 and 1902. On neither occasion was the result fully satisfactory to Australian interests. The Australian representatives could only press the interests of Australian missionaries, traders and settlers on the Imperial Government, and in return be given information about the desultory negotiations with the French for the arms traffic to French settlers to be curbed and for the establishment of an Anglo-French jurisdiction over land titles and claims. At the instance of Australian missionaries and settlers, British annexation was still occasionally urged on the Imperial Government; and the Commonwealth Government, unlike the Colonial Governments earlier, was prepared to undertake financial commitments to administer the New Hebrides. The New Hebrides remained very much a side issue in Anglo-French relations, and no real

I See Chapters 12 and 14.
attempt was made to settle matters in dispute until after the conclusion of the Anglo-French Entente in 1904.

In looking at the whole course of the New Hebrides question from the 1880s until 1902, the most significant factor which can be distinguished is the British and, to a lesser extent, the French recognition of the right of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand to put forward their point of view and stress the importance of their interests in the South Pacific. This was something of significance in itself without its being dependent on whether or not the Imperial Government secured those interests through diplomacy.

Another important factor to which the New Hebrides question drew attention was the connection between the external interests of the Australian Colonies and their political relationship with Great Britain. In the same way as the Australian Colonies saw the connection between Imperial defence and the political relations of the self-governing colonies with the mother country, but refused

I An examination of the settlement of the dispute in 1906 is beyond the scope of this study. It must suffice to note that the settlement, in the form of an Anglo-French condominium, was made with little reference to Australia by the Liberal Government in Great Britain. Australian dissatisfaction was voiced in no uncertain terms by Deakin. The Liberal Government's lack of regard for Australian views contrasts unfavourably with the amount of information Chamberlain and Lansdowne gave to Barton in 1902 on the course of negotiations with the French Government to set up a joint authority to deal with land claims. The Commonwealth government had been aware from 1903 onwards that a joint Anglo-French protectorate was one of the possibilities on which Britain and France might reach a settlement.

See correspondence from the Governor-General in Letterbooks of Confidential Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol.I. C.P.78, Set 9, C.N.L. Archives, Canberra.
to accept imperial federation as the means of providing for Australian defence, they rejected imperial federation as the way to secure the recognition of their external interests in the exercise of British foreign policy. The development of external interests was regarded in the Australian Colonies as a sign of their growing maturity, and as an extension of self-government. Imperial federation was regarded as a means of curtailing colonial autonomy; but Australian federation was a means whereby the external interests of the colonies might be better safeguarded when the united voice of Australia prompted the Imperial Government.

The importance of united action among the Australian Colonies was to be a significant factor in other questions which arose between the Imperial Government and the Australian Colonial Governments, and especially so with regard to Chinese immigration into the colonies and the problems raised by colonial adherence to the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894. Both these questions were also concerned with securing colonial as well as imperial interests through British foreign policy. They illustrate how the Australian Colonial Governments could increasingly show a spirit of co-operation with Great Britain for the removal of potential areas of disagreement, and at the same time uphold important Australian interests.

I Relations with the Pacific Islands had been included among the subjects with which the Federal Council could deal, subject to the consent of the Imperial Government. Under Clause 51 of the Commonwealth Constitution, external affairs became a federal subject.
Did it therefore follow that the Australian Colonies would remain within the Empire? Would the loose ties of the imperial connection be sufficiently strong to overcome the differences created by distance and on occasions by the divergent interests of Great Britain and the Australian Colonies? Although Sir Charles Dilke observed in 1889 that the political relationship between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies was based on investment, sentiment and loyalty to the Crown remained the two strongest and most important of the loose ties between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. In the circumstances of the late 1880s and the 1890s, could it be taken for granted that the Crown would remain a strong bond of unity between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies?

I C.W.Dilke, op.cit., p.696.
CHAPTER 8
THE CROWN AS A BOND OF IMPERIAL UNITY: THE GOVERNORS OF THE
AUSTRALIAN COLONIES

The Governor's role as an officer of the Imperial Government, in addition to his being the Queen's representative, remained a visible sign that a self-governing colony was still a dependency. At no time, since self-government was conferred on the Australian Colonies in 1856, had a formal distinction been made in the Letters Patent and the Royal Instructions between the constitutional powers a Governor exercised in administering responsible government and the duties imposed on him as an imperial officer.

Certain prerogative powers were still exercised by the Governor at his own discretion and not according to ministerial advice. These were the exercise of the prerogative of mercy, the powers of dissolution, the appointment of members to a nominated Legislative Council and the reservation of bills. As long as this was so, a colony did not enjoy full self-government. In 1887 the Governors of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand retained more power of independent action than the Governor-General of Canada. Some of the Australian Colonies, therefore, sought to gain the Imperial Government's recognition that all prerogative powers should be exercised by a Governor on the advice of his ministers. This demand in turn raised questions about a Governor's appointment. If he acted primarily or exclusively on the advice of his ministers, should not the Colonial Government have a voice in his selection and appointment?
In 1888 the Colonial Office defined a Governor’s imperial duties as "conducting the foreign relations of the Crown, and advising the Crown when any question of Imperial as distinct from colonial interest arises". During the late 1880s, when the whole basis of the imperial connection was being given some critical reappraisal in the Australian Colonies, the office and role of the Governor did not escape attack. In particular his duties as an imperial officer were questioned.

In the forefront of these critics was George Higinbotham, Chief Justice of Victoria since 1886. The passage of time had not softened his attitude towards "Downing Street". In 1888 it was likely that as Chief Justice he might be called on to administer the government in Victoria. For this reason, the issues he raised could not be ignored by the Colonial Office. Higinbotham still contended, as he had in 1869, that the Colonial Office interfered with the exercise of colonial self-government by means of the close correspondence which passed between the Secretary of State and the Governor. Higinbotham also claimed that in a self-governing colony certain powers were conferred on the Governor by virtue

2 Sir Henry Loch, the Governor of Victoria, had been granted six months’ leave of absence during 1889, and Sir William Stawell felt that he would be unable to act as Lieutenant-Governor. In Victoria the Chief Justice held a Dormant Commission to administer the government in such a situation.
3 As Bramston and Herbert would have preferred. Minutes on Loch to Holland, Confidential,4 August,1887. C.O.309/131.
4 Higinbotham to Loch,31 Jan.,1887, enclosed in Loch to Holland,
of the colonial Constitution Act instead of through the Crown. In particular Higinbotham contended that the prerogative of mercy should be exercised solely on ministerial advice.

Higinbotham believed that a definition of the true relationship between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments had become necessary because the lessening sense of personal attachment to England among the growing numbers of native-born Australians might otherwise lead to separation. Such a definition might also restrain colonial fears of imperial interference or dictation whenever a crisis arose and vital colonial interests appeared to be at stake.

Higinbotham was concerned almost exclusively with the legal basis of the imperial connection. In the late 1880s the Colonial Office placed far more emphasis on the practice of self-government, as it had extended in several important respects since 1856, than it did on the letter of the Instructions. Imperial policy in the

See Chapter 3, pp.95-9 for a summary of Higinbotham's resolutions in the Victorian Legislative Assembly in 1869.

I e.g. the duty of a Governor to consult with his advisers rested in the Constitution Act and did not arise by reason of Clause VI of the Instructions to the Governor of Victoria.
2 In 1884, and again in 1887, this opinion led Higinbotham to refuse a request from the Governor for a report giving his reasons for advocating or opposing clemency in two cases. His refusal caused Sir Henry Loch to bring the whole question of the Instructions to Stanhope's notice and then to Holland's. Loch to Holland, Confidential, 6 Oct., 1887, C.O.309/I3I.
3 Higinbotham to Knutsford, 26 May, 1888. This letter was written at the time of the crisis over colonial restrictions on Chinese immigration. It was published by Higinbotham in the Age and Argus, 16 Feb., 1889, copies of which were enclosed in Loch to Knutsford, 20 Feb., 1889, C.O.309/I34.
1970s and 1980s seemed to show that there was little likelihood of another serious constitutional crisis like the one in Victoria in 1867-1868 or of deliberate interference by the Colonial Office in local affairs. As long as self-government had not reached its fullest development in all possible spheres, there was a chance that a legal definition of the existing relationship between the Imperial and Colonial Governments might make the remaining limitations all the more obvious, and, therefore, the more likely to cause friction.

Other attacks on the Governor's role as an imperial officer came from those who were less concerned than Higinbotham about the legal basis of the Governor's powers, but were greatly concerned about the practice of responsible government. Among such critics were Sir Thomas McIlwraith, the Premier of Queensland in 1888, and Sir Henry Wrixon, the Attorney-General of Victoria in 1887-1888.

As long as the Letters Patent and the Instructions were "not construed as they are intended to operate", the wording of those instruments meant nothing to McIlwraith; but, the moment the Governor attempted to act in any matter without or against the advice of his ministers, McIlwraith's interest and antagonism were aroused. He believed that the ministry's resignation would then provide a test of strength, and he was confident that the ministry would prevail against the Governor. Sir Henry Wrixon did not

I McIlwraith to Musgrave, 10 August, 1888, enclosed in Musgrave to Knutsford, Confidential, 17 August, 1888. Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Confidential Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol. I.
attach much practical importance to the wording of the Instructions; but, unlike McIlwraith, he felt that as long as they remained in their present form they contained "seeds of trouble". Admittedly a ministry could protect itself by resigning, should a Governor attempt to act on the letter of his Instructions; but the Governor would no longer be immune from public criticism if the question at issue was a local one on which strong public feeling had been aroused.

Radicals in New South Wales and Queensland and "nationalists", such as McIlwraith's supporters in Queensland in 1888, were also roused into openly attacking the Governor and his functions whenever it appeared that he was not "a colourless medium through whom the wishes of the people, as expressed by the Government of the day, pass and become law". With the exception of the Bulletin and the small minority of republicans who denied the necessity for such an expensive luxury as a vice-regal establishment, the radicals and the "nationalists" would recognise only the constitutional role of the Governor as the Queen's representative. The Crown, therefore, was the connecting link between the Australian Colonies and Great Britain provided it was a symbol of equality and not of dependence.

In the long run, the extent to which any suspicion of imperial interference or dictation was aroused in the Australian Colonies...
ies depended greatly on the relations each Governor established with his ministers and with the colonists in general: whether he saw himself first and foremost as an imperial officer or as the Queen's representative in the pattern of colonial self-government. In the late 1880s Governors of both persuasions carried out their duties in the Australian Colonies. To some extent this marked a significant change in the origins of those who were appointed as Governors.

The governorships of the Australian Colonies were regarded as first class appointments in terms of salary and betterment for men who formed a class of professional Governors by the 1870s and 1880s. They were dependent on the Colonial Office for their future employment and promotion, and a succession of appointments was essential to them in order to qualify for a pension at the end of their careers. During their terms of office they might be expected, therefore, to look after imperial rather than colonial interests; but, as far as the Governors of the Australian Colonies were concerned, the emphasis which some of them placed on imperial interests was a matter of principle and conviction rather than of endeavouring to advance their own careers.

I e.g. see Sir William Robinson's anxiety in 1888-1889 when, after 26 years' service, he needed only another short term in office to qualify for a pension. He was greatly disappointed not to be appointed to Queensland, and his health would not allow him to serve in the tropics. Finally he was appointed to Western Australia for the third time. Robinson to Knutsford, personal, 20 Oct., 1888. C.O.13/145.
Some of these "professional" Governors adapted themselves readily from administering the government of a Crown Colony to that of a self-governing colony. Their long experience of colonial affairs then stood them in good stead. Among those to whom the Australian colonists paid such a tribute was Sir Hercules Robinson who had been Governor of New South Wales in the mid 1870s. Other Governors, despite their long years of service, were unable to make the transition easily to administering responsible government. There were two such governors in the Australian Colonies in the late 1880s: Sir Anthony Musgrave in Queensland and Sir William Robinson in South Australia. Both had autocratic tendencies, and in particular they were out of sympathy with the democracy of those they governed. The most serious of Musgrave's difficulties in Queensland arose from his dislike for the interpretation of his duties which he believed was current in the Australian colonies, and particularly in Queensland: "that the Crown in the person of its representative is to be absolutely effaced and that the representative and agent of the Crown shall in all things do what he is 'advised', that is directed, to do by his Ministry". If a Governor acted solely on the advice of his ministers, Musgrave

I e.g. G.H. Reid's tribute to Robinson, N.S.W. Parl Deb., Legis. Assembly, 21 Nov., 1888, vol.35, p.570.
2 Herbert appreciated that Musgrave's and Robinson's difficulties with their ministers was a result of their inability to make the change from administering Crown Colony government. Minutes on Musgrave to Knutsford, Q'ld. No.71, 17 August, 1888. C.0.234/49.
3 Musgrave to Knutsford, Q'ld. No.71, 17 August, 1888. C.0.234/49.
thought that there would be nothing left of the tie between the Australian Colonies "and the Crown and the State of Great Britain”. He believed that the imperial factor should be upheld in the Australian Colonies by means of the Governor’s personal exercise of the prerogatives attributed to the Crown in the Instructions, and by the submission of any question, even a purely local one, for the Secretary of State’s decision. Such an attitude prevented Musgrave from seeing that the aspects of colonial democracy, which he so disliked, and his ministers’ intentions to extend the powers of responsible government at the expense of the prerogatives of the Crown, did not have separation from Great Britain as their aim.

The Colonial Office was aware of the difficulties faced by the Governors in administering responsible government in the Australian Colonies, and especially in attempting to reconcile the essential duties imposed on them as imperial officers with their obligation to act in local affairs on the advice of their ministers. Tact and perspicacity were required in deciding when to resist and when to give way and accept ministerial advice at the expense of the remaining prerogatives of the Crown. For his skill in this respect, Sir Henry Loch merited the Colonial Office’s commendation, and also for maintaining good relations with the Government.

1 Musgrave to Knutsford, Q’ld. No.71, 17 August, 1888. C.234/49.
2 Paragraphs 10, 11, 12 in Musgrave to Knutsford, Q’ld. No.83, II Sept., 1888. C.0.234/49.
3 Mention has already been made of Loch’s difficulties in maintaining the position of the Governor as the channel of communication against the encroachments of the Agent-General. See Chapter 3.
and people of Victoria at a time when the office and functions of the Governor were meeting serious criticism in other Australian Colonies as well as from the redoubtable Chief Justice of Victoria.

Some of Loch's success was undoubtedly due to the hospitality which he dispensed at Government House. Despite the shrillness of the radicals' criticisms of aristocracy, titles and excessive vice-regal expenditure, there remained a clear "liking for a lord" and for all the splendours of a lavish Government House, provided these came from the private means of the Governor. A Government House invited criticism when it failed to live up to this expectation. However, it did not necessarily follow that the majority of Australian colonists "would plead for blue-blooded Governors", and oppose men who had risen to that position through their ability.

In 1887 Lord Carrington, who had been appointed Governor of New South Wales the previous year, was obviously neither a "professional" Governor nor a careerist. He was a wealthy nobleman and a staunch Liberal in British politics. To some extent Carrington's

1 Minutes on Loch to Knutsford, Vict. No.II0, 15 Nov., 1888, C.0.309/134. Loch was not a "professional" Governor. He had had military, diplomatic and administrative experience in the Crimea, China and Great Britain respectively.
3 The Marquis of Normanby's parsimony was viewed unfavourably in Victoria, as was that of Lord Loftus in New South Wales. In 1895 the South Australian press commented favourably on Sir Thomas Powell Buxton's wealth and philanthropic interests, e.g. Advertiser, editorial 21 May, 1895.
5 Before succeeding to the title, he had been a member of the House of Commons, 1865-1888.
appointment was seen in the Australian Colonies as an attempt to gain favour for the retention of the imperial link, and to popularise the office of Governor after the none too popular governorship of Lord Augustus Loftus. The Gladstone Government might well have intended that Carrington's appointment should mark the resurgence of interest in England in retaining and strengthening the link between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. This would have been a shrewd move at a time when the Home Rule issue appeared as if it might weaken imperial unity. If this was the motive behind Lord Carrington's appointment, the choice was a happy one. His administration of the government, his affable manner and the lavish hospitality which he and Lady Carrington dispensed at Government House all contributed to his success. Carrington also came to understand the nature and aspirations of the national awareness which he saw developing in the Australian Colonies. After his return to England, he felt compelled to explain to English audiences that Australian nationalism did not have separation from England as its aim, and that its growth "need not diminish or impair by one jot or tittle the loyalty of Australia to England". From this premise, Lord Carrington contended that the political equality of the colonies with Great Britain

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I e.g. J.B.Watt to Parkes, 26 Jan., 1886. Parkes Correspondence, vol. 41, pp. 371-3, A 911 (Mitchell Library).
In a way Loftus' appointment itself had been an unsuccessful attempt at a new departure. It had been made in accordance with Salisbury's belief that the office of Governor in an important colony should be filled by someone of personal rank with a successful official career behind him. Salisbury thought that Loftus, after a long career as a diplomat, would fulfil those conditions. Salisbury to Loftus, 28 Jan., 1879. Letters of Lord Loftus, A 3057 (Mitchell Library).

in the Empire must be recognised in imperial policy.

As a result of Carrington's personal success in New South Wales, or from the assumption in the Australian Colonies that his appointment marked a new policy consciously pursued by the Imperial Government, similar appointments were expected subsequently in the other Australian Colonies. Between 1888 and the inauguration of the Commonwealth in 1901, this was largely the case. But, as will be shown later, the continued practice of such appointments might not necessarily have stemmed from the adoption of such a policy for its own sake. The Colonial Office might well have seen it as a means of avoiding a repetition of the dissatisfaction which was aroused in some of the Australian Colonies in 1888 by a particular appointment and by the method of appointing a Governor.

Several of the "new" Governors were wealthy young noblemen. Unlike the "professional" Governors, they did not need to be con-

I Speech at Colston Banquet, Bristol, 13 Nov., 1891. The impact of this argument was perhaps weakened by Carrington's attack, as a Liberal, on the colonial policy of Salisbury's Government. His strictures on Lord Knutsford seemed particularly unmerited. Statements refuting Carrington's criticisms were made by Duncan Gillies and others in the Victorian Legislative Assembly. Vict. Parl. Deb., 1891 Session, Legis. Assembly, 18 Nov., 1891, vol. 68, pp. 2502-4.

2 (a) Appointments from the older aristocracy:-

N.S.W. Carrington, 1886-1890
    Jersey, 1890-1893
    Hampden, 1895-1899
    Beauchamp, 1899-1901

Queensland Lamington, 1896-1901

Victoria Hopetoun, 1889-1895
    S. Australia Kintore, 1889-1895
    New Zealand Onslow, 1889-1892
    Glasgow, 1892-1897
    Ranfurly, 1897-1904

(b) Other appointments, including peers, but not "professional" Governors:-

Queensland Sir Henry Norman, 1889-1896
Victoria Lord Brassey, 1897-1900
South Australia Sir T.F. Buxton, 1895-1899
    Lord Tennyson, 1899-1902
cerned about making a career for themselves as colonial Governors. Their main interest, and probably one of the purposes behind their appointments, was to extend their political experience. Their acceptance of governorships was also an expression of the increasing interest in the Empire among the upper classes in Great Britain. Their willingness to go to the colonies might possibly have been encouraged by the term of office served by the Marquis of Lorne, the Queen's son-in-law, as Governor-General of Canada from 1878 to 1883. They did not all repeat Carrington's success in understanding, or even tolerating, colonial democracy and Australian national aspirations.

The "new" Governors, and particularly those who as peers or commoners had had experience of public affairs in Great Britain, were also indicative of the increasing recognition by the Imperial Government in the late 1880s and during the 1890s that a Governor's most important functions were those he exercised by reason of the colonial constitution. During the earlier part of that period four

1 Some of them had been members of the House of Commons for short periods before succeeding to the peerage, e.g. Hopetoun and Lamington. Others had held offices of various kinds, e.g. Omslow had held office as Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies (1887-8) and as Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade (1888-9); Kintore and Ranfurly had been Lords-in-Waiting to the Queen; Kintore had also been a Whip of the House of Lords (1886); Lamington had been Assistant Private Secretary to Salisbury (1885-6); Jersey had been Paymaster-General (1889-1890); and Beauchamp had been a member of the London School Board (1897-9). If Kintore did not suggest Beauchamp for a governorship, he certainly urged him to accept. (Diary of Lord Beauchamp, A 3295 Mitchell Library)

2 Kintore probably showed the least understanding and the greatest dislike in his attitude towards C.C. Kingston between 1893 and 1895.

3 Among the commoners, Sir Robert Duff had been Speaker of the House of Commons; Sir Henry Norman had been a member of the Council of the Viceroy of India and of the Council of the Secre-
of the powers and functions of a Governor, in which he exercised his own discretion, were questioned. These were, first, the exercise of the prerogative of mercy; secondly, the powers of dissolution; thirdly, the appointment of members to a nominated Legislative Council; and, fourthly, the reservation of bills.

In addition, a rather different question concerning the Governors came into prominence shortly after the 1887 Colonial Conference. This arose from a demand by some of the Colonial Governments that they should be consulted before a new appointment was officially announced; or that they should at least be notified confidentially before an appointment was submitted for the Queen's approval so that they could express an opinion on the suitability of the person named. In the long run, the appointment question held most future significance for the relationship between the Australian Colonies and the British Crown.

II

When George Higinbotham, the Chief Justice of Victoria, with some support from Sir Henry Wrixon, the Attorney-General, put his principles into practice and refused the Governor's requests for reports whether clemency was justified in two particular cases, the Gillies Ministry as well as the Governor made representations...
to the Colonial Office about the content and interpretation of the Instructions. While he was in London in 1887, Deakin sought the removal of those clauses which no longer applied in a self-governing colony and changes in others so that the practice of ministerial responsibility would be more fully recognised.

The attention of the Colonial conference was directed more particularly to the exercise of the prerogative of mercy than to the Instructions as a whole. Since 1875 the Governor's discretion had been curtailed in non-capital cases in the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, and it had become usual for him to act on the recommendation of the responsible minister. In capital cases the Governors still acted on their own discretion, and they could not rely on a ruling from the Secretary of State in any particular case. Since 1878 the prerogative of mercy had been exercised by the Governor-General of Canada in all cases on the advice of his ministers, although the wording of the revised Instructions did not bind him to do so. On behalf of their Governments Dillon Bell and Deakin favoured the introduction of the Canadian practice into the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Although some satisfac-

I Minute by Bremston on Law Officers to C.O., 26 Jan., 1888. C.O. 309/135. Deakin was especially concerned with Clause II of the Letters Patent and Clauses VI, VII and XI of the Instructions to the Governor of Victoria. These referred to the source of the Governor's powers, the direction to consult his Executive Council and the exercise of the prerogative of mercy.


3 See minutes by Bremton and Herbert on Carrington to Holland, Confidential, 10 March, 1887, in connection with the Mount Rennie outrage. C.O. 201/606.

4 See statement by Sir A. Campbell, one of the Canadian representatives, to the Colonial Conference. _Procs.,_ C. 5091, p. 546.
tion was expressed because the Instructions still contained clauses which no longer applied in a self-governing colony, the majority of the Australian and New Zealand representatives felt that in the existing state of colonial society the Governor should continue to exercise his own judgment in capital cases.

In the Colonial Office, Herbert was one of those most in favour of bringing the Instructions to the Governors of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand into line with those to the Governor-General of Canada. Holland was not so certain. He was aware that Higinbotham's contentions as a whole were not widely supported in Victoria, and he was doubtful whether all the Colonial Governments desired changes to the same extent as the Victorian Government.

He was particularly hesitant about altering the clause concerning the prerogative of mercy, and his doubts were reinforced by Sir Henry Loch's opposition to any change. Like Griffith and Downer at the Colonial Conference, Loch thought that the Governor's independence from colonial issues was advantageous in cases of pardon or reprieve. Loch was also concerned about the difficulty of drawing a line between local interests and imperial interests so as to define which of a Governor's powers were dependent on the colonial constitution.

I Proc. of Colonial Conference, 1887. C.5091, Downer, pp.548-9; Adye Douglas and Wisdom, p.549; Griffith, p.550; and Fitzherbert, p.552. Wisdom and Fitzherbert stated that they were expressing a personal opinion and not the view of their Governments.  
2 Minutes on Loch to Stanhope, 30 Sept., 1886, C.0.309/130; and on Loch to Holland, 4 August, 1887, C.0.309/131.  
3 Minute on Loch to Holland, 4 August, 1887, C.0.309/131.  
4 Loch to Holland, Confidential, 4 August, 1887, C.0.309/131. Loch added that he particularly had in mind sentences passed as a result of bloodshed during disturbances caused by political excitement.
After recourse had been had to the Law Officers of the Crown, and they had reported in favour of most of the changes requested by the Victorian Government, the Colonial office still faced a difficult problem. Holland, Herbert and Bramston realised that imperial authority in the Australian Colonies and New Zealand was ever becoming weaker in practice; but they wondered to what extent it was wise to give formal recognition to this change. If the Instructions were revised to satisfy the Victorian Government's representations, a far greater emphasis would be placed on the constitutional powers and role of the Governor. Adequate safeguards would still have to be inserted to secure the Governor's position as an imperial officer; but it did not necessarily follow that it was desirable, or even possible, to make any hard and fast distinction between local and imperial matters. For these reasons, the decision on the exercise of the prerogative of mercy took on a significance far beyond its own merits.

The final decisions were to a large extent determined by the opinions held from the outset by Holland, who became Lord Knutsford in February, 1888. Although the colonial constitution was to be recognised in the Letters Patent as one of the sources of the Governor's powers, and that the instruction requiring a Governor to keep in close communication with the Secretary of state might be omitted. The Law Officers were less prepared than the Colonial Office to make a Governor's duty to consult with his Executive Council, that is, his ministers, dependent solely on parliamentary institutions. On matters affecting imperial interests, it might still be necessary for a Governor to act in opposition to the advice of his ministers. As far as the prerogative of mercy was concerned, the Law Officers on the whole favoured the introduction of the 1878 Canadian clause. Law Officers to C.O., 26 Jan., 1888. C.O. 309/133.

Throughout the preceding months Holland had personally guided
Governor's powers, no major alterations were to be made in the
Instructions. The Victorian Government's representations would be
met in so far as a few "grandmotherly instructions [which] irritate
gentlemen like Messrs. Deakin and Service" were to be omitted. The
Governor's discretion in the exercise of the prerogative of mercy
was to be maintained. Despite Herbert's advocacy of limiting to
imperial and extra-colonial questions a Governor's discretion to
reject the advice of his ministers, Knutsford decided not to make
any formal distinction. The Governor of a self-governing colony
would be unlikely to act in opposition to the advice of his minis-
ters except on imperial or extra-colonial matters. Imperial inter-
ests were still to be safeguarded by means of the Governor's power
to reserve certain classes of colonial bills; but, in special cir-
cumstances, a Governor might assent to a bill provided he was satis-

the deliberations in the Colonial Office on this matter. His earlier
experience in the Colonial Office as Legal Adviser stood him in
good stead.

1 Clause III in the draft Letters Patent, enclosed in Knutsford's
2 Herbert's phrase in minute on Law Officers to C.O., 26 Jan.,1888,
C.O.309/I33. Clauses III,IV and V of the existing Instructions
to the Governor of Victoria were to be omitted from the new draft.
Knutsford was also prepared to make the correspondence between
the Secretary of State and the Governor the subject of a despatch
instead of an instruction. Minute on Law Officers to C.O., 26 Jan.,
3 Clause VI of the draft Instructions of 1888. No longer was it to
be mandatory for the judge who tried the case to give his rea-
sons for recommending or refusing clemency.
4 Minute by Herbert on Law Officers to C.O., 26 Jan.,1888. C.O.309/
I33.
fied that there was urgent necessity for it to come into operation immediately. The revised Instructions to the Governors of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand still differed in some respects from those issued to the Governor-General of Canada since 1876. The major difference was the retention of a Governor's discretion in the exercise of the prerogative of mercy in capital cases.

In view of the differences of opinion among the delegates at the Colonial conference in 1887, Knutsford gave the Governments of all the Australian Colonies and New Zealand an opportunity to comment on the proposed changes in the Letters patent and Instructions. They made no haste to do so. In the meantime, there arose a crisis in Queensland in which the Governor and the Premier stood opposed to each other on an issue concerning the exercise of the prerogative of mercy. The outcome of this crisis materially affected Knutsford's attitude towards retaining the Governor's discretion.

In July, 1888, Sir Anthony Musgrave refused to mitigate the severe sentence of three years' penal servitude passed on Benjamin

I Clause V of the draft Instructions of 1888. In general the specified classes of bills covered those affecting imperial or extra-colonial interests such as divorce, the imposition of differential duties (other than those allowed by the Australian Colonies Duties Act of 1873), and bills which were inconsistent with imperial treaty obligations, affected the royal prerogative or the rights and property of British subjects not resident in the colony, or prejudiced British trade and shipping.

2 At first the Colonial Office had intended to settle the Instructions for Victoria, and then consult the other Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Minute by Herbert on Law officers to C.O., 26 Jan., 1888. C.O. 309/I33. The drafts of the Letters Patent and the Instructions were forwarded to all the colonies in a Confidential Circular despatch, dated 30 April, 1888.
Kitt for stealing two pairs of boots. In itself the case was unimportant; but some other factors gave it a significance far beyond its own merits. Previously there had been few occasions when Musgrave differed from the advice tendered by his ministers or had hesitated to accept their recommendations for clemency. These had concerned capital cases. During the course of their conflict in 1888, neither Musgrave nor McIlwraith made any reference to Carnarvon's ruling on non-capital cases in 1875. McIlwraith took his stand on what had been granted in the Canadian clause of 1878, and Musgrave asserted the Governor's absolute discretion.

Musgrave's action in refusing clemency to Kitt also seems inexplicable in terms of the development of self-government in the

1 The brief facts of the case were these. Kitt had been sentenced at Townsville in February, 1888. The Queensland Ministry regarded the case as one for the exercise of clemency under the Offenders' Probation Act of 1886. Police reports showed that Kitt previously had a good character; but the judge's report upheld the sentence on the probability of previous thefts, although there was no evidence in support. At a meeting of the Executive Council on 12 July, 1888, Musgrave refused a recommendation for mercy, and upheld his refusal when the case was re-submitted on 18 July. Musgrave also doubted that the Offenders' Probation Act applied to Kitt.

2 Ministers' recommendations and minutes of the Executive Council, 12 and 18 July, 1888, enclosed in Musgrave to Knutsford, Q'ld. No. 71, 17 August, 1888. C.O. 234/49.

3 The most notorious case was in 1884 when six men were charged with kidnapping and murdering New Guinea natives during a recruiting cruise by the "Hopeful". Musgrave, the Chief Justice and a majority of the Executive Council were against clemency. In deference to public opinion, the case was reconsidered. Musgrave then accepted a majority decision of the Executive Council. The death sentences passed on two of the men were commuted to life imprisonment.

5 It was left to Sir Samuel Griffith to point out that Carnarvon's 1875 ruling precluded him from supporting Musgrave's action in the Kitt case. Memo. for Musgrave, 5 Sept., 1888, quoted by Griffith in the Q'ld. Legis. Assembly, II Sept., 1888. Q'ld. Parl. Deb., vol. 55, p. 207.
Australian Colonies. Yet there is little reason to doubt that he sincerely, if mistakenly, felt that serious issues were at stake. In particular he feared that the continued whittling away of the Governor's powers of independent action, and the increasing number of matters in which he was to act on the advice of his ministers, would lead to the separation of the self-governing colonies from Great Britain. When Musgrave continued to reject the advice of his ministers that clemency be shown to Kitt, McIlwraith tendered his resignation. Both on constitutional grounds and because he could not support Musgrave's action concerning Kitt, Griffith was undoubtedly correct in refusing to attempt to form a government. Musgrave, therefore, refused to accept McIlwraith's resignation, and a standstill of government business seemed likely.

Musgrave also feared that the Kitt case was only the forerunner of an attempt to obtain the release of the "Hopeful" prisoners. If this issue was likely to arise, why did Musgrave take a

1 McIlwraith resigned on 4 Sept., 1888. McIlwraith to Musgrave, 4 Sept., 1888, enclosed in Musgrave to Knutsford, Q'ld. No. 79, 4 Sept., 1888. C.0. 234/49.


In Griffith's view the immediate question at issue in 1888 had been settled for a long time: that in local affairs the Governor should act on the advice of his ministers. For this reason, there was no need for the McIlwraith Government to resign. Ibid. p. 208. In addition, Griffith's party had been very soundly defeated in the elections in May, and it was unlikely that had he formed a government and been granted a dissolution this decision would have been reversed.

3 Musgrave to Knutsford, telegram, 4 Sept., 1888, and Confidential despatch of the same date. C.0. 234/49.

References to the "Hopeful" case had been made during the elections in May, 1888. The connection between the "Hopeful" case and Musgrave's action concerning Kitt has been discussed by I.D. McNaughtan in "The Case of Benjamin Kitt", Historical Society of Queensland Journal, vol. 4, No. 4, Dec., 1951, pp. 533-558.
stand on the Kitt case, where his actions could so easily become indefensible, rather than wait for the "Hopeful" case to come before him? In the latter case, although it might be difficult to sustain, he could have put forward a defence for refusing clemency on the grounds that imperial or extra-colonial interests were involved.

There was one further factor which influenced the actions of the two protagonists - a simple one, but not unimportant. At the time of the conflict both Musgrave and McIlwraith were sick men, and sickness increased the determination of two obstinate men to hold each to his own course without any attempt to compromise. Even so, there was no need for McIlwraith's bluster, if not outright defiance of the Imperial Government; but his attitude was in keeping with a form of colonial reasoning, as practised by Service, Deakin, Berry and Parkes on occasions, that bluster, loud shouting and defiance were the only ways of making a reluctant Colonial Office take any notice of colonial wishes. "Imperial interference" was always a good rallying cry in the colonies. McIlwraith used it effectively in September, 1888, when he declaimed: "I do not care one straw what the Secretary of State says. What the Secretary of State says affects the Governor; it does not affect me. If he sends instructions as to what is to be done in this colony I do not take the slightest notice of them any more than if any private individual sent out word what was to be done here; but as

McIlwraith to Musgrave, 29 August, 1888, enclosed in Musgrave to Knutsford, Q'ld. No. 79, 4 Sept., 1888, C.O. 235/49.
soon as the Governor acts on his instructions, then I have something to do with the Governor. I have nothing to do with the Secretary of State..."

The crisis in Queensland burst suddenly upon the Colonial Office when Musgrave telegraphed for instructions after McIlwraith had tendered his resignation. Knutsford had only meagre information at hand to guide him in reaching a decision. Two issues seemed to stand out. There was the technical question whether or not in a non-capital case Musgrave could refuse to accept ministerial advice; but far more important was the very practical question whether Musgrave was wise to make a stand on such a weak case, and in so doing raise the problem of the Ministry's resignation. Anderson questioned why Musgrave had not taken his stand on a capital case, and especially on one, such as the "Hopeful" case, where he would have had strong grounds for doing so and the likelihood of support from some sections of the population in Queensland. Moreover, the "Hopeful" case was one where a claim could be made that the Governor's impartiality would be of great value.

2 Musgrave to Knutsford, telegram, 4 Sept., 1888. C.O. 234/49.
3 i.e. Musgrave's telegram of 4 Sept., and a telegram from McIlwraith to the Agent-General, forwarded by Dicken to the Colonial Office in Archer's absence, 5 Sept., 1888. C.O. 234/49.
4 There was some difference of opinion also whether power under the Offenders' Probation Act was vested in the Governor personally or in the Governor-in-Council. Minutes by Anderson and Wingfield on Musgrave's telegram of 4 Sept., his despatch of 17 August (Q'ld. No. 71), and Dicken to C.O., 5 Sept., 1888. C.O. 234/49.
There was no doubt in Knutsford's mind, nor among the officials in the Colonial Office, that throughout the crisis Musgrave had taken up a practically indefensible position from which he would have to retreat either on grounds of policy or because of McIlwraith's strong position in the Queensland Parliament. McIlwraith's threats and bluster, and representations at the Colonial Office by the Agent-General's secretary, were hardly necessary. At most they possibly only helped to tip the balance in favour of sending an immediate instruction to Musgrave instead of awaiting the arrival of despatches in which he gave a full explanation of his actions. Musgrave was therefore instructed on 7 September that he should act on the advice of his ministers provided no extra-colonial interests were involved. The conflict had been unnecessary, and Musgrave's sudden death on 9 October solved the rather delicate problem of his future in Queensland after he had been compelled to give in to McIlwraith.

2 Dicken to C.O., 5, 6, 7 and 8 Sept., 1888. C.O. 234/49.
4 Telegram, Knutsford to Musgrave, 7 Sept., 1888, draft with Dicken to C.O., 6 Sept., 1888. C.O. 234/49. Knutsford gave his reasons for this decision in his despatch to Sir A. Palmer (Administrator), Q'd. No. 62, 30 Oct., 1888, draft attached to Musgrave to Knutsford, telegram, 10 Sept., 1888. C.O. 234/49. Dicken was not informed of Knutsford's telegram of 7 Sept. until the Colonial Office knew on 10 Sept. that Musgrave had told his ministers of the Secretary of State's decision. Minutes on Dicken to C.O. 5, 7 and 8 Sept., 1888. C.O. 234/49.
The settlement between Musgrave and McIlwraith did not exhaust its implications. In the colonial Parliaments and in the press, it was often quoted in succeeding years as showing the need for the colonial Governments and Parliaments to be always vigilant in asserting the primacy of their powers over those of the Governors. In the Colonial Office there was a sharpened awareness that in practice a Governor enjoyed only very limited independence of action. As Anderson commented during the crisis in Queensland:

"The present case shows clearly that with a determined Ministry and what Colonial Ministry is not so, the discretion given to a Governor avails him nothing, but is a delusion and a snare, relying on which he may miss securing what the exercise of a little tact and judgment might easily have gained for him".

The Colonial Office was, therefore, led to the conclusion that if the exercise of the prerogative of mercy was to remain on a different footing from the other functions of a governor in a self-governing colony, "it thereby challenges attack on the part of cantankerous champions of democratic right like Mr. Higinbotham and Sir Thomas McIlwraith". As a result of Musgrave's action, the question had been given much publicity in the Australian Colonies. It was probable that Musgrave's attempt to preserve the Governor's absolute discretion in the exercise of the prerogative of mercy would lessen the limited independence of action still left to him.

1 Minute on Dicken to C. O., 5 Sept., 1888. C. O. 234/49.
2 Minute by Anderson on Musgrave to Knutsford, telegram, 4 Sept., 1888. C. O. 234/49.
3 Before the Queensland crisis, some of the Governors and leading ministers had hoped that public discussion of the proposed changes in the Instructions might be avoided as far as possible. Reference to private letters from Sir Henry Loch in minute by Meade on Musgrave to Knutsford, Q'ld. No. 71, 17 August, 1888. C. O. 234/49.
Despite his earlier doubts, Knutsford was now willing to include the 1878 Canadian clause in the Instructions to the Governors of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand should any of the Colonial Governments so desire.

In 1888 none of them made such a request, and they were also unresponsive to the alterations in the Letters Patent and Instructions which Knutsford had already submitted to them. The Victorian Government's change of view since the previous year was to some extent conditioned by its attitude towards a related problem concerning the Chief Justice. Moreover, it did not want a general revision of the Instructions to raise questions which were best left undisturbed. On the ground that it was "not constitutionally bound to offer advice", the Gillies Government refused to offer any opinion on the proposed changes in the Letters Patent and Instructions. Because of the Victorian Government's attitude,

1 Minutes by Wingfield and Knutsford on Musgrave to Knutsford, Q'd. No.71, 17 August, 1888; and draft of Knutsford to Palmer, Q'd. No.62, 30 Oct.,1888, attached to Musgrave to Knutsford, telegram, 10 Sept.,1888. C.0.234/49.

2 As Sir William Robinson's term of office in S. Australia would expire about the time of Loch's departure on leave, Loch had suggested that Robinson's appointment as Administrator would solve the problem caused by Higinbotham's refusal to correspond with the Secretary of State. As in the case of an appointment of a Lieutenant-Governor, Knutsford asked the Victorian Government if Robinson's appointment would be acceptable. The Gillies Government refused to express an opinion. Memo. by Gillies for Loch, 16 Nov.,1888, enclosed in Loch to Knutsford, Confidential, 22 Nov. 1888. C.0.309/I32.

3 Loch to Knutsford, Secret, 26 Oct.,1888. C.0.309/I32.

Among the factors contributing to the Victorian government's cautious attitude were Wrixon's change of mind since he had supported Higinbotham early in 1887; the opposition of Shiels, the leader of the Opposition in Victoria, to the exercise of the prerogative of mercy solely on ministerial advice; and the reservation of the Chinese Immigration Bill during 1888. The Governor's powers of reservation might well have been one of the wider questions that would be best left undisturbed.
Knutsford decided at the end of 1888 to do nothing further for the time being towards a revision of the Instructions.

Early in the 1890s, two Governors accepted ministerial advice in granting clemency in capital cases. In 1890 Sir Henry Norman agreed to the release of two of the "Hopeful" prisoners, McNeil and Williams. The following year Lord Onslow, the Governor of New Zealand, supported his ministers' claim that the prerogative of mercy should in all cases be exercised on ministerial advice, subject to their power of resignation should their recommendations be refused. Acting on his ministers' advice, Lord Onslow commuted to life imprisonment the death sentence passed on a Maori youth. Shortly afterwards, the South Australian Government showed that a crisis would arise should the Governor reject its advice in favour of a reprieve.

Among the Colonial Office officials, Herbert was the most

1 Norman to Knutsford, Confidential, 22 Feb. and 17 March, 1890. C.0.234/51.
In giving his reasons for accepting Cabinet's recommendation, Norman pointed out the difficulty facing a Governor, who had no independent legal adviser, when the Minister of Justice and the Chief Justice held different opinions on a case. Although Norman realised that imperial or extra-colonial interests could be involved in the case, he decided to accept the advice of his ministers without any reference to the Secretary of State. He felt that a delay in reaching a decision might lead to a revival of public agitation. The Colonial Office believed Norman acted constitutionally in releasing the two prisoners. There was also relief that the Secretary of State neither had to decide nor interfere in the case.

2 Onslow to Knutsford, 7 Feb., 1891. Printed in N.Z. Parl. Paper, 1891 (Second Session), A I.
Onslow believed that the existing circumstances of colonial life no longer supported the argument used by some of the representatives at the Colonial Conference in 1887 against removing the Governor's discretion in capital cases.

3 Boucaut (Administrator) to Knutsford, Confidential, 30 March, 1891. C.0.15/I47.
strongly convinced that the contentions of the New Zealand and South Australian ministers were constitutionally defensible. Once again he was willing to view a situation as it existed and not as he would wish it to be. His reflections led him to the conclusion "that by not carrying out those principles of responsible government we are living in danger of collisions in which we would be standing on unsound ground and should be beaten". A clause similar to the 1878 Canadian clause on the exercise of the prerogative of mercy was included in the Instructions to the Governor of New Zealand in March, 1891. For reasons very similar to those used by Herbert in favour of the change, the Governments in the Australian Colonies responded favourably to Knutsford's inquiry whether a similar clause should be included in the Instructions to the Governors of the Australian Colonies. Once those colonies were satisfied on that point, any further revision of the Instructions was laid aside until the first Governor-General was appointed in 1900.

2 In particular this reasoning led the Shiels Government in Victoria to support the change. Public agitation over a number of capital cases during the previous eighteen months, and the "somewhat anomalous and cruel position" in which a Governor sometimes found himself, led Hopetoun to support Shiels' view that the change would "bring home to Ministers the responsibility which it is their duty to accept".
Memo. By Shiels, 2 May, 1892, enclosed in Hopetoun to Knutsford, Confidential, 3 May, 1892. C.O. 309/137.
3 The revised Instructions, dated 9 July, 1892, were forwarded to the Governors shortly before the end of Knutsford's tenure of office as Secretary of State. e.g. N.S.W. No. 54, 13 July, 1892. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
During the 1890s three other prerogative powers sometimes caused difficulties in the relations between a Governor and his ministers.

At the Colonial Conference in 1887, Sir Francis Dillon Bell's arguments that a Governor should always grant a dissolution at the request of his ministers found little support among the other colonial delegates. They felt that this in particular was a matter where the Governor's impartiality and independence of judgment were valuable.

Ministerial advice did not replace the Governor's independence of judgment in granting or refusing a dissolution because each Governor showed that he would use this power cautiously and impartially, and only when he felt the political situation was such as to justify his refusal. During the latter months of 1899, the Governors of New South Wales, South Australia and Victoria refused to grant the dissolutions requested by Reid, Kingston and Turner after their ministries had enjoyed fairly lengthy terms of office. As the three Premiers had just completed their work towards

1 Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1887. C.5091, pp.555-6.
2 Ibid. pp.556-8. But Berry personally supported the New Zealand view.
3 N.S.W.: Beauchamp to Chamberlain, Confidential, 12 sept. 1899, C.0.201/625. Beauchamp gives an account of his refusal, at first of Reid's request for a prorogation and then for a dissolution, in his Diary. (A 3295 Mitchell Library)
See also the debates in the Legis. Assembly, 30 August to 12 Sept., N.S.W. parl. Deb., vol.100.
South Australia: Tennyson to Chamberlain, S.Aust. No.36, 2 Dec., 1899, and telegram of the same date. C.0.13/153.
bringing about the federation of the Australian Colonies, there was perhaps some justification for their attempts to remain in power; but the Governors' decisions were constitutionally correct. Similarly, a Governor retained the power to dismiss a ministry, although its use was exceedingly rare. The outstanding occasion was in 1932 when Sir Philip Game, the Governor of New South Wales, dismissed the Premier, J.T. Lang, on the ground that certain of his actions during the economic and financial crisis were illegal under both Commonwealth and State laws. On this occasion, the Governor's action did not escape charges being levelled at him during the ensuing election that he had acted partially.

On the other hand, a Governor came to act solely on ministerial advice in nominations to seats in the Legislative Council even if he thought the number of new members was excessive. Two crises during the 1890s, one in New Zealand (1891-1892) and the other in New South Wales (1894), illustrate the change. The coup de grâce was given to any independence of action a Governor might still have tried to exercise when the Colonial Office accepted that the correct constitutional procedure was for him to act on the advice of his ministers.

In the Instructions of 1892 the classes of bills necessitating reservation by a Governor were still enumerated. They concern-

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2 On the crisis in N.S.W. see Duff's despatches and telegrams to Ripon, also C.O. minutes, 30 July, 1894, onwards. C.O. 201/615.
2 The enumeration of subjects for reservation was not omitted until the Instructions to the Governor-General were drawn up in 1900. A different practice was followed in Canada. By means of a suspensive clause, consultation with the Imperial Government could
ed subjects of colonial legislation which might conflict with imperial interests, including treaty obligations, or might affect the interests of another colony. Some sections of opinion in the Australian Colonies, as expressed in the press and by members of the legislatures, continued to regard reservation as demonstrating that the self-governing colonies were still dependencies and that there might be imperial interference in colonial affairs. Such an attitude became more and more a mistaken one from the 1880s onwards. Reservation did not necessarily lead straightway to disallowance. It offered an opportunity for consultation between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments to remove, alter or limit the provisions contained in a colonial bill. The compromise worked out between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments was then embodied in another bill. Disallowance was an extreme measure that the Imperial Government was ever more reluctant to use. In the interests of good working relations with the Imperial Government, the Colonial Governments on the whole were equally reluctant to take up such an uncompromising attitude that disallowance became the only action open to the Imperial Government.

take place before a proclamation was issued that a measure had become law. This practice was followed in 1897 when a preferential rate for British goods was included in the Canadian tariff.

The latter provision meant that a situation could still arise similar to that in 1887 when the Victorian Government protested against Parkes' bill to confer the name of Australia on the colony of New South Wales. Even if Parkes had not himself advised Carrington to reserve the bill, the Governor would have been instructed to do so. Minutes on Carrington to Holland, Confidential, 8 Dec., 1887, C.O.201/606; and 3 and 20 Jan., 1888, Confidential, C.O.201/606.

2 For example, this happened with regard to the New South Wales Divorce Bill, 1887; the Chinese Immigration Restriction Bills passed by several of the Australian Colonies in 1888-1889; and the Coloured Immigration Restriction Bills of 1896-1897.
On occasions the Secretary of State gave a Governor authority in advance to assent to a bill which normally should have been reserved, or he was instructed to use his discretion. By the former means assent was given, without the power of reservation being used, to the revised Coloured Immigration Restriction Bills of 1897-1898. In 1895 Sir Samuel Way, the Acting-Governor of South Australia, was instructed by Chamberlain to use his discretion whether or not the Governor's Salary Bill should be reserved. At a later date Hopetoun, as Governor-General used his discretion in assenting to the Immigration Restriction Bill passed by the Commonwealth Parliament in 1901.

In the Australian Colonies and New Zealand during the late 1880s and the 1890s, a Governor's independent exercise of prerogative powers was curtailed with regard to the prerogative of mercy and the appointment of members to a nominated Legislative Council; but his independence of judgment in granting or withholding a dissolution was maintained, and so was his power to dismiss a ministry. Through the power of reservation, a Governor's role as an imperial officer was still upheld; but in all other spheres by

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1 Minute by Chamberlain, 19 Nov., 1897, on Playford (Agent-General) to C.O., 18 Nov., 1897, enclosing a telegram from Kingston of the same date. C.O.13/152.

2 Chamberlain to Way, 30 Sept., 1895, draft with Way's telegram of 7 Sept., 1895, asking for instructions. C.O.13/150.

3 Hopetoun to Chamberlain, telegrams of 20 August and 12 Dec., 1901; minutes on these; and Chamberlain's telegram to Hopetoun, 9 Sept., 1901. C.O.418/10.

The Instructions to the Governor-General of Australia followed the Canadian precedent that a bill should only be reserved on instructions from the Secretary of State if the Governor-General had any doubts about giving the royal assent. Sections 58 and 74 of the Commonwealth Constitution also guided the Governor-General's conduct with regard to reservation.
1900 his constitutional role in the pattern of self-government had been given greater emphasis.

Through their understanding of the continued evolution of the Governor's constitutional role, Knutsford and Herbert made a constructive but unspectacular contribution between 1887 and 1892 to relations between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies. On the other hand, Knutsford and Herbert, with their immediate successors, Ripon and Meade, were determined to maintain exclusive imperial control over the appointment of Governors.

III

A Governor's appointment by the Queen, solely on the recommendation of her ministers in Great Britain, was seen in the Australian Colonies as an indication that he was an officer of the Imperial Government and a self-governing colony was still a dependency. A colonial voice in the appointment of a Governor would be another step towards achieving equality with Great Britain and of emphasising his role as the Queen's representative in the pattern of responsible government.


The argument that elected Governors would be a sign of political equality between the mother country and the colonies was used by An Australian Native in "Imperial Federation or the Consolidation of the Empire", Bankers' Institute of Australasia Journal, Jan., 1889, p.654.
There were two possible ways of breaking into this exclusive imperial preserve. The more extreme way was to make the office of Governor elective. Some of those, both radicals and others, who cried, "Australia first", saw election as the best means of turning the appointment of a Governor into a local matter. Their aim was to ensure that a Governor would consequently uphold colonial and not imperial interests. It did not necessarily follow that all who advocated election had the separation of the colonies from Great Britain as their ultimate objective; but this obvious connection helped to ensure that only a minority in the Australian Colonies supported any move in favour of an elective governorship.

The Colonial Office was not far wrong in concluding that such a demand was likely to have its roots in the unpopularity of a particular Governor, or in some vice-regal actions which had aroused public criticism. If serious or persistent moves were made for an elective governorship, separation must of necessity be the objective because "an elective governor would not be the representative


2 e.g. Cohen's motion in the S. Australian House of Assembly, was defeated by 31 votes to 9. S. Aust. Parl. Deb. (1887), H. of Assembly, 3 August, 1887, pp. 384-390.

Similarly in New Zealand in 1887 and 1892 Sir George Grey tried to persuade the House of Representatives to support the election of Governors. N. Z. Parl. Deb. (1892), vol. 77, H. of Representative 18 August, 1892, pp. 176-194.

3 Minutes on telegram from Robinson to Knutsford, 24 July, 1888. C.O. 13/145.

Sir George Grey's motion in New Zealand in 1892 came at a time when Onslow and then Glasgow had aroused public criticism by their reluctance to make further appointments to the Legislative Council.
of the Queen, but a new kind of official unknown in the British Empire and inconsistent with its polity".

A less extreme way of gaining a colonial voice in the appointment of a Governor was for the Colonial Government to be informed before a new appointment was made so that a protest could be made if necessary. Once this was conceded by the Colonial Office, the next step towards making the office of Governor into a local appointment would be to gain the right of nomination or of vetoing the Imperial Government's appointment should the Colonial Government regard it as unsuitable. During 1888 the South Australian and the Queensland Governments requested that they should be given an opportunity to express an opinion before an appointment was announced. The subsequent moves between the Colonial Governments and the Colonial Office showed how difficult it would be in practice to agree to such a request and at the same time retain the appointment of a Governor as an imperial matter.

The immediate motive behind the South Australian and the Queensland demands was to forestall unpopular appointments - that of the Marquis of Normanby to South Australia and Sir William

1 Minute by Bramston on Buxton to Chamberlain, Secret, 27 Nov., 1895. C.0.13/150
2 Telegram, Playford to Blyth (Agent-General), 23 July, 1888, Letterbooks Treasurer to Agent-General, S. Aust. Archives 634.
Telegram, McIlwraith to Archer (Agent-General), 17 Oct., 1888; and Archer's report on his interview with Herbert in his telegram of 18 Oct. and confidential letter of 19 Oct., 1888.
Letterbooks Chief Sec to Agent-General, and Agent-General to Chief Sec., vol. 39. State Archives of Queensland.
Robinson to Queensland—rather than as a means whereby the Playford and McIlwraith Governments could retain radical or, in the latter's case, Irish support. It is difficult to say whether the South Australian representation had any effect; but Knutsford decided against appointing Robinson to Queensland shortly after McIlwraith approached the Colonial Office. Although Robinson had been given some hope that he would be appointed to Queensland, Knutsford's decision was a wise one. It would have been a great mistake to have appointed a man with Robinson's autocratic tendencies to administer the government of a colony where the Premier was openly critical of the existing forms of the imperial connection.

In November, 1888, Sir Henry Blake's appointment as Governor of Queensland was announced. McIlwraith, supported by the Opposition leader, Sir Samuel Griffith, exercised the right of "protest" which he claimed. He implied that Blake's experience in Ireland had made him objectionable to the people of Queensland, that is, to the Irish Catholic vote; and he claimed that Blake had had more experience of government in a Crown Colony than in a self-govern-

I Telegram, Playford to Blyth, 20 July, 1888, and Blyth's reply of 21 July that Normanby was an applicant. Letterbooks Treasurer and Agent-General, S. Aust. Archives 634 and 613.
2 Telegram, Robinson to Knutsford, 24 July, 1888, and despatch of same date, C.O. 15/145; minute by Herbert on Archer to C.O., 3 Dec., 1888, C.O. 234/49.
3 Reference to telegram from Knutsford, 13 Oct., 1888, that he would be unable to appoint Robinson to Queensland, in Robinson to Knutsford, personal, 20 Oct., 1888. C.O. 15/145.
But in a letter to Parkes, McIlwraith claimed that he wanted an
ing colony; and he asserted that the unsatisfactory marriage of Blake's son and his lack of an occupation in Queensland made Blake's appointment undesirable.

Admittedly the Irish faction was one of the miscellaneous groups in the National Party, but it seems likely that too much emphasis has been placed on this as a reason for McIlwraith's opposition to Blake. Neither is the third objection to be given much weight. In view of Carrington's success in New South Wales, the root objection to Blake most probably lay in the second reason. This is borne out by the emphasis placed on Blake's lack of experience in a self-governing colony, and the implied condemnation of his earlier career as being in line with that of a "professional" Governor.

Knutsford was easily able to demolish McIlwraith's argument that the Colonial Government should express an opinion on the suitability of an appointment. He pointed out that Sir Henry Blake

opportunity to express approval of or his objection to the Secretary of State's nomination. Letter dated 12 Nov., 1888. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 88/3640 in Box 189 (Archives of N.S.W.).

I Telegram, McIlwraith to Archer, 3 Nov., 1888, Q'ld. Agent-General Letterbooks, vol.39 (State Archives of Q'ld.); and Archer to C.O., 3 Nov., 1888, printed in G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, (1889), C.5868, p.2. The third reason given by McIlwraith was not published. At the request of the Colonial Office, McIlwraith elaborated on his reasons and formally submitted them through the Administrator. Palmer to Knutsford, 15 Nov., 1888, printed in ibid., pp.4-5.

2 e.g. C.W. Dilke, op.cit., pp.202, 207.


4 e.g. W.H. Groom in the Q'ld. Legis. Assembly referred to the expectations of a first class Governor for a first class colony and one having knowledge of constitutional government. Q'ld. Parl. Deb., 15 Nov., 1888, vol.55, p.III3. An editorial in the Brisbane Courier, 10 Oct., 1888, showed that an appointment similar to Carrington's was expected.
was unknown in Queensland, but the Colonial Office knew that he had
done well in administering responsible government in the difficult
I circumstances of Newfoundland. Knutsford was also on firm ground
when he stated that experience in administering responsible govern-
ment had never been, and could never be, a prerequisite for an
appointment to a self-governing colony. His argument was indispu-
table that the greater number of the most successful Governors in
the Australian Colonies would otherwise have been debarred from
appointment. However, Knutsford evaded answering McIlwraith's main
objection to Blake: that he was more or less a "professional"
Governor instead of having a background and status comparable with
that of Carrington.

The immediate question as it concerned Queensland was settled
by Blake's resignation. Sir Henry Norman's appointment as Governor
of Queensland followed shortly afterwards. Although in his varied
and successful career Norman had had no previous experience of
administering responsible government, he had held appointments
which could not possibly mark him out as a "professional" Governor.
McIlwraith and his successor, B.D. Morehead, could, therefore, re-
gard Norman as being "eminently qualified for the position".

1 Knutsford to Palmer, 30 Nov., 1888, printed in C. 5828, pp. 16-7.
2 After a career in the Army in India from 1844 onwards, Norman
had been A.D.C. to Queen Victoria, a member of the Viceroy of
India's Council, a member of the Council of the Secretary of
State for India and Governor of Jamaica.
3 Morehead to Palmer, 22 Jan., 1889. Q'ld. Govt. House Papers,
Official Letters to the Governor, vol. 17 A.
In claiming the right to "protest", McLlwraith had not explicitly gone so far as to demand the right of nomination or of consultation before an appointment was made. Almost simultaneously the South Australian Government made a more specific request for consultation. In reply to the Queensland and South Australian Governments, the Colonial Office contended that a Governor was responsible to the Crown alone. Therefore a colonial ministry could neither participate in nominating him nor have a veto on the nomination. A colonial voice in a Governor's appointment would be equally undesirable on account of the impartial position he had to hold between the political parties in the colony. There was also an insuperable difficulty in subjecting the appointment of "a public man of high standing" to the approval of the Government in a colony where little was known of him. The South Australian Government countered the last mentioned objection by pointing out that the practice of a local appointment of the Chief Justice did not lead to charges of partiality. There was, therefore, no reason why a Governor, appointed on the recommendation

1 Playford to Blyth, 13 Nov., 1888. Letterbooks Treasurer to Agent-General, S.Aust. Archives 634. Playford asked for "an opportunity of expressing an opinion on the appointment of the new Governor".
3 C.O. to Blyth, 15 Nov., 1888, printed in ibid., p. 4.
4 ibid. On the basis of the number of times between 1885 and 1888 when one or other of the Colonial Governments failed to keep confidential information from publication, the Colonial Office probably had little expectation that any confidential consultation concerning the appointment of a Governor would not become known. Leakages of this nature would have enhanced the difficulty of finding men, other than "professional" Governors, who were willing to spend a six-year term in the Australian Colonies.
of the Colonial Government, should be charged with partiality. In an oblique reference to Sir Henry Blake's appointment, the South Australian Government pointed out that if a Colonial Government was given an opportunity to show whether or not a particular appointment would be acceptable, the greater unpleasantness of making objections after an appointment had been announced would be avoided.

The distinction between the right of expressing an opinion on the suitability of an appointment and the exercise of a colonial veto was a tenuous one. It would only be a short step also from expressing an opinion to demanding colonial nomination or to claiming that the appointment of a Governor should become a local matter. The South Australian Government must have been aware of these implications when it suggested that the Imperial Government should only nominate well-known persons to be Governor or, as an alternative, that the Colonial Governments themselves might suggest several persons who would be suitable. There was one further colonial claim that might conceivably arise. The corollary of the power to nominate a Governor, or to veto his appointment, would be the right to dismiss him.

There were men in the Australian Colonies in 1888 who claimed that Blake's resignation meant in effect that the Colonial Office had virtually conceded colonial consultation, and that Normanby

1 Telegram, Robinson to Knutsford, 21 Nov., 1888, printed in ibid., p. 7.
2 ibid.
had not been appointed to South Australia in deference to Playford's representations. Such claims, in addition to the demands of the Queensland and South Australian Governments, caused others in the colonies to fear that the position of the Governor might be radically if not totally altered. To these men, a colonial appointment of the Queen's representative, and especially an appointment by election, would not be the same as the Queen's appointment of her own representative through the agency of her advisers in Great Britain. As one of them expressed this problem: "When the position was assumed that had been taken up by Sir Thomas McIlwraith, there would be no representative of the Sovereign in the colony. It would be simply a representative of Sir Thomas McIlwraith". Those who followed this train of thought were sincerely perturbed about the future of the strongest link binding the Australian Colonies to Great Britain. They were trying to see the wider issues which lay beyond the immediate causes of the agitation in 1888. If the Imperial Government admitted these ultimate colonial claims, they could see no other end result than separation. No one could say with absolute assurance in 1888 that to grant the Colonial Govern-


ments the right of nominating the Governors would not lead to separation. There was too much evidence that pointed in the opposite direction. Not until the 1890s would it be possible to divest any colonial claim for control over the appointment of the Queen's representative from overtones of independence.

The issues which had been raised by the Queensland and South Australian Governments in 1888 were not relevant to those colonies alone. Indeed, the claim was made that even party distinctions were obliterated "on this large national question". In New South Wales and Victoria the whole problem could be viewed somewhat more dispassionately. It was in these two colonies that the more immediate and longer term "national" rights were examined more carefully in relation to imperial interests.

The Premier of New South Wales, Sir Henry Parkes, supported those who wanted changes in the selection and nomination of future Governors. He thought the Colonial Government should be informed of any intended appointment before it was announced. In addition, only those who had had experience of public affairs, had held high political office or had sat in the Imperial Parliament should be eligible for appointment. The latter was a new stipulation, and

1 This included some very questionable statements by McIlwraith when he was in Sydney in the early months of 1888, as well as remarks by radical and other members of the Colonial Parliaments during the debates in Nov., 1888, on the subject of the appointment of Governors.
Parkes thought it was justified by the growing importance of New South Wales as a part of the Empire. He also regarded it as the more important of the two principles he laid down. He did not hesitate to show the strength of colonial opposition to "professional" Governors as a motive for his demands; but he paid a well-earned tribute to Carrington's actions as Governor. It was obviously because of Carrington's success that Parkes wanted to ensure the appointment of a man of similar background as his successor.

Although some of the members of the New South Wales Legislative Assembly openly confessed their belief that the election or the nomination of the Governor by the colony would be the first step towards independence, only two declared themselves in favour of immediate separation. Others found difficulty in supporting Parkes' principles wholeheartedly. They thought that great care would have to be taken so that a colonial voice in the appointment of the Governor would not bring the Queen's representative into the arena of colonial politics, and thereby open the way for the Governor's impartiality to be questioned. On the whole, Parkes' two principles found general support in New South Wales. A colonial

Buchanan's amendment in favour of immediate separation, pp. 559-564, was supported by T.Walker, pp. 579-582, 600.
4 The Address in Reply, including Parkes' resolutions, was adopted by 43 votes to 2.
voice in the appointment of the Governor, and the disqualification of "professional" Governors from appointment in the future, seemed a way of satisfying aspirations which arose from a belief in the continued growth and progress of the colony.

The official attitude in Victoria was that the appointment of the Governor should remain solely in the hands of the Imperial Government. Sir Charles Dilke seemed to think that this attitude could be explained exclusively in terms of the opposition of the Victorian Government and a majority of both Houses to Home Rule because they were anti-Catholic. On the contrary, the main influence in determining this attitude appears to have been the problem raised by the Colonial office's decision to exclude Higinbotham from acting as Administrator during Sir Henry Loch's absence in 1889. The Gillies Government maintained, either on principle or as a matter of policy, that the appointment of an Administrator was exclusively the concern of the Imperial Government.


2 C.W. Dilke, op. cit., p. 129. Dilke's explanation seems tenable only if the Legislative Assembly debates are considered in isolation. The resolutions to support the Queensland Government were moved by Gaukson and O'Loughlen, who were supported by the Irish vote; and at one point Gillies stated that a colonial voice in the appointment of a Governor might lead to colonial involvement in imperial questions, e.g., Home Rule. Vict. Parl. Deb., vol. 59, p. 203. O'Loughlen's motion was defeated by 59 votes to 3.

The Age and the Argus supported Gillies' view, editorials 16 Nov., 1888.


Considering the fact that Higinbotham and the Age held that the appointment of a Governor was a matter for the Imperial Government, it is likely that the Gillies Government made the decision from conviction and not as a tactical policy in the circumstances of November, 1888. Higinbotham to Loch, 10 Nov., 1888, enclosed in Loch.
Gillies thought that those in the colonies who supported a colonial nomination of the Governor were assuming that his appointment was a local matter because he acted for the Queen in Victoria. He saw no reason to insist that a Governor should have had parliamentary or ministerial experience before his appointment. The only possible objection Gillies could see to any appointment made by the Imperial Government was unfitness to hold such a position; and he offered no assurance that for this reason the Victorian Government would not protest against any particular appointment.

Knutsford's attitude was not altered in any respect as a result of Parkes' two stipulations. He did not feel that any sufficient reasons had been established by the New South Wales, Queensland and South Australian Governments for making a change in the method of selecting and appointing a Governor. His chief defence lay in the number of very successful appointments made through the existing method, and the great difficulty of selecting men solely from the categories favoured by New South Wales. He closed the

to Knutsford, Vict. No.210, 16 Nov.,1888, C.0.309/I32; Age, editorials, 12 and 16 Nov.,1888.

Gillies thought that a Governor with a distinguished career and a great capacity for administration would not be satisfied for long with his constitutional position, but would attempt to influence his ministers to adopt his way of thinking.


3 Knutsford to the Governors of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, 8 July, 1889, printed in C.5828, pp.19-20.
In November,1888, Knutsford had promised a general statement of the Imperial Government's attitude. He delayed sending this despatch because of the difference in attitude between Victoria and New South Wales. He also wished to postpone re-opening the matter until several new Governors had taken up their duties. The despatch was drawn up in June,1889, in order to evade a motion by J.H.Heaton in the House of Commons. Minutes by Herbert and Knutsford on J.H.Heaton to C.O.,20 June, 1889, C.0.234/50.
subject by refusing to communicate formally or informally with a Colonial Government before an appointment was announced.

Despite the Colonial Office's refusal in 1888-1889, A.B. Keith claimed that the practice of consultation with the Colonial Governments grew up in succeeding years; but the two examples cited by him rest on very tenuous evidence. Keith later suggested that informal consultation was practised through allowing a name to leak out to the press in order to see if the reaction in the colony concerned was favourable. Only on one occasion in the Australian Colonies and New Zealand before 1900 did a deliberate or unintentional leakage occur. Apart from this, and one other rather dubious exception, Knutsford and his successor, Ripon, maintained the policy laid down in 1888 that there could be no consultation with the Colonial Government before a vice-regal appointment was announced. When Chamberlain took over the Colonial Office at the end of June, 1895, no immediate appointments had to be made in any of the Australian Colonies or New Zealand; but the last moves in a series of manoeuvres between the Kingston Government in South Australia and the Colonial Office since 1893 were left to him.

I Knutsford to Norman, Q'ld. No.40, 28 Oct.,1889, draft attached to Norman to Knutsford, Q'ld. No.79, 10 Sept.,1889, C.O.234/50.
2 A.B.Keith, op.cit., vol.1, p.87. Later writers, including B.Penny, op.cit. p.188, have accepted Keith's statement.
4 See Note B, Appointments to the Governorships of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, 1839-1900.
The basis of the manoeuvres was the South Australian Government's determination to reduce the cost of the vice-regal establishment. A reduction in the Governor's salary and allowances would increase the Colonial Office's difficulties in finding suitable men who were willing to accept a governorship and face even greater expenditure from their own personal resources. At the same time, the South Australian Government appeared to have a much wider objective in view than when Playford had asked to be informed before the appointment of a Governor was announced. Between 1893 and 1895 Kingston seemed to be trying to manoeuvre the Imperial Government into a position where the local appointment of a Governor would be practically conceded.

Kingston enjoyed strong political support in South Australia. His actions between 1893 and 1895 did not arise from any dissatisfaction with Kintore as Governor; but they had a clear connection with that form of Australian democracy which criticised lavish entertainments at Government House for certain sections of colonial society (even if the cost was met from the private resources of the Governor), objected to imperial titles and decorations, and asserted the equality, if not the superiority, of all things.

On account of the severe financial crisis, the Governments of New South Wales and Victoria had also been compelled to reduce the Governor's salary and allowances.

Kintore claimed that he spent £2000 p.a. from his own resources. Kintore to Bramston, 20 March, 1894, C.O.16/149.

In 1899 Chamberlain told Beauchamp that he imagined it was generally known that acceptance of an Australian governorship involved considerable personal expenditure. Chamberlain to Beauchamp, 9 Feb., 1899. Letters and papers of Earl Beauchamp, 1899-1900, pp.16-9 (Mitchell Library, A 3012).
Australian. Such attitudes led Kingston to seek ways of increasing colonial autonomy. The Colonial Office was therefore inclined to see him as "posing before 'Young Australia' as the anti-Downing Street champion". This did less than justice to Kingston, because he was neither a separatist nor a supporter of an elective governorship. Kintore and Sir Samuel Way, the Chief Justice, disliked radical colonial democracy, and in no uncertain terms they pointed out to the Colonial Office what they believed was Kingston's ultimate aim: to secure either some form of local control over the appointment of a Governor or the appointment of an Australian as Governor. For its part, the Colonial Office was well aware that Kintore's and Way's criticisms of Kingston's motives were coloured by their personal dislike of what they thought he epitomised.

Kintore's term of office was due to end in 1894 at the expiry of his period of leave. If Sir Samuel Way continued to act as Administrator for any length of time, the Government would save the

I e.g. Kingston in H. of Assembly, 18 June,1895, S.Aust. Parl. Deb. (1895 Session), pp.143-4; also Memo. for the Governor, 30 April, 1895, on the proposed reduction in the Governor's salary, enclosed in Way to Ripon, S.Aust., No.32, 2 May,1895. C.O.13/I50.
There is also Kintore's description of Kingston as "able but absolutely unscrupulous", and "blackhearted and entirely disloyal" Kintore to Meade, private, 24 July,1895. C.O.13/148.
The S.Australian Register also thought that Kingston was working towards the abolition of "Imperially appointed Governors". Editorial 9 July,1895.
5 e.g. Minute by Anderson on Way to Buxton, 19 Nov.,1895, enclosed in Buxton to Chamberlain, S.Aust.No.87, 19 Nov.,1895. C.O.13/I50.
6 Like Carrington, Kintore had been appointed for five years instead of the usual six-year term.
expense of half the vice-regal salary and Way's salary as Chief Justice. Kingston suggested, therefore, that as an economy measure there should be a longer interregnum than usual between the expiry of Kintore's term of office and the appointment of his successor. The Colonial Office appreciated the financial difficulties in the colony, and might have agreed but for Kintore's and Way's apprehensions that the move was intended to give the Colonial Government the power to indicate when the interregnum should end. The South Australian Government would thereby have taken an important step in the direction of turning the governorship into a local appointment. By obtaining Kintore's agreement to return to the colony for another year, and so complete the usual six-year term, Ripon evaded having to make any decision on the South Australian Government's request. Kingston appreciated that he had, as he put it, been "euchered" by Ripon in the first move. When the Legislative Council refused to pass the 1894 bill to reduce the Governor's salary, Kingston suffered another temporary setback.


5 A saving of about £2000 had been expected.
In the succeeding moves Ripon's courteously worded despatches contrasted with Kingston's increasingly unmannerly memoranda. The interest in these moves lies in the Colonial Office's determination to secure a compromise from which both sides would feel a certain amount of satisfaction. Ripon did not formally agree to Kingston's renewed request for an interregnum after Kintore had completed his full term. By appointing Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton almost immediately, Ripon again deprived the South Australian Government of any opportunity of stipulating how long the interregnum should be. Ripon also refused to give the South Australian Government any prior information before Buxton's appointment was announced. Yet in effect there was a six months' interregnum between the expiry of Kintore's term of office in April, 1895, and Buxton's arrival in October. Sir Robert Meade expressed the essence of the compromise in these words: "We have made an appointment of Governor and having ensured (?) that no attempt will be made to get a local man appointed it seems to me that we can make a merit of meeting their wishes as to the time at which the new Governor should take

1 e.g. Kingston’s memoranda of 18 Jan., and 13 Nov., 1894, and 2 May, 1895. C.O.13/149 and 150.
3 Playford (Agent-General) to C.O., 5 and 6 Feb., 1895, enclosing a telegram from Kingston, C.O.13/150.
4 Kintore left South Australia in March, 1895, and Buxton's appointment was announced on 21 April. The South Australian Government had hoped that Buxton would not arrive until March, 1896, but the Colonial Office thought that twelve months was too long an interregnum. Minutes on Buxton to Meade, 13 April, 1895, attached to Way to Ripon, Confidential I March, 1895. C.O.13/150.
up his appointment". For his part, Kingston could claim some
saving on the vice-regal establishment before the passage of the
Governor's Salary Reduction Bill in September, 1895.

The end of the moves and counter-moves came a few months later
when Chamberlain decided not to disallow the bill. Throughout the
two years of manoeuvring the Colonial Office realised that the
salary paid to the Governor was a matter on which the Secretary of
State could "do little more than advise and that gently". This
realisation, and the awareness that Kingston had strong support
in the colony, no matter what Kintore and Way might say to the
contrary, made Chamberlain's decision the only judicious one. How-
ever, the Colonial Office could claim victory in the more import-
ant issue at stake in its contest with Kingston. The power of

The Colonial Office's handling of the appointment of Kintore's
successor and the interregnum was appreciated in South Australia,
e.g. editorials in Advertiser and Register, II April, 1895.
2 S.Aust. Parl. Deb. (1895 Session), H. of Assembly, 10 Sept., 17
and 18 Sept., 1895, pp. 1310, 1387-1399, 1437.
Among the provisions in the bill, was a reduction in the Gover-
nor's salary from £5000 to £4000 p.a.
3 Chamberlain to Buxton, I Feb., 1896, draft of telegram filed with
Buxton to Chamberlain, Secret, 27 Nov., 1895; and Buxton's tele-
Despite Chamberlain's instruction to Way that he should use his
discretion with regard to reservation, Buxton, supported private-
ly by Way, decided to reserve the bill. See p. 331.
4 Marginal comment on draft of Ripon to Way, S.Aust. No. 14, 27 April,
1894, attached to Way to Ripon, S.Aust. No. 8, 23 Jan., 1894, C.O.
I3/I49.
5 When the C.O. decided to publish the correspondence of 1893-1895
and thereby show up the "diplomatic" methods of the South Aus-
tralian Government, it was hoped that "Miss Shaw would take it up"
and possibly show that the ready support given in the British
press to a colony against the Imperial Government was not always
justified. Minutes by Meade and Chamberlain on the reply to a
appointing a Governor remained firmly in the Secretary of State's hands.

During 1900, when he was faced with making appointments to three of the Australian Colonies, Chamberlain made the first definite departure from the policy Knutsford had laid down in 1888. He suggested to Queen Victoria that "in view of the strong prejudice which formerly existed in Australia against the appointment of gentlemen whose service had been confined to Crown Colonies, it would be wise to consult confidentially the Premiers of the several colonies to find out whether such appointments would be acceptable."

If the Queen agreed, and the nominations were approved by the colonies, Chamberlain would then submit the recommendations to her. Chamberlain appeared to be suggesting a change in procedure; but this could have arisen solely from the inevitable alteration in the position of the State Governors after the federation of the Australian Colonies, and the uncertainty in 1900 about the future amount of their salaries. Noblemen might be more reluctant to take up appointments as State Governors, and a return would then have to be made to appointing "professional" Governors.

Chamberlain might not have acted in conformity with his recommendation to the Queen when new appointments were made to the State Governorships in 1900-1901, or when the first Governor-General was appointed in 1900. There is no evidence that the Pre-

miers were consulted then; but consultation was recognised in the Colonial Office as the correct procedure when a successor to Hope-
toun, the Governor-General, was sought late in 1902. Although the Colonial Office refused to submit two or three names for the Commonwealth Government to make a choice, confidential information of the name of the new Governor-General would be given "with a view of ascertaining whether the appointment proposed will be acceptable". Barton, the Prime Minister, also approached Chamberlain directly to request that Tennyson, the Acting Governor-General, might be appointed to complete Hopetoun's term of office to the end of 1903 at least. Despite some reluctance at having to face the problem of making another appointment the following year, Chamberlain finally agreed to Tennyson's appointment. This was because the Commonwealth Government was unlikely to regard Sir George Clarke, the Governor of Victoria and the only possible alternative to Tennyson, "as a big enough man for a definite appointment".

By 1901 the Colonial governments had been granted the right of expressing an opinion before a vice-regal appointment was made.

I Hopetoun resigned in June, 1902, after the Commonwealth Parlia-
ment refused to reimburse him for the expenses incurred in connection with the royal visit and the celebrations at the inauguration of the Commonwealth.

2 Minute by Dealtry on Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegram, 26 Oct., 1902, C.O. 418/19. Dealtry referred to the practice of consulta-
tion laid down on Newfoundland 1010/01 and 1524/01.
Chamberlain had been informed by Tennyson, the Acting Governor-
General, that the Barton Ministry thought it would "tend to a happy result if, before an appointment is made, the names under consideration could be forwarded for their opinion as to their reception in Australia".

3 Minutes on Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegram, 3 Nov., 1902, and
It did not necessarily follow from Chamberlain's agreement to Barton's request that Tennyson should be appointed Governor-General that he would allow colonial nomination as a general practice; but this was almost bound to follow sooner or later.

When in 1888-1889 three of the Australian Colonial Governments sought to be consulted before the appointment of a Governor was announced, they intended to emphasise that they regarded a Governor's constitutional functions as the most important of his duties. Although in 1901 some imperial duties still devolved upon the Governor-General, his duties as the monarch's representative in the administration of public affairs were far more important. Consultation with the Commonwealth Government before the appointment of a Governor-General was announced was the most significant way of recognising this development and of showing that a self-governing colony was gaining equality of status with Great Britain.

The Imperial Conferences of 1926 and 1930 gave formal recognition to changes of which the foundations had unmistakably been laid by the early years of the twentieth century. Once equality of

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draft of telegram to Barton, C.O.418/19.

4 Minutes by Chamberlain and Anderson on Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegrams, dated 3 and II Nov.,1902, C.O.418/19.

I Almost concurrently, all the Australian Colonial Governments were supporting Western Australia in securing as full a measure of responsible government as they themselves had achieved. See the Addresses adopted by the Colonial Parliaments in 1889. The majority in the Parliaments favoured the whole of Western Australia as one self-governing colony. They were afraid that the establishment of a Crown Colony in the northern part might lead to Chinese immigration or pauper settlement schemes.

2 The 1926 Imperial Conference declared that the Governor-General was solely the representative of the monarch, and the 1930 Imperial Conference laid down that the Governor-General should be appointed on the advice of the Dominion Government after informal consultation with the monarch.
status between Great Britain and a Dominion was conceded, and the Governor-General recognised as being solely the representative of the monarch, it was no longer possible to maintain that the Imperial Government must advise the Crown in the appointment of its representative. Despite the fears expressed in the 1880s, that colonial nomination was bound to lead to separation, the Crown remained the strongest and most obvious bond of Empire.

IV

During the latter part of the nineteenth century the Governors themselves contributed much to the smooth working of their dual functions as imperial officers and as the Queen's representatives in the exercise of constitutional functions. Colonial ministers were willing to admit that the Governors were well chosen, yet there were danger signals whenever a Governor seemed to make however mild an effort to take an active or an independent part in colonial affairs. For this reason, the Colonial Office treated with circumspection Sir Henry Loch's suggestion in January, 1888, that a conference of imperial and colonial representatives should be held to discuss Chinese immigration into the Australian Colonies. Possibly Lord Brassey, because of his enthusiasm for imperial naval defence and for imperial federation, came nearest to treading on

1 e.g. G.H. Reid's statement in an interview published in the Daily News, 15 June, 1897.
2 Loch to Knutsford, Confidential, 6 Jan., 1888, and minutes, C.O. 309/132.

On another occasion, Duncan Gillies, the Premier of Victoria, raised objections when Loch wrote directly to Parkes in 1889 after the latter had taken up the cause of Australian federation. Carrington to Knutsford, Confidential, 21 Nov., 1889. C.O. 201/610.
dangerous ground and offending a long held colonial tenet that
Australian defence was local or "national". He supported schemes
drawn up by the Colonial Defence Committee for the establishment
of an imperial military reserve in Australia, and he urged the
formation of a branch of the Royal Naval Reserve.

Despite Higinbotham's contention that local subjects should
not feature in the correspondence between the Colonial Office and
the Governor of a self-governing colony, the Governors continued
to be a useful source of confidential information on colonial
affairs and on colonial attitudes towards imperial policy. The
practice of monthly reports was encouraged by Knutsford, Ripon
and Chamberlain. Sir Henry Norman's reports were particularly full
and showed a judicious appreciation of Queensland affairs. In the
mid-1880s, and again in 1892-3 when the Imperial Federation League
was passing through its final phase of activity, the Colonial
Office specifically requested information from the Governors
about attitudes in the Australian Colonies towards the imperial
federation movement.

1 See despatches from Brassey, and correspondence between the
2 Knutsford, Circular (Secret) of 9 March, 1892; and from Ripon,
6 March, 1893, and Chamberlain, 21 Feb., 1896. N.S.W. Govt. House
Papers. Chamberlain favoured the use of Secret despatches for
this purpose rather than private letters to the Secretary of
State.
3 e.g. Norman's Confidential despatch of II Nov., 1889, C.O.234/50;
and Secret despatches of I June, I August and I Sept., 1892; I9
March, 1894, and II Nov., 1895. Q'ld. Govt. House Papers; Letter-
books of Secret Despatches, vols. I and II.
4 e.g. Ripon's Secret despatch of 6 March, 1893. N.S.W. Govt. House
Papers.
News items showing colonial opinion on imperial federation were
forwarded regularly from Queensland and Victoria, and less fre-
quently from N.S.W. and South Australia.
Although a Governor's actions could not always be supported, the Colonial Office was usually reluctant to censure him publicly. The Colonial Office also tried to ensure that the Colonial Governments were always mindful of the honour due to the office of the Governor. To uphold the Governor's position, the Imperial Government did not regard the Agent-General as the correct channel of communication on any matter concerning the Governor. The Colonial Office did not refuse to accept such communications; but should a reply be made it was either sent through the Governor (or Administrator) or a fuller statement of the representations from the Colonial Government was requested through the Governor.

Despite their demands which affected the role and the appointment of the Governors, the Colonial Governments did not seek to change the relationship of the colonies with the British Crown. One of the clearest statements of this attitude in the early 1890s was made by J.B. Patterson when he was Premier of Victoria. In the existing relationship of the Australian Colonies to the British

I e.g. with regard to Musgrave's action in the Kitt case. Knutsford to Palmer (Administrator), Q'ld. No.62, 30 Oct., 1888. The draft of this despatch is particularly interesting. Its basis was Wingfield's minute of 5 Oct. (on Musgrave to Knutsford, Q'ld. No.71, 17 August, 1888); but there were significant alterations, omissions and additions by Brumton and Herbert in softening the terms of censure because it was a public despatch, and, moreover, one drafted after Musgrave's death. C.O.254/49.

2 e.g. the Colonial Office's request in 1888 that McIlwraith should send a full statement of his objections to Blake through the Administrator. The Colonial Office replied to the South Australian Agent-General in 1888 because Playford had not entirely ignored the Governor in asking to be informed confidentially of the name of the new Governor. In 1895 no reply was made to G.H. Reid's message, sent through the Agent-General, asking for an early appointment of a new Governor and offering to make a nomination himself. See Note B.

3 In 1888 Sir Thomas McIlwraith might have been a possible exception if his remarks on separation foreshadowed a deliberate policy.
Crown, "the subjects of the Empire, while free to promote their own interests in whatever way they think best, are only restricted in respect of matters which relate to the Empire as a whole.... All that is requisite, is that the enlightened and liberal spirit—now the settled policy of the Imperial Government towards the Colonies—should be continued”.

Late in 1889, when the Australian federation movement took on a new strength, the Governors saw the beginning of a problem which was eventually to involve them in a conflict between their imperial and their constitutional duties. This conflict came in 1900 when imperial legislation became necessary to establish the Commonwealth of Australia. At that point the Imperial Government attempted to safeguard certain imperial interests for the sake of the unity of the Empire, and the Governors chose to advocate those imperial interests in opposition to the opinions of the majority of those who had worked out the federal constitution.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, and, indeed, up to the end of the First World War, a Governor's most important duty as an imperial officer concerned the place of the self-governing colonies in Britain's relations with foreign Powers. Not only was he to reserve any colonial bill which touched on the foreign relations of the Empire, but he was also the channel by which the

I J.B. Patterson to Sir A. Clarke (Acting Agent-General), 19 Sept., 1893, a copy of which was forwarded to the C.O. by Clarke, 8 Nov., 1893. C.O. 309/139.
Patterson's statement was made in reply to an invitation to Clarke to become a member of a Special Committee of the Imperial Federation League to consider commercial federation.

2 See Chapter 13.
Colonial Governments were consulted when their interests might be affected by imperial treaties. The Governors, therefore, played an important role in the 1888 crisis over Chinese immigration and in the problems created by the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894. Even after foreign governments had established consulates in the Australian Colonies, the Governors, and thus the Imperial Government, remained the channel of communication in any negotiations between the Colonial Governments and foreign Powers. This practice continued after the formation of the Commonwealth in 1901.

As long as foreign policy remained entirely an imperial matter, the Governor-General's dual role continued. It was not until after 1919, when the British Dominions were given recognition as separate entities in international relations, that his imperial duties became incompatible with his role as the monarch's representative.

1 See Chapters 9 and 10.

2 In one respect Japan was an exception to this. The practice of direct negotiations had grown up, and had been allowed by the Imperial Government, because of the difficulties in connection with immigration arising from Queensland's adherence to the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894. In 1901 the Japanese Consul in Sydney protested directly to the Commonwealth Government about the Immigration Restriction Bill, e.g. see enclosures and minutes with Hopetoun to Chamberlain, No. 97, 21 Nov., 1901, C.O. 418/10.

3 After the declaration of the 1926 Imperial Conference that the Governor-General of a dominion was solely the monarch's representative, the office of High Commissioner was created to represent the interests of the United Kingdom in each Dominion.
CHAPTER 9

IMPERIAL FOREIGN POLICY AND COLONIAL LEGISLATION: AUSTRALIAN

RESTRICTIONS ON CHINESE IMMIGRATION

Despite indications that the Chinese problem was more or less under control by 1887, the appearance of calm was deceptive. The visit of the Chinese Commissioners in 1887, and their inquiries into the treatment of Chinese nationals in the Australian Colonies, revived fears of an increase in Chinese immigration and focussed attention on the Chinese as a competitive labour force and as an unassimilable element in the population.

One of the features which made the Chinese a distinctive element in colonial society in the 1880s in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and southern Queensland was the competition they offered as cheaper labour. This was especially marked in the furniture trade and in market gardening, and was most acute during a time of distress such as that in New South Wales or South Australia in 1887. In the economic and other conditions of the 1880s,

1 The Chinese Immigration Acts, passed by the Australian Colonies and New Zealand in 1881 or in succeeding years, had effected an appreciable decrease in the volume of Chinese immigration. The texts of these Acts are printed as Appendix II in G.B. and I. Parl.Paper, lxxiii (1886), C.5448, Australasia. Correspondence relating to Chinese Immigration into the Australasian Colonies. A poll tax of £10 was imposed in all the colonies with the exception of Queensland where it was increased to £30 in 1884. The tonnage limitation, and the penalties imposed on masters and shipowners as well as on illegal immigrants, varied from colony to colony. In N.S.W., Victoria and Tasmania one Chinese passenger was permitted for every 100 tons of a ship's burthen; in Queensland and W.Australia one to every 50 tons; and in S.Australia and New Zealand one to every 10 tons.

2 The Chinese Commissioners objected to restrictive legislation because it marked out the Chinese for discriminative treatment, and appeared to make them an inferior people. The Commissioners made their views known before leaving the colonies, and later the Chinese Minister in London lodged a formal protest at the
there was no longer any fear of large numbers of Chinese miners coming into competition with those of British or European stock in the mining areas, and especially in the goldfields, as had been the case in the 1850s and 1860s. The Chinese were prevented by their different social habits from becoming assimilated into colonial society, and they also tended to continue to look on China as the focus of their loyalties because they always remained part of its village and family structure and hoped eventually to return to China. In effect, the Chinese were an alien race occupying an inferior position in the Australian Colonies. Colonial self-preservation, it was held, necessitated that the entry of Chinese into and settlement in Australia should be restricted.

In the late 1880s, Darwin was the one danger spot because the Northern Territory might offer sufficient attraction to draw large numbers of Chinese to the Australian Colonies. Moreover, the climatic conditions there were such that the Chinese might prove to be more capable of permanent settlement in large numbers than

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2 In 1878 a Queensland Act excluded Chinese miners from a goldfield until three years had passed since the field was proclaimed.

Current attitudes in the Australian Colonies towards Chinese immigration were formally stated by the Colonial Governments in reply to Holland's Circular despatch of 23 Jan., 1888. Printed in C.5448, pp.2-3, 14-5, 24-5, 35-6, 39-40, 51-4. Also see Parkes' statements in the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, 2 and 16 May, 1888, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.32, pp. 4418, 4732.

At the beginning of 1888 there were fewer Chinese residents in the colonies than in earlier decades. See the figures given in M. Willard, History of the White Australia Policy (Melbourne, 1923), pp.51, 60, 69, 94.
white people. Although the Northern Territory was controlled by South Australia, the Chinese Immigration Restriction Act did not apply outside South Australia itself. Reports of appreciable numbers of Chinese entering the Northern Territory caused apprehension in Queensland. If the Chinese entered Queensland by land, the restrictions of the 1884 Act would be evaded; and they would perhaps provide an alternative labour force for the northern Queensland plantations when kanaka labour recruitment ended in 1890.

There were unmistakable indications in the latter part of 1887 of increasing anti-Chinese feeling among certain sections of the population in the eastern Australian Colonies, and especially among the small shopkeeper and artisan classes. In addition, there were organised Anti-Chinese Leagues in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and other centres. This ferment coincided with and, indeed, had some links with the radical political and social agitation which was an offshoot of the growing Australian national awareness. Anti-Chinese feeling rose to a sudden high pitch early in 1888. The simultaneous arrival of several ships bringing Chinese immigrants made it appear as if long held fears of the dangers to colonial society from a sudden influx of large numbers of Chinese were about to be realised.

It was widely held in the Australian Colonies that there was

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1 See Section 2 of the S. Australian Act. C. 5448, p. 76.
2 Kanaka labour recruitment was to cease in 1890 under an Act passed in 1885.
an extensive abuse of the naturalisation certificates issued to Chinese residents who wished to make a visit to their families in China or Hong Kong and then return to Australia. The holders of naturalisation certificates were exempt from paying a poll tax and from the other restrictions on Chinese immigration. Although in many cases Chinese entering the colonies with these certificates were not the original holders, it was very difficult for customs officials to prove this in individual cases. Moreover, the immigration restrictions did not apply to Chinese who were British subjects. An appreciable proportion of Chinese immigrants, if not the majority as some colonists claimed, came from the Crown Colony of Hong Kong and to a lesser extent from the Straits Settlements.

Restrictions on Chinese immigration into the Australian Colonies posed a double problem for the British Government. On the one hand, charges were made in the Australian Colonies that the Colonial Office put the interests of the Crown Colonies in encouraging British Chinese to emigrate, and the interests of the shipowners in transporting them, before the interests of Australia in restricting their entry. On the other hand, Australian restrictions on Chinese immigration involved the British Government in difficulties with the Chinese Government. In 1888 the view was

1 The N.S.W., Tasmanian, W. Australian and New Zealand Acts specifically excluded British Chinese. In the other colonies, the Acts were not applied to them.
2 e.g. Parkes in N.S.W. Legis Assembly, 16 May, 1888. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 32, p. 4785.
widely held in the Australian Colonies that the British Government would sacrifice important Australian interests so as to maintain friendly political and commercial relations with the Chinese Empire and ensure Chinese support in countering any Russian threat to India. More responsible elements among colonial public men and the press showed some awareness that the Australian Colonies were impinging on British treaty and other interests in legislating to restrict Chinese immigration. They realised that those interests could not be entirely disregarded in any further proposals by the colonies to deal with the problem.

Towards the end of 1888 Lord Knutsford stated that it was the British Government's duty to accede to colonial wishes provided they were consonant with imperial interests. The crisis caused in 1888 by the need for further restrictions on Chinese immigration into the Australian Colonies provided an opportunity for testing the sincerity of Knutsford's declaration. Should the British Government decide that Australian interests in further restricting Chinese immigration were not consonant with Great Britain's political and commercial interests in China, those Australian colonists who were always suspicious of imperial policy would have further reason for claiming that the British Government was ever ready to sacrifice vital and well defined Australian interests.

As in the case of the New Hebrides, the final decisions on

1 e.g. Age, editorial 8 August, 1887.
policy towards other Powers rested with the Foreign Office and not with the Colonial Office. Judged by its actions between 1885 and 1887, the Colonial Office was unlikely to disregard colonial representations. Nor was it likely that further colonial legislation against Chinese immigration would be disallowed. Unfortunately, it did not necessarily follow that the Foreign Office would be as appreciative of colonial interests as the Colonial Office. Much would also depend on the insistence and the effectiveness of the Colonial Office's promptings. For these reasons, as much interest in the new phase of the Chinese question in 1888 lies in the different degree of support given by the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office to the representations of the Australian Colonies as it does in the attitudes of the Colonial Governments towards imperial policy. The Colonial Office had to bear the brunt of colonial criticism of aspects of imperial policy it could not control.

II

When working class agitation against labour competition from the Chinese accelerated during the latter months of 1887, Sir Henry Parkes, the Premier of New South Wales, and Duncan Gillies, the Premier of Victoria, not only realised the strength of this agitation but also its possible threat to their own political positions unless some action was taken. Both Premiers wanted the Governments of all the Australian Colonies to consult
together on what action should be taken.

Between November, 1887, and March, 1888, the Premiers of the Australian Colonies were united as far as their objective was concerned: the prevention of any large-scale Chinese immigration. They differed on the means of securing that objective. The simplest way of dealing with the problem was to introduce legislation increasing the existing poll tax and tonnage limitations. Parkes felt that immediate measures were needed; and he, far more than any of his fellow Premiers, favoured further legislative action. He saw the visit of the Chinese Commissioners, and the appearance of a sudden increase in the number of Chinese immigrants early in 1888, as proof of his long standing belief that the Chinese would attempt to establish a colony in Australia. Gillies was reluctant to introduce more stringent legislation because he thought it would cause undesirable repercussions in Anglo-Chinese relations. He believed that new immigration would be severely restricted if the existing Victorian Act was applied more strictly, and especially so with regard to the


2 These measures were favoured by the working class organisations and Anti-Chinese Associations in N.S.W., Victoria and Queensland. In the early months of 1888, they were agitating for a poll tax of up to as much as £100, and also for a residential tax of £10 or £20 on Chinese already within the colonies, e.g. Victorian Anti-Chinese Association to Parkes, 24 Feb. 1888. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 88/2646 in Box 175 (Archives of N.S.W.).


4 e.g. Parkes to Griffith, 21 Feb., 1888. Copy in N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 88/2185 (Archives of N.S.W.).
fraudulent use of naturalisation certificates. Gillies also thought that certain Australian ports should be closed to Chinese for a period of six months. He seemed to imply that either the agitation in the colonies would quieten down during that time or the shipowners in Hong Kong and elsewhere would have time to realise that the 1881 Act was being rigidly enforced.

At the end of 1887, Griffith, the Premier of Queensland, was opposed to introducing any new legislation; but by March, 1888, he was changing his mind. Increased fears of an influx of Chinese were aroused in Queensland by rumours of large numbers of Chinese landing at Darwin. The Governments of the three eastern colonies, therefore, urged the South Australian government to close the gap at Darwin. Although a few months earlier Playford, the Premier of South Australia, had decided against another attempt to extend the 1881 Act to the Northern Territory, a poll tax of £10 was to be imposed, subject to parliamentary sanction, on all Chinese arriving in the Northern Territory and

1 Gillies, therefore, suggested that the Collector of Customs should deny that those who presented naturalisation certificates were the genuine holders. The restrictions of tonnage and poll tax would then apply to almost all Chinese passengers. Gillies to Parkes, Confidential, 30 Nov., 1887, enclosing a copy of the Memo. by the Victorian Commissioner of Trade and Customs, dated 30 Nov., 1887. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 88/13268 in Box 175 (Archives of N.S.W.).
on those already in the Territory beyond a certain radius from Darwin. A twenty-one days' period of quarantine was also imposed on vessels arriving at Darwin from China, the Malay peninsula and Singapore. These emergency measures did not alter Playford's opposition to the introduction of hasty and more restrictive legislation into South Australia.

From the lack of unity in method among the Colonial Governments were born two other possible means of dealing with the renewed Chinese threat to the Australian Colonies. One of these means was to call a conference in order to secure united action by the Colonial Governments, and the other was to secure an Anglo-Chinese treaty. The latter might avoid unwelcome repercussions from colonial legislation on Anglo-Chinese relations; and either a conference or a treaty might prevent unilateral or hasty action by a colony in disregard of intercolonial and imperial interests.

In January, 1888, Sir Henry Loch, the Governor of Victoria, suggested that an intercolonial conference should be called on the initiative of the Imperial Government. He thought two possible dangers might be avoided if the colonies could decide on united action in consultation with the Imperial Government. The

1 Playford to Gillies, 28 Feb., 1888, printed in ibid., p. I4. The Legislative Council had defeated previous attempts to extend the 1881 Act to the Northern Territory.
2 Loch to Holland, Confidential, 6 Jan., 1888. C.O.309/I32.
danger of extreme colonial legislation, as a result of popular agitation, would be removed, and the consequent international difficulties would be prevented.

Loch's suggestion was received sympathetically in the Colonial Office; but nothing was done beyond informing the Foreign Office that the idea of a conference was worth considering. This did not mean that the Colonial Office discounted the importance of the Chinese question in the Australian Colonies; but it bristled with so many difficulties that the Colonial Office felt obliged to tread warily. Several months earlier Herbert had emphasised the importance of allaying colonial fears that the Imperial Government would come into conflict with the colonies on the Chinese question: "It would be an interference with self-government, which we should have to abandon with discomfort to insist that the Colonies should receive Chinese if they do not desire to do so". There was, therefore, an obvious danger of raising the cry of "Imperial interference" should a conference be called on the initiative of the Imperial Government. Officials in the Colonial Office realised only too well that working class agita-

1 On 23 Jan., 1888, the Colonial Office had sent on to the colonies the Foreign Office's request for details of existing legislation against the Chinese. Until this information was received, the Foreign Office would make no reply to the Chinese Minister's protest in Dec., 1887, and the Colonial Office was reluctant to open up any other questions in the meantime.

2 Minute by Herbert on Loch to Holland, Confidential, 9 August, 1887. C.O. 309/131.
tion in the colonies might prevent the Governments from acting reasonably; but should the Colonial Office attempt to recommend the disallowance of hasty restrictive legislation, grave difficulties would be created between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments. On the other hand, if further colonial legislation against the Chinese had necessarily to be sanctioned, difficulties would be created for the Foreign Office in its relations with the Chinese Government.

While Loch's suggestion for an intercolonial conference was not altogether lost from sight, another feasible means of dealing with the problem was introduced by several of the Colonial Governments. At the end of March and the beginning of April, the Governments of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia asked for details of a recent treaty between the United States and China, and inquired if a similar treaty to control immigration could be negotiated by the British Government. Sir William Robinson, the Governor of South Australia, had been the

I Minutes by Herbert and Anderson on Loch to Holland, Confidential, 6 Jan.,1888. C.0.309/I32.
2 Telegrams from Carrington, 31 March and 5 April,1888, C.0.301/608; despatch from Loch, Vict. No.60, 5 April,1888, C.0.309/I32; and telegram from Robinson, 4 April, 1888, asking only for details of the treaty with the United States, C.0.13/I45. The treaty secured by the United States was believed to prohibit Chinese labourers from entering the United States for 20 years unless they had a family there or property amounting to the value of 1000 dollars.

The Colonial Governments had discussed the idea of a treaty among themselves before the Imperial Government was asked for details of the treaty between the United States and China, e.g. Gillies to the Premiers of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, 22 March, 1888. Printed in Vict. V. and P. (1888 Session), Legis. Assembly, vol.I, Paper C 20, pp.15-6.
Chinese could claim no such rights because the existing Chinese Immigration Restriction Acts had been sanctioned by the British Government. The Colonial Governments could see no reason for the Chinese Government's continued insistence that its subjects should not be subjected to discriminatory treatment and prevented from entering the Australian Colonies. By its acceptance of a treaty provision that Chinese labourers should not enter the United States, the Chinese Government had created a precedent. A similar treaty between Great Britain and China would formally recognise the right of the self-governing colonies to control the composition of their population. At the same time it would remove any adverse threat to Anglo-Chinese relations through the actions of the Australian Colonies.

In marshalling these arguments, the Colonial Governments overlooked significant differences in the Australian and American situations. As the Chinese Commissioners had reported, there had been no violence against the Chinese already in Australia. For this reason, the actual or possible improvement of conditions for Chinese in the United States, including the removal of threats of violence and the prospect of an indemnity for Chinese victims of lawless public outbursts, were bargaining counters that could not be used in any British negotiations. In addition,

1 This had not prevented the Chinese Minister in London from protesting strongly in 1886 when British Columbia had imposed heavier restrictions on Chinese immigrants under legislation adopted in 1884. Lew-ta-Jen to Salisbury, 13 July, 1886, printed in C. 5448, Appendix I, pp. 56-8.
the United States Government was its own agent. The British Government had no control over the treatment of Chinese in the self-governing colonies.

Once more there was some unity of purpose among the Colonial Governments when they decided to ask the Imperial Government if a treaty could be negotiated with the Chinese Government; but again there were differences of opinion on the method of approach. Some of the Colonial governments thought a joint representation would carry most weight. Parkes and Griffith wanted each Government to act for itself. In the end any possible unanimity of action was lost as a result of Parkes' precipitate and independent actions.

Parkes' arguments in defence of his unilateral action in asking the Imperial Government to negotiate a treaty are not convincing. His claim is inadmissible that the communications between the Colonial Governments for the purpose of securing common action were "of an irregular character". Although he had urged Gillies to send a separate representation to the Imperial Government rather than a joint one, he gave Gillies no time to

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1 This was a point which was appreciated in the Colonial Office. Knutsford and Herbert seemed to think that it might lessen the chances of securing a treaty with China. Minutes on F.O. to C.O., 16 and 21 April, 1888. C.O. 201/609.

2 i.e. Gillies, Playford and Fysh (Tasmania). Playford wanted to wait until the exact terms of the treaty with the United States were known in Australia. See correspondence printed in Vict. V. and P. (1888 Session), Legis. Assembly, vol. I, Paper C 20, pp. 15-5, 17-8.

3 But they differed on the method to be used. Griffith thought that Addresses to the Queen from each Colonial Parliament would be most influential. Griffith to Gillies, 7 April, 1888, printed in ibid., pp. 22-3.

reply before he presented his own case to Knutsford. He seemed to take it for granted that the other colonies would then follow suit. At the end of March and during the early part of April, Parkes was the most convinced that imperial action was needed urgently; but it is hard to find out with any certainty whether anti-Chinese agitation was any stronger in New South Wales at that time than in Victoria or Queensland. Possibly Parkes was more susceptible to popular pressure, and he wanted to forestall any moves by Gillies and Playford towards restraint or compromise.

As Parkes presented the case for diplomatic action by the British Government, it was partly a request and partly a threat. Australian interests, being synonymous with the interests of the Empire as a whole, demanded that the Australian Colonies should be "protected by the diplomatic influence and the powers of treaty which belong to the Empire". Because one of the most vital and grave of Australian interests was the restriction of Chinese immigration, Parkes urged the British Government to undertake negotiations with the Chinese Government immediately to secure the freedom of the Australian Colonies from "the disturbance of Chinese immigration in any form". Although the Colonial Govern-

2 Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 3 April, 1888, that Parkes believed there was "every prospect of all the colonial governments making similar representation". Printed in C. 5448, p. 3.
3 Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 31 March, 1888, printed in C. 5448, pp. 2-3.
ments wanted to avoid raising a conflict between colonial and imperial interests, the alternative to a treaty was "local legislation of a drastic character".

The Victorian Government chose to put its case before the Colonial Office less peremptorily. Gillies evidently did not think the situation was as urgent as Parkes. Although he believed just as firmly that British diplomacy should safeguard colonial interests as much as imperial interests, he made no threat of legislative action if the British Government declined or failed to negotiate a treaty. On the whole, Gillies' more moderate attitude rather than Parkes' blunt alternatives had most support from the other Colonial Governments.

At the beginning of April, the Colonial Office also showed no immediate sense of urgency. When Parkes' request for the opening of treaty negotiations was received, there was some feeling in the Colonial Office that an intercolonial conference, as had been suggested by Sir Henry Loch, might be given a chance before attempting the much more difficult task of negotiating a treaty with the Chinese Government. Yet the Colonial office still hesitated to act on a proposal that had come from the Governor and not from the Victorian Government; and little assurance was felt that New South Wales would be co-operative towards a suggestion coming from Victoria.

1 Memo. by Gillies, II April, 1888, forwarded in Loch to Knutsford, Vict. No. 67, 15 April, 1888, printed in C.5448, pp. 24-5.
2 Minute by Fuller on Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 31 March, 1888. C.0.201/608.
3 Minutes by Fuller on Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 31 March, 1888; and by Bramston and Knutsford on Carrington's telegram of 3 April, 1888. C.0.201/608.
When the Colonial Office turned towards the prospects of a treaty with China some immediate difficulties were apparent. The terms of the treaty with the United States were not officially known to the British Government; there would be greater difficulty in negotiating an Anglo-Chinese agreement should the Chinese Government require some form of reciprocity; and the Australian Colonies probably would not want to lose the power of exploiting China commercially. Despite these difficulties, the Colonial Office felt that an attempt should be made to obtain no less stringent terms for the Australian colonies than those in the treaty with the United States. Although the Colonial Office did not want to encourage discrimination against a cheap form of labour, Herbert and Knutsford were more realistic than Onslow in realising that it would be most unwise to resist the Australian attitude.

It is important to emphasise that before the anti-Chinese agitation in New South Wales and Victoria reached crisis proportions early in May, the Colonial Office was supporting the Australian view that Chinese immigration must be severely restricted, and had urged the Foreign Office to undertake to negotiate a treaty with China. However, the fact that no immediate or early

1 Minutes by Anderson and Herbert on Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 3 April, 1888. C.O.201/608.
2 Minutes by Herbert, Onslow and Knutsford on Carrington's telegram of 3 April. Knutsford took the view that "if the Australian Colonies press this matter we can hardly help ourselves, though we need not encourage the policy". C.O.201/608.
3 See a note on Carrington's telegram of 3 April, that a request for negotiations to be opened with the Chinese Government was sent to the Foreign Office on 15 April. C.O.201/608.
reply, or even a formal acknowledgment, was received from the Colonial Office caused an outburst of feeling in New South Wales against the British Government; and led to charges by Parkes and others that Australian interests were being sacrificed. Both the Foreign Office and the Victorian Government contributed to the delay.

Salisbury and the permanent officials at the Foreign Office appreciated neither the urgency of the matter nor the strength of Australian feeling. In a leisurely approach to the question, the British Minister in Washington was asked to obtain details of the negotiations and the text of the treaty between the United States and China; and the British Minister in Peking was asked to report on the possibility of a similar treaty with Great Britain, and, failing this, whether the Chinese Government would regard legislative action by the Australian Colonies as unfriendly. The Colonial Office regarded the Foreign Office's indefinite approach as unsatisfactory and in part unnecessary. The Chinese had already made it clear enough that they would regard colonial legislation as unfriendly.

As the Colonial Office had feared, the reply from the British Minister in Peking was most unpropitious. Consequently,

1 Parkes' remarks in the Legislative Assembly on 16 May, 1888, suggest that he had expected some kind of immediate acknowledgment and possibly a general promise of action. N.S.W. Parl. Deb. (1887-8 Session), vol. 32, p.4788.
2 His telegram of 26 April, sent through Carrington, was, therefore, an attempt to obtain such a reply. Printed in C.5448, p.112.
3 Minutes by Fuller, Herbert and Knutsford on F.O. to C.O., 16 April, 1888. C.O. 201/609.
4 F.O. to C.O., 21 April, 1888. C.O. 201/609.
the New South Wales Government could neither be told that negoti-
tiations for a treaty would be undertaken nor that the Chinese-
Government had rejected any possibility of a treaty. Because the
Australian Colonies had themselves suggested a treaty, the
Colonial Office felt obliged to postpone sending a reply to New
South Wales until the Foreign Office had been encouraged to make
a more definite attempt to open negotiations.

Press representatives in London obtained some unofficial
and incomplete information on this situation. They attributed the
unwillingness to attempt to negotiate a treaty to the Colonial
Office and not to the Foreign Office. Reports of this nature had
a double effect in the colonies. They easily strengthened fears
that the British Government would sacrifice Australian interests,
and they added weight to the irresponsible agitation of those
who wanted immediate colonial action against Chinese immigrants
or even separation from the mother country. Unfortunately, Carr-
lington did not immediately inform the Colonial Office by tele-
graph of the effect of the press reports in New South Wales. The
Colonial Office, therefore, was not straightway aware of his
warning that strong anti-Chinese feeling was increasing among
all classes of the population and "any attempt by a contractor
to land 500 of them in Australia would certainly be resisted by

1 Minutes by Fuller, Bramston, Herbert and Knutsford on F.O. to
C.O., 21 April, 1888. C.O. 201/609.
2 See reports published in the Australian press on 23 April, 1888.
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force".

Parkes' actions at this time are open to somewhat contradictory explanations; and his own defence of his conduct does nothing to resolve the inconsistencies. On the one hand, he caused Carrington to warn the Colonial Office a few days later that intense public feeling would compel the Government to introduce stringent restrictive measures should the press reports prove to be true. On the other hand, he did nothing in Parliament or elsewhere to stem the public agitation. Such ambivalence in Parkes' attitude was bound to give rise to charges that he attempted to make political capital for himself out of the working class agitation. It also helped to foster a belief, both within and beyond New South Wales, that the public image of Parkes had two different sides. On the one side, there was the statesman who thought for himself. On the other, there was the politician who, in an agitated state, followed a mean, isolated and passionate policy and acted as "the mouthpiece of a reckless

Carrington to Herbert, private, 23 April, 1888, enclosing extracts of Sydney press comment on the press cable from London. C.0.201/608.

This letter, and Carrington's previous assurance to Knutsford that the agitation against the Chinese was sincere and supported by "the leading men of all sections of the community", and the text of the resolutions adopted at a public meeting in Sydney were not received in the Colonial Office until the end of May. Printed in C.5448, pp.I6,33.

Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 26 April, 1888, C.0.201/608 and printed in C.5448, p.II.

Parkes stated in the Legislative Assembly that the telegram was sent at his request. N.S.W. Parl.Deb., (1887-8 Session), vol.32, 16 May, 1888, p.4785. He evidently hoped to elicit a denial from the Colonial Office; but he told the Legislative Assembly that he knew there could be no truth in the press statements because such information would have reached the Governor before it reached the press. N.S.W. Parl.Deb., vol.32, 24 April, 1888, pp.4147-8.
popular clamour”.

In Victoria, the same press reports caused Sir Henry Loch to ask the Imperial Government not to decide in principle against opening negotiations with the Chinese Government before a full statement of the Victorian Government’s views had been received. This in effect meant further delay before the Colonial Office could send a reply to New South Wales about the likelihood of opening negotiations with the Chinese Government. Herbert, in the meantime, tried to get the Foreign Office to agree that Carrington might be told there was no foundation for the press reports, and also that the Imperial Government was fully aware of the strength of feeling in the Australian Colonies.

The Foreign office showed little understanding of Australian attitudes in thinking it would be sufficient to tell the colonies that no decision had been reached against a treaty, but there was little hope that the Chinese Government would agree to the proposed stipulations. The Colonial Office realised only too well the adverse effect such a message would have in the


1 Age, editorial 18 May, 1888.
2 Loch to Knutsford, telegram, 23 April, 1888. C.0. 309/I32.
3 Herbert thought it most undesirable that the N.S.W. Government should know about the Victorian request. Minute on Loch’s telegram of 23 April, 1888. C.0. 309/I32.
4 loc. cit.
5 F. O. to C. O., 30 April, 1888. C.0. 201/609.
colonies. Herbert, fully supported by Knutsford, felt that the Foreign Office must be told in unmistakable terms what would be the inevitable alternative if the Imperial Government made no attempt to negotiate a treaty: the colonies would take immediate legislative action to exclude all Chinese immigrants. Such legislation would have to be allowed; but before then, a feeling of hostility between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies would have been created. If the Chinese rejected a treaty, either on the lines of the treaty with the United States or to limit in duration or in numbers the entry of Chinese immigrants into the Australian Colonies, they would have no grounds for objecting to repressive colonial legislation. Before the Foreign Office made any response to this plain speaking, the leisurely approach of the previous months was shattered when the agitation in the Australian Colonies reached a sudden climax first in Victoria and then in New South Wales. As a result, all three possible methods of dealing with the question came under consideration almost simultaneously: negotiations for an Anglo-Chinese treaty, a renewal of the idea of an intercolonial conference and an imminent possibility of stringent colonial legislation.

III

Administrative actions by the South Australian and Victor-

I Minutes by Herbert and Knutsford on F.O. to C.O., 30 April, 1888. C.O. 201/609.
ian Governments were the root cause of the "crisis". The closure of the port of Darwin under quarantine measures led indirectly to the strict application of the 1881 Act in Victoria. At the end of April, the "Afghan" and three more ships carrying a total of 531 Chinese passengers, many more than would be allowed to enter under the various Chinese Immigration Restriction Acts, reached the eastern Australian Colonies. To the anti-Chinese sections of the population, especially in Melbourne and Sydney, the arrival of four ships within a few days of each other appeared to be proof of a Chinese plan for large-scale immigration into Australia. When the "Afghan" reached Melbourne, the Victorian government rejected forty-eight out of sixty naturalisation certificates, and the master of the ship did not insist on landing the twelve Chinese permitted by the 1881 Act. This action allayed irritation in Melbourne, and possibly staved off a riot. When the "Afghan" arrived in Sydney from Melbourne, followed almost immediately by the other three ships, anti-Chinese feeling was easily fanned into ugly public demonstrations.

On 4 May Parkes forbade the landing of any Chinese no matter whether they held naturalisation certificates or were within the

1 The quarantine and poll tax restrictions which were to apply to the Northern Territory from 1 March had been notified to the authorities in Hong Kong, Singapore, etc.


3 Loch to Knutsford, telegram, 2 May, 1888; Memo. by Gillies, 2 May, 1888; and Loch to Knutsford, telegram, 16 May, 1888, all printed in C. 5448, pp. 15, 35-9, 24.

In the circumstances, Knutsford approved Loch's actions in dealing with the crisis. Minute on Loch to Knutsford, Confidential, 10 May, 1888, C. O. 309/132.
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number permitted to land on payment of poll tax. This executive action was illegal, but Parkes justified it on the grounds of strong public feeling against the Chinese and the likelihood of disorder should any of the Chinese land. Although he admitted that there was an unreasoning mass attitude of fear, Parkes always denied that he was carried away by political considerations or gave way to the pressure of public panic as expressed in large public meetings and in a demonstration outside Parliament House. Parkes' action against the "Afghan" was criticised in the colony; but the Government's intention to introduce legislation that would almost prohibit the entry of Chinese into New South Wales was widely endorsed by political supporters and opponents alike.

Parkes appeared to have acted in the sole interests of New South Wales, and perhaps in the interests of the other Australian Colonies as he saw them, and to have disregarded the likelihood of complications in imperial policy. But was this his


2 Parkes to Carrington, 6 June, 1888. Parkes Correspondence, vol.6, pp.141-6, A 876 (Mitchell Library).

3 Some of the criticism arose from the haste with which Parkes sought an indemnity for the Government's actions since I May immediately before a case was to be heard in the Supreme Court contesting the power of the Ministry to prevent the landing of Chinese who were legally entitled to land. ibid., 15 and 16 May, 1888. C.Dibbs, p.4596; H.Copeland, p.4697; J.P.Abbott, p.4758; A.J.Gould, p.4806; T.Slattery, p.4807; and Dibbs' motion of censure on 23 May, 1888, ibid., pp.4391-4952.

4 This gave some of Parkes' critics the grounds for charging that his actions would have unfortunate repercussions on treaty negotiations with the Chinese, and on securing concerted action
deliberate intention? Two days before he prohibited any Chinese from landing, he declared it was one of his long held principles "to resist the introduction of any class of persons whatever from any part of the world into this country who could not be at once admitted to all our rights as citizens". At the same time, he admitted that "the self-imposed duty of Australians to protect themselves in this matter will necessarily bring them... into conflict with one of the most important features of Imperial policy", that is, the need to maintain friendly relations with China. He showed a judicious awareness of the interplay of colonial and imperial interests when he said that colonial restrictions on Chinese immigration must be looked at "not from any standpoint of unreasoning ignorance, but as forming part of a great comprehensive policy which is fraught with consequences many of which we cannot at present foresee". But a subsequent remark suggested that he might reject this rather dispassionate approach in a moment of excitement in defence of a principle in which he had long believed or of irritation with the Imperial Government should it appear that Australian interests were being sacrificed. On 4 May, when the four ships carrying Chinese immi-


2 ibid.  
3 These alternatives leave aside the more debatable point of whether or not on 4 May Parkes succumbed to taking drastic action on account of violent popular agitation.
grants arrived, Parkes put the immediate local considerations first, and virtually excluded all others.

The Colonial Office's inadvertent tardiness in replying to his request for treaty negotiations had a disastrous effect on Parkes; and it contributed to his disregard of any possible complications in British policy when he prohibited the Chinese from landing. Even after a reply had been received, he deliberately chose to misrepresent the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office itself did not merit such treatment. On 9 May, the Foreign Office, seemingly unmoved by recent events in Melbourne and Sydney, at last made up its mind that the New South Wales Government might be informed that "negotiations were being considered". This did not necessarily mean that negotiations would shortly be opened with the Chinese Government. To add to its dissatisfaction, the Colonial Office was told that Salisbury did not want Anglo-Chinese relations to be affected adversely by "the adoption of any course of action especially objectionable to the Chinese". Because the Chinese Government was "very sensitive of any declaration that Chinese are inferior to other people", Salisbury suggested that any colonial legislation restricting immigration should apply to all foreigners subject to special arrangements with foreign Governments. Although it was the best that could

1 F.O. to C.O., 9 May, 1888, C.O.201/609. At the same time Sir H. Macartney gave support to the Foreign Office's doubts that the Chinese would accept treaty provisions under which Chinese nationals would be treated differently from others.

be obtained from the Foreign Office, Knutsford with considerable reluctance informed Carrington on II May that "negotiations were being considered".

On 15 May, when Parkes was thoroughly worked up over the "Afghan" and the other ships, he completely ignored the reply for which he had been so impatient. He attributed the misleading press reports of a few weeks earlier to "the mere expression of the private opinion of the Secretary of State". He implied that the Imperial Government was less willing to listen to the representations of the Australian Colonies than it was to hear the protests of the Chinese Minister about the treatment of the Chinese on the "Afghan" and the complaints made by shipping interests in London. Parkes then announced that the time had come for legislative action. By his method of leading up to this announcement, he ensured the continuance of a feeling of irritation against the Imperial Government.

On the following day, when Parkes introduced a bill to indemnify the Government and impose more stringent restrictions on Chinese immigration, he claimed there was no inconsistency in

3 Knutsford to Carrington, telegram, 12 May, 1888, printed in C.5448, p.21. So that the Foreign Office might reply to the Chinese protest, Knutsford asked to know the numbers of Chinese refused permission to land, the existing regulations and by what law landing was refused. Complaints on behalf of the shipowners are included in the correspondence between Gellatly, Hankey, Sewell and Co. and the Colonial Office beginning on 30 April. This correspondence and telegrams from Knutsford to Loch and Carrington stating the shipowners' case and seeking information, are printed in C.5448, pp.12-3,16-7.
his request for an imperial treaty and his recourse to colonial legislation a few weeks later. His use of the delay in the Colonial Office's reply and his strictures on the nature of the reply itself, about which he now informed the House, were pieces of special pleading to justify his own actions. Despite all his assertions of acting with loyalty and in the interests of imperial unity, he was led into shouts of defiance against the Imperial Government and into defence of a "higher law of conserving society" which necessitated the almost total exclusion of Chinese from Australia.

Some members of the Legislative Assembly not unjustifiably claimed that he was partly motivated by chagrin that his message to the Imperial Government appeared to have been ignored. But whatever might have been the personal motivation behind his attitude, he could expect a ready response in the New South Wales Parliament and among the public to his argument that the Imperial Government was reluctant to act in order to safeguard Australian interests and consequently those interests must be defended by colonial legislation. This was a familiar and an always effective cry in the Australian Colonies; but on the present issue the

2 ibid., pp. 4785-6. Although Parkes claimed that his Government had waited a reasonable time for a reply from the Colonial Office before taking legislative action in the colony, this proved to be no longer than the time it would take for a despatch to reach the colony in reply to his telegram of 31 March. ibid., p. 4786.
3 ibid., pp. 4787, 4789.
4 ibid., e.g. H. Copeland, pp. 4771-2.
conflict between imperial and Australian interests was more apparent than real. The problem lay in finding an acceptable mean between the slowness of imperial diplomacy, on what was only one of many questions, and the Australian concentration on one issue. Colonial Governments, Parliaments and the public found difficulty in making adequate allowance for the slowness of diplomatic methods; and the strength of public agitation drowned the voices of more moderate men who argued against legislation adopted in haste and under public pressure.

The provisions in the bill were of the maximum stringency the Imperial Government was expected to allow and the other colonies to support. The poll tax was increased to £100, and an amendment raised the tonnage limitation from one Chinese passenger to every 100 tons to one for every 300 tons. New restrictions limiting the places of residence and occupations and an annual licence fee were to be placed on Chinese already in the colony.

The bill completed its passage through the Legislative Assembly during an all-night sitting. Any differences of opinion

1 ibid., e.g. J.P. Abbott, p.4758.
2 Parkes in the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly, 16 May,1888, ibid., pp.4823-4.
A motion by Dibbs, the Opposition leader, for total exclusion after 1 June was defeated, ibid., p.4826. The division on Dibbs' amendment was almost on party lines despite general agreement in principle on the bill.
3 Amendment to Clauses 5 and 6 moved by J.McElhone, ibid., p.4833.
A penalty of £500 was imposed on the master or owner of a ship for each Chinese passenger in excess of the tonnage stipulation.
4 Chinese were to reside in five towns only in N.S.W., including Sydney and Newcastle; passports would be needed to travel into the interior; Chinese were not to engage in mining without the express authority of the Minister concerned; and all Chinese residents were to pay an annual licence fee of £10 (reduced to
among members were mainly on whether or not the Government should be indemnified and whether the new legislation provided sufficiently stringent restrictions. There was little or no expression of opinion that it was regrettable that New South Wales should have taken legislative action independently of the other colonies, or that an imperial treaty would have been preferable to further restrictive legislation. Some members were prepared to accept with equanimity that separation from Great Britain might result either from the colony’s action in itself, or from the reservation and perhaps the disallowance of the bill by the Imperial Government. On this last point, Parkes more than once strongly hinted that he had reason to believe that the bill would not be reserved. Apart from an assumption that as the 1881 Act had been sanctioned there would be no difficulty about the new bill, Parkes had probably already received an assurance from Carrington that he would press for leave to assent to the bill.

Parkes’ action against the "Afghan" had been reported to

ten shillings by the adoption of an amendment, ibid., pp.4835); and a penalty of £10 was to be imposed if a Chinese could not produce a licence. Clauses II, I2, I3, I6, ibid., pp.4833-6. Parkes claimed that these provisions were modelled on existing Anglo-Chinese treaties.

There was no division on the second reading of the bill. By the time a division was taken during the committee stage, only 49 members were present out of a House of 124. The indemnifying clause was passed with Dibb’s and 9 of his supporters voting against it.

1 ibid., e.g. J.H.Want, pp.4823,4827.
2 An exception is to be found in the forceful arguments put forward by Henry Copeland, ibid., pp.4772-3.
3 ibid., e.g. J.Fletcher, p.4797; N.Melville, p.4819.
4 ibid., pp.4759, 4817, 4822.
the Colonial Office on 8 May. After the quick passage of the indemnity bill and the new restrictive legislation through the Legislative Assembly on 16-17 May, Carrington immediately asked leave to assent to the bill. He thought that in the critical state of affairs in the colony a refusal to sanction the bill "would inevitably lead to most serious complications". Herbert, in keeping with his earlier attitude, was certain that assent could not be refused and the more so because of the indemnifying clause. For this reason, the Foreign Office was urged to agree that Carrington should be instructed to assent to the bill without prejudice to disallowance should its provisions prove inadmissible. To this course of action the Foreign Office immediately agreed; but the instruction was not sent to Carrington until 24 May.

In urging the Foreign Office to agree that Carrington should be instructed to assent to the bill, Herbert had also insisted that a refusal or even a delay would exacerbate the agitation in New South Wales, and "prove almost certainly preju-
ficial to any prospect of a full consideration of the question and of a settlement on moderate terms". The "moderate terms" Herbert had in mind might have been those included in a treaty with China; but it seems more likely that he was thinking of the influence of the more moderate Australian Colonies at an inter-colonial conference. A new suggestion for a conference had come from the South Australian Government. With strong support from Gillies, the Premier of Victoria, Playford advocated that the Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand should attempt to secure uniformity of action.

Herbert looked more favourably on a conference than some of the other officials in the Colonial Office. He thought it would provide the best opportunity to discuss the Foreign Office's suggestion of general immigration restrictions with powers of relaxation by agreement with foreign Governments, and to draw up a joint representation for the guidance of the Imperial Government in negotiations with the Chinese. The Foreign Office's procrastination, encouraged by further protests from the Chinese Minister in London, once more prevented the Colonial Office from

"Afghan" illegal, and the Legislative Council was likely to pass the bill. Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 18 May, 1888, printed in C.5448, p.27.

1 Minutes on Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 17 May, 1888, C.0.201/606.
2 Playford communicated with the Colonial Governments on 9 May. By 10 May he had received favourable responses from Gillies and Parkes. Robinson informed Knutsford of the South Australian Government's suggestion on 10 May. C.0.13/145.
3 Minutes on Robinson to Knutsford, 10 May, 1888. C.0.13/145.
4 loc. cit., and minutes on F.O. to C.0., 9 May, 1888, C.0.201/609. The Colonial Office did not much favour the suggestion of general immigration restrictions because it was based on a misinterpretation of the existing Victorian Act. Minutes on F.O. to C.0., 14 May, 1888, C.0.201/609.
warmly welcoming the prospect of joint but moderate action by the colonies. At one and the same time, the Colonial Office continued to press the Foreign Office to open negotiations with the Chinese Government and was anxious that the Foreign Office should not refuse to countenance an intercolonial conference. By the latter part of May, negotiations and an intercolonial conference thus became complementary to each other.

To add to the Colonial Office's difficulties, the Crown Colony of Hong Kong was drawn into the problem by the Chinese Government as well as by the Australian Governments. Chinese emigrants embarked on ships at Hong Kong no matter whether they were British Chinese or the subjects of the Emperor of China, and it was unlikely that officials in the colony regulated the emigration of Chinese in accordance with the restrictions imposed by the Australian Colonies. The Colonial Office had already shown some reluctance to take any action which would affect shipping interests in Hong Kong; and internal difficulties might well be created in the colony if the Governor prohibited Chinese from emigrating to the United States and curbed emigration to the Australian Colonies.

2 The former was in response to a request from the Victorian Government for a statement that the Imperial Government was willing to consider opening negotiations with the Chinese Government after learning the joint views of the colonies. Loch to Knutsford, telegram, 17 May, 1888, and minutes. C.O. 509/132.
3 F.O. to C.O., II June, 1888, forwarding a request from the Chinese Government that the Governor of Hong Kong should prohibit Chinese from emigrating to the United States. C.O. 201/609.
Playford and Gillies favoured an intercolonial conference for two reasons. Moderate views might prevail over the extremists and so prevent the adoption of new and more stringent colonial legislation. In addition, the Colonial Governments would have an opportunity to come to a common understanding among themselves on an acceptable basis for treaty negotiations between the British and Chinese Governments. For both these reasons, the South Australian Government, encouraged by the Governor, Sir William Robinson, wanted the conference to meet in Adelaide. When Parkes introduced legislation into the New South Wales Legislative Assembly on 16 May, Playford thought that the Imperial Government's support for an intercolonial conference was needed more urgently. Whereas he had felt previously that Parkes would be unlikely to listen to representations from the other colonies that legislative action in New South Wales should be postponed until after the conference had met, he now feared that the passage of such legislation would upset joint action by the colonies.

Although Parkes had readily agreed to the South Australian

2 Robinson to Knutsford, Confidential, 14 May,1888, S.Aust. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Confidential Despatches. Robinson thought that in Adelaide he might have a better chance of urging moderation on the conference.
In addition to Playford, Griffith and Fysh asked Parkes not to introduce legislation until after the conference had met.
Government's suggestion, he was not very enthusiastic about "Playford's conference". He made difficulties about the representation of New South Wales because he feared the moderating influence of the other colonies. As soon as he had satisfied the extremists in New South Wales by the adoption of a new Chinese Immigration Restriction Bill, and he knew that Carrington had been told he need not reserve the bill, Parkes found no further reason to be obstructive about a conference which was to be held in Sydney and not in Adelaide.

The Foreign Office was sufficiently in favour of a conference by 22 May to allow Knutsford to inform the Colonial Governments that it would serve a useful purpose. However, it did not follow that the Foreign Office was set in favour of any one course of action. Its "blowing hot and cold" in favour of a conference caused some irritation in the Colonial Office because of the offence that would be given to the colonies should the conference be quashed after all. The intricacies of the problem

1 Parkes to Gillies, telegram, 16 May, 1888. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, draft with in-letters in Box 175 (Archives of N.S.W.).
3 Sir William Robinson, the Governor of South Australia, was gratified with this response. He thought that the Imperial Government's attitude would strengthen the hands of those in the colonies who preferred an imperial treaty to drastic colonial legislation. Robinson to Knutsford, 22 May, 1888, Confidential. S. Aust. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Confidential Despatches.
4 F.O. to C.O., 24 May, 1888. C. O. 201/609. The Foreign Office implied that a conference would be of very little use because the N.S.W. bill further lessened the very slim chances of opening negotiations with China.
were further brought home to the Colonial Office when Robinson, the Governor of South Australia, asked what important points the Imperial Government would like the conference to discuss. Herbert and Knutsford could not dispute the Foreign Office's contention that the New South Wales legislation would prevent any immediate hope of opening negotiations with the Chinese Government. Although this meant that the colonies would have to be told that the Foreign Office was disinclined to open negotiations, Herbert, even more strongly than Knutsford, felt that the Imperial Government should still encourage an intercolonial conference in order to "learn what the majority of the colonies agree to request and which of them desire to assume an attitude towards China permitting of negotiation".

By 6 June Herbert and Knutsford managed to pin the Foreign Office down to agree to a statement of the Imperial Government's attitude. On the whole, little encouragement was offered to the Colonial Governments. They were told that the Imperial Government was anxious to meet them in their determination to limit Chinese immigration; but the actions of the New South Wales Government and Parliament had created obstacles to opening negotiations with China for the time being. It was inadvisable that any measures

5 Minutes on F.O. to C.O., 24 May, 1888, C.O. 201/609; and on Robinson to Knutsford, telegram, 29 May, 1888, C.O. 13/145.

I Robinson to Knutsford, telegram, 29 May, 1888, C.O. 13/145.
2 Minutes by Herbert and Knutsford on Robinson's telegram of 29 May, 1888, C.O. 13/145.
favoured by the conference should place disabilities on trade between the Australian Colonies and China, a potentially valuable market for them. Furthermore, it was particularly undesirable that the Chinese should be placed on a different footing from people of any other nationality. The only constructive feature was a suggestion that negotiations with the Chinese Government might be feasible if colonial legislation equally restricted the immigration of all foreign labourers subject to special agreements. Otherwise the opening of negotiations would depend on the nature of the proposals put forward by the Colonial Governments.

By the time this statement reached the Australian Colonies, the sense of crisis had passed to a large extent, and the whole question could be discussed more calmly. In the hope of avoiding any expressions of public opinion, the South Australian Government did not want the Imperial Government's statement to be published before the conference met. Parkes discounted the present or future value of Australian trade with China; and both he and Gillies looked with immediate disfavour on the suggestion.

1 Knutsford to Robinson, telegram, 6 June, 1888, S.Aust.Govt. House Papers and printed in C.5448, p.35.
2 The Victorian and N.S.W. Governments were still involved in complications arising from their actions against the "Afghan" and the other three ships. Cases were brought before the courts to test the legality of those actions, e.g. the Ah-Toy-Musgrave case in Victoria; and claims were made for compensation for the shipowners, masters and passengers. The latter question involved the Victorian and New South Wales Governments in an appreciable amount of correspondence with the Governor of Hong Kong.
3 Note from Robinson, attached to a copy of Knutsford's telegram of 6 June in the Parkes Correspondence, vol.6, pp.145-152, A 876 (Mitchell Library).
that all foreign immigration should be restricted. But these were minor considerations. The main concern was whether Parkes would be amenable to moderation now that the New South Wales bill was not to be reserved.

IV

The conference of representatives of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand opened in Sydney on 12 June under the presidency of Parkes. The Imperial Government was not represented. This was viewed with favour in New South Wales; but in Great Britain the Colonial Office was criticised for appearing to allow imperial interests to take second place.

The task before the conference was not to discuss principles, but to consider the best means of achieving one object, namely, the further restriction of Chinese immigration. From the outset there was a general body of agreement among the representatives that a treaty between the British and Chinese Governments

Gillies also instructed Sir Graham Berry, the Agent-General for Victoria, to inform the Colonial Office that the colonies were unlikely to agree to general immigration restrictions. Berry reported an interview with Herbert in a telegram of II June, 1888, Vict. Premiers Dept. records, in-letters 88/2038.
2 Gillies went so far as to instruct Berry to take up the matter with the Colonial Office. Gillies to Berry, telegram, 13 June, 1888, and Berry's reply of 15 June, Vict. Premier's Dept. records in-letters 88/2502.
3 The minutes and resolutions of the conference are printed in N.S.W. V. and P. (1887-8 Session), Legis. Assembly, vol.II, pp.173-188.
The representatives were:-

N.S.W.  
Sir H. Parkes, J.F. Burns
Victoria  
D. Gillies, A. Deakin
was desirable. The Chinese Government would thereby accept restriction on Chinese immigration into the Australian Colonies and those restrictions would apply uniformly to all the colonies. Failing such a solution, uniform legislation would best secure their object.

The basis of the deliberations of the conference was a series of resolutions put forward by Playford. These included a request to the Imperial Government to negotiate a treaty, the adoption of a joint representation to the Imperial Government and a draft bill. The latter was a moderate tightening up of the existing legislation. It included the application of immigration restrictions to British Chinese; but no penalties were to be imposed on Chinese residents in the colonies. With the exception of the representatives of Tasmania and Western Australia, the conference soon agreed on the terms of the resolution asking the Imperial Government to undertake diplomatic action with the Chinese Government on behalf of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Apart from a determination to extend immigration restric-

S. Australia       T. Playford, C.C. Kingston
Queensland        J. M. Macrossan (appointed by agreement
                   between Griffith and McIlwraith, his successor to the
                   Premiership)
Tasmania           P. O. Fysh
W. Australia       Sir M. Fraser
New Zealand        R. Oliver, the only non-ministerial represen-
                   tative; and he arrived in Sydney too late for the ses-
                   sions of the conference.

4 Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 12 June, 1888, printed in
C. 5448, p. 41; Carnarvon in the House of Lord, 8 June, 1888,
Hansard 3 Ser., vol. 326, pp. 1511-1521.

173-4.

2 I. ibid. Other provisions included a poll tax of £30, a tonnage
tions to British Chinese, agreement on the provisions to be embodied in uniform legislation was much more difficult to secure. The poll tax was the most contentious issue. Parkes, having imposed a poll tax of £100 in New South Wales in order to secure almost total prohibition of Chinese immigration, was unlikely to agree to Playford's suggestion of a poll tax of £30. An increase in the poll tax to £30 in 1884 had considerably lessened Chinese immigration into Queensland. The Queensland representative's main interest at the conference, therefore, was in the means of preventing the evasion of the existing restrictions by British and overlanding Chinese. The two Victorian representatives wanted to secure almost total prohibition through an imperial treaty. They thought that a heavy increase in the poll tax would increase Chinese objections to discriminatory treatment. After a majority of the colonies had rejected a poll tax of £30, Gillies suggested eliminating a poll tax altogether and substituting an equally effective limitation of one Chinese passenger to every 500 tons burden of ships entering an Australasian port. Gillies' amend-

restriction of one Chinese passenger to every 200 tons, and penalties for evading the payment of poll tax by entering a colony from overland.

3 Tasmania refused to agree that any further restrictions were necessary, and Western Australia abstained from voting because she was a Crown Colony. ibid., p.174. Perhaps the most significant change made in the wording of the resolution, before it was adopted by the conference, was the substitution of "Imperial Government" for "mother country".

I ibid., p.174. New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania voted against a poll tax of £30, South Australia and Queensland were in favour and Western Australia abstained.
ment was intended to serve a dual purpose. It offered a means of imposing severer restrictions on Chinese immigration, and, at the same time, it would not stand in the way of treaty negotiations by giving further offence to the Chinese Government.

A draft bill, drawn up by Deakin, Kingston and Macrossan, was adopted by the conference on 14 June. In addition to its application to all Chinese and the restriction of one Chinese to every 500 tons, stiffer penalties were to be laid on shipowners and masters for evasions of the restrictions and permits were to be obligatory for Chinese moving from one colony to another. The Victorian, South Australian and Queensland Governments agreed to introduce legislation modelled as closely as possible on the draft bill, and Parkes undertook to pass amending legislation on similar lines as soon as two other colonies had passed a bill based on the draft bill.

I New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Queensland were in favour of Gillies' amendment. Tasmania voted against it, and Western Australia abstained. Macrossan, the Queensland representative, appears to have agreed to the amendment mainly for the sake of unanimity among the four colonies.

2 Text of draft bill in ibid., pp. 179-181. Chinese officials, travellers, merchants and students were exempt from the provisions of the bill. The conference draft bill was not clear whether the limitation of one Chinese to every 500 tons applied per ship to all the colonies inclusively or to each colony separately. If the draft bill itself was not explicit on this point, the conference resolutions and statements made by the representatives afterwards showed with little doubt that the limitation was intended to apply to all the colonies inclusively.

3 ibid., pp. 175-6. Fraser, the W. Australian representative, agreed to lay the draft bill before the Legislative Council, but would not bind his Government to take further legislative action. ibid., pp. 176-7.

Fysh, on behalf of Tasmania, objected to the inclusion of British Chinese; and he refused to introduce any further legislation because the 1887 Tasmanian bill, modelled on the 1881 Victorian Act, was sufficiently effective to control the few
The calmer tone of the conference, as well as the "greatest cordiality and good feeling" towards the Imperial Government expressed by the representatives, contrasts with the immoderation of Parkes' speech on 16–17 May in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly and of those made by Griffith's and McIlwraith's supporters during the Queensland election campaign in April and May. The joint representation from the conference to the Imperial Government showed both the moderation as well as the clear purpose activating the conference. It discounted the argument that China offered a profitable market to the Australian Colonies; but pointed out that their own valuable markets had never been closed to imports from China although many of the products could be obtained from India. The colonies' refusal to impose restrictions on all foreign immigrants was couched in politic terms.

Parkes' voice spoke out clearly in the reasons put forward in justification of further restrictions on Chinese immigration, and in the argument that immediate and uniform legislation had been endorsed by the conference because there was no way of knowing how long it would take to negotiate a treaty with the Chinese who were attracted to Tasmania. Memo. by Fysh, printed in *ibid.*, pp.176–7.

1 Parkes' assurance to Carrington of the cordial feeling expressed by all the representatives towards the Imperial Government was telegraphed to Knutsford on 15 June. Printed in C.5448, p.45.

2 The joint representation was forwarded through Carrington, confidential telegram, 14 June,1888. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers and printed in C.5448, pp.43–4.

3 This statement supported Parkes' previous arguments, Parkes to Carrington, 9 June,1888, Parkes Correspondence, vol.6, pp.141–4, A 876 (Mitchell Library).

The figures given by the conference for 1886 were:-
Chinese Government. The aim of the conference had been to devise legislation which would secure the colonies' purpose in adopting it, and give no offence to the Chinese Government by its being obviously discriminatory. Gillies and Playford, rather than Parkes, seemed to speak in the statement that the Colonial Governments would prefer to achieve their aim by means of a treaty between the British and Chinese Governments. In order to assist the Imperial Government to open negotiations, the conference had recommended the abolition of a poll tax on Chinese immigrants. Finally, the Imperial Government was asked to induce the Governments of Hong Kong, the Straits Settlements and Labuan to prohibit the emigration of British Chinese to the Australian Colonies and New Zealand.

When the conference closed three questions were left without immediate answers: first, would the Imperial Government accept the proposed uniform colonial legislation; secondly, would it be possible for the Imperial Government to negotiate a treaty; and, thirdly, would the Colonial Parliaments accept the terms of the draft bill and would Parkes honour his undertaking to modify the New South Wales bill.

Exports from Australia (excluding W. Australia) to China: £16,000 (out of a total export trade of £38,700,000)
Imports into Australia from China: £848,000.

In addition to Parkes and Gillies, who had voiced their objections before the conference met, McIlwraith informed the conference of the Queensland Cabinet's unanimous disapproval. McIlwraith to Macrossan, 14 June, 1888, printed in N.S.W. V. and P. (1887-8 Session), Legislative Assembly, vol. II, p.175.

A summary of the draft bill was telegraphed to Knutsford by Carrington on 18 June, 1888, printed in C.5448, pp.48-9.
The Colonial Office found it much easier to answer the first question than the second. While the conference was still sitting the Colonial office had two main concerns. Was colonial legislation intended as an alternative should negotiations with the Chinese Government fail? Would the New South Wales Government be likely to postpone its separate legislation except to indemnify itself? The joint representation from the conference seemed to show that legislation was to be a temporary measure until a treaty was concluded. The Colonial Office's subsequent attitude towards colonial legislation was influenced by this assumption, and by Carrington's assurance that Parkes would introduce amending legislation when any two colonies had adopted the draft bill. The expected temporary nature of the legislation also made it easier for the Colonial Office to accept the exclusion of British Chinese and recommend interim measures to prevent their leaving Hong Kong. For the time being, therefore, Herbert did not favour any distinction in colonial legislation between British Chinese and the subjects of the Emperor of China. He was

1 Minutes by Herbert and Knutsford on Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 13 June, 1888, C.O.201/608.
2 Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 16 June, 1888, printed in C.5449, p.46.
After certain important amendments had been adopted during the committee stage, the N.S.W. bill passed its third reading in the Legislative Council on 13 June. The Assembly did not accept these amendments until early in July. The royal assent was given on 11 July.
3 Early in July the Governor of Hong Kong was instructed that until further notice all licences should be refused to vessels carrying Chinese to Australia. The Australian Governments were informed of this through a telegram to Robinson, 20 July, 1888, S.Aust.Govt.House Papers.
4 This was in response to an inquiry from Sir William Robinson. Robinson personally doubted whether British Chinese should be
partly under a misapprehension that British Chinese were few in number; and he also under-estimated the difficulty of strictly defining British nationality. There was no suggestion in the Colonial Office in 1888, such as Chamberlain was to make in 1897, that any restriction imposed by a colony on the entry of coloured British immigrants was a discrimination against some of the Queen's subjects.

After the conference had closed, the South Australian Government intended to bring a bill before Parliament as soon as possible. This made it obvious that the colonies were not going to postpone legislation until the possibility of negotiating with the Chinese Government had been tried. A bill, closely resembling the conference draft bill, was introduced into the South Australian House of Assembly on 23 June; but the second reading made slow progress. Playford tried, therefore, to strengthen the position of the moderates who supported the conference bill. He sought two assurances from the Imperial Government; first, that the proposed abolition of the poll tax on Chinese immigrants would help towards reaching an agreement with the Chinese Government, and, secondly, that the restriction of one Chinese passenger to every 500 tons burthen (with some powers included with other Chinese. He asked if the Colonial Office would prefer an alteration in that clause of the bill. Robinson to Knutsford, telegram, 25 June, 1888, C.O.13/145. Robinson was told that the bill could apply to British Chinese because "legislation will take effect pending negotiations and may be modified hereafter". Knutsford to Robinson, telegram, 5 July, 1888, S.Aust. Govt. House Papers.

I Minutes by Herbert and Bramston on Robinson to Knutsford, telegram, 25 June, 1888, C.O.13/145.
of relaxation) was preferable to a £20 or £30 poll tax and one Chinese to every 100 tons burthen (with no powers of relaxation). The first attempt to obtain these assurances ended in a rather non-committal statement that the Imperial Government favoured the decision arrived at by the conference. On the second occasion, Knutsford overruled Bramston's doubts whether it would be wise to express an opinion in favour of powers of relaxation.

Although the Colonial Office expected that new colonial legislation would only be temporary until a treaty could be negotiated, there was no lack of sympathy for the position taken up by the Australian Colonies. The Colonial Office evidently understood that the draft bill covered the minimum restrictions the colonies would accept. Reference would have to be made to the Foreign Office before the Queen could be advised to assent to new colonial legislation restricting Chinese immigration; but the precedent created in 1881 made it practically a foregone conclusion that assent would not be refused.

1 Robinson to Knutsford, 19 August, 1888, S. Aust. Govt. House Papers; Playford to Gillies, 10 August, 1888, and Gillies to Berry, 12 August, 1888, Vict. Premier's Dept. records, in-letters 88/2796 and 2814.

2 This attempt was made through the Agent-General. Berry to Gillies, 13 August, 1888, Vict. Premier's Dept records, in-letters 88/2814. Berry said that Knutsford at first declined to reply except through the Governor; but he afterwards consulted Salisbury. This inquiry, and Berry's two earlier ones on 11 and 13 June, appear to have been the only occasions when an Agent-General took an active part in the Chinese question.

The Colonial Office was in a very different position in trying to answer the second question raised by the intercolonial conference. The opening of negotiations for an Anglo-Chinese treaty depended on the attitude of the Foreign Office. Shortly after the representation from the conference was received in London, there were some grounds for optimism that treaty negotiations would prove to be feasible after all. At the end of June, Sir John Walsham, the British Minister in Peking, was instructed to urge the Chinese Government to open negotiations for a convention which would include stipulations similar to those included in the conference draft bill. This was welcome news to Herbert, and he thought that a copy of the draft articles should be sent to the colonies in order to show that something was being done. He also appreciated the importance of learning whether the Colonial Governments had any objections to the draft clauses.

For fear of a leakage before Walsham could take any action, the Foreign Office would only allow the Governors to be informed confidentially. This caused Herbert and Knutsford some concern. It was essential to them that the Colonial Governments should know that something was being done in response to their representations. A few days later, the Foreign Office agreed that the

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I F.O. to C.O., 28 June, 1888, C.O. 201/609; and printed in C.5448, pp.49-50 with the exception of the draft articles.
2 Minute on F.O. to C.O., 28 June, 1888, C.O. 201/609.
Colonial Governments might be informed confidentially of the terms of the four draft articles. These offered scope for securing by agreement with the Chinese Government restrictions very similar to those which the colonies intended to impose by legislation.

When Walsham opened conversations with the Chinese Government early in August, he was not very confident at first that an arrangement could be worked out because the Chinese Government insisted on treaty rights. A further and possibly a more serious complication arose when the Chinese Government refused to ratify the treaty with the United States. By the middle of August, however, Walsham was able to report some progress towards the Chinese Government's acceptance of stipulations which corresponded fairly well with those in the draft bill drawn up by the conference. This seeming progress led the Colonial Office into attempts

I F.O. to C.O., 18 July,1888. C.O.201/609. Contrary to a fairly usual practice, the Agents-General were not informed as well as the Governors.
2 Circular despatch (very confidential), 27 July,1888, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. First, bona fide government officials, teachers, students, merchants or travellers should be allowed to visit or reside in the territories of the two countries concerned provided they held certificates from their own government and from the government of the place where they were proceeding.
Secondly, labourers were to be admitted to reside or work in either of the two countries under laws establishing what places of residence and employment were open to them and what numbers could enter.
Thirdly, labourers were defined as servants working for wages, those engaged in mining for gold and other minerals, artisans, manufacturers and agricultural or manual labourers.
Fourthly, permissible places of residence and occupations were to be notified as soon as possible after the signing of the treaty, with the understanding that this permission could be withdrawn at any time without notice or compensation.
to ensure, on the one hand, that the Imperial Government would not be committed to accept in its entirety any arrangement reached with the Chinese Government, and, on the other, that the Colonial Governments would not in the meantime add any further restrictions to those adopted by the conference.

Towards the end of August, it seemed as if Walsham was simultaneously exploring two different lines of reaching an agreement with the Chinese Government: to continue working for a treaty and, alternatively, to reach a "formal arrangement". Probably there would be very little difference in the terms of either; but in the latter the Chinese Government would not bind itself beyond signifying its assent. The Colonial Office doubted that a "formal arrangement" would satisfy the colonies' request for a treaty between the British and Chinese Governments. Some fears of colonial intransigence remained; but it was hoped that the Chinese rejection of the treaty with the United States would make the colonies more amenable to accepting whatever terms the British Government could obtain. When these terms proved to include

the view that colonial legislative restrictions violated Anglo-Chinese treaty commitments. Minute on F.O. to C.O., 9 August, 1888, C.O. 201/609; and statement in House of Lords, Hansard 3 Ser., vol. 326, p.1516.

4 This action was later understood to have been caused by the ratification of the treaty by the United States Senate before the Chinese had done so. F.O. to C.O., 17 Oct., 1888, based on correspondence from the British Minister in Washington. C.O. 201/609.

5 F.O. to C.O., 14 August, 1888, C.O. 201/609.

1 Minutes on F.O. to C.O., 14 August, 1888, C.O. 201/609.

2 F.O. to C.O. 22 August, 1888, and minutes, C.O. 201/609.

a tonnage limitation of one Chinese passenger to every 300 tons and the admission of all Chinese, with the exception of labourers but including household servants, the Colonial Office was not very sanguine that the colonies would agree.

When Knutsford sought to know the attitude of the Colonial Governments towards these terms, he emphasised that the Chinese Government laid considerable stress on the limitation of one Chinese passenger to every 300 tons. He also implied that the terms outlined by Walsham were the best that could be obtained. By that time, several of the colonies were much more concerned with adopting legislation on the lines of the draft bill. The alterations and additional provisions, insisted on by some of the Parliaments, affected the Governments' response to the terms of an agreement with the Chinese Government.

Although Sir William Robinson described the South Australian bill as a "product of sober reflection and not of frantic excitement", its passage continued to be neither brief nor smooth. The main opposition came from those who thought the conference bill was too severe for the needs of the colony. At one

1 F.O. to C.O., 31 August, 1888, and minutes, C.O.201/609.

The terms which the Chinese Government might accept for a five year period included the abolition of the poll tax on Chinese immigrants; the application of most-favoured-nation treatment to Chinese residents in the Australian Colonies, including the right to leave and return; the application of the tonnage restriction to labourers only; and the admission of all other Chinese (including household servants) freely into the Australian Colonies. The agreement could be extended to include New Zealand if that colony so desired.

2 Circular despatch (very confidential), 14 Sept., 1888, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

stage there was a danger that the tonnage limitation would be lowered to one Chinese to every 200 tons, a poll tax of £20 or £30 imposed and more lenient provisions introduced for the Northern Territory. In the end, the bill had only one major difference from the conference draft bill: no penalty was to be imposed on Chinese who reached the colony overland without a permit.

In Queensland, McIlwraith's balanced view of the Imperial Government's policy towards colonial restrictions on Chinese immigration stood in marked contrast to his simultaneously aggressive attitude over the exercise of the prerogative of mercy. Both he and Sir Samuel Griffith, the Opposition leader, thought that the provisions in the conference draft bill needed to be tightened to suit Queensland's circumstances. To some extent, the Queensland bill provided heavier penalties than the conference draft bill, but strong opposition came from those who thought the Queensland bill was still insufficiently stringent. The criticisms of those who claimed to have working class interests at heart and wanted a poll tax retained were successfully overcome by Macrossan's arguments in favour of the efficacy of the continuing government House Papers, Letterbooks of Governor's Despatches. The bill had been introduced into the House of Assembly on 28 June, the second reading lasted through July and August, and it was not until 27 Sept. that its passage through the House of Assembly was completed. It completed its passage through the Legislative Council on 13 November.


2 A clause was also added that the Act would terminate on 1 Jan., 1890, unless a proclamation was issued that two other colonies had adopted the limitation of one Chinese to every 500 tons.
of the heavy tonnage limitation; but some important amendments were adopted. Increased penalties were imposed on Chinese who illegally entered Queensland from overland or by transhipment to small vessels off the coast, and also on masters to ensure that crew members did not desert their ships while in Queensland ports. The adoption of these amendments, moved by the Opposition leader, showed the unanimity between McIlwraith's and Griffith's supporters on the Chinese question.

In keeping with Duncan Gillies' continued reluctance to take further legislative action, the Victorian Government delayed until well into November before deciding to introduce the conference draft bill into the Legislative Assembly. Gillies appears to have hoped that the early conclusion of an Anglo-Chinese treaty would make colonial legislation unnecessary. He also wanted to see the outcome of the lengthy passage of the South Australian and Queensland bills. As in South Australia,

I Q'ld. Parl. Deb. (1888 Session), Legis. Assembly, vol. 55, 26 Sept., 1888, Macrossan, p. 454; J.G. Drake, p. 433-4. In the interests of the working class, T. Glassey introduced an amendment to provide for a £10 residential tax on all Chinese in the colony; but he withdrew it when he failed to gain much support from his fellow working class representatives. ibid., 18 Oct., pp. 748-50.

2 The increased penalties included: Clause 5, 12 months' imprisonment without reduction of sentence for default in payment of £500 by the master of a ship for exceeding the tonnage limitation, ibid., p. 743-4; Clause 7, a similar penalty if any Chinese crew member was missing on the departure of a vessel, ibid., p. 744; an additional clause whereby a penalty of £50 or 3 months' imprisonment (non-reducible) was imposed on any Chinese illegally entering the colony by transhipping to a small vessel; and a similar penalty for illegal entry by land (Clause 8); and provisions for re-conviction if the fines for illegal entry were not paid, ibid., pp. 745-6.

the bill was adopted in Victoria with very minor amendments.

In each of the three colonies the tone of the debates was very different from that on the panic measure rushed through the New South Wales Legislative Assembly in May. As for the remaining three colonies, Western Australia eventually adopted the conference bill; Tasmania retained her 1887 Act; and, despite the undertaking Parkes had given, no attempt was made to amend the New South Wales Act and substitute a tonnage limitation of one Chinese to every 500 tons for the £100 poll tax. With the exception of Parkes' hasty actions in New South Wales in May, the colonies had attempted to act in terms of Australia as well as in their own individual interests. While there was justifiable criticism in the other colonies of Parkes' method of action, and of its effect on British negotiations with China, no criticism was valid on the grounds that the New South Wales Act was insufficiently stringent. In the long run, the other colonies did not press the New South Wales Government to adopt the confer-


2 Parkes had reiterated his undertaking in August. Carrington to Knutsford, telegram, 18 August, 1888, quoted in Cabinet minute M 19567, 20 August, 1888, N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, 88/9597, minute files for 1888 (Archives of N.S.W.).

In October, Knutsford reminded Carrington that the N.S.W. bill had been allowed to remain in operation in view of Parkes' undertaking. Knutsford to Carrington, N.S.W. No. 90, 23 Oct., 1888, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.


4 e.g. McIlwraith's charge that Parkes' action had thwarted the Imperial Government "in its efforts to satisfy the wants of the colonies". ibid., 12 Sept., 1888, p. 237.
ence bill.

In the latter part of 1888 only the Victorian Government remained in favour of a treaty. The South Australian and Queensland Governments were far more concerned with the possibility that the reserved Chinese Immigration Restriction Acts might be disallowed. If the Imperial Government did not resort to the extreme measure of disallowance, certain amendments might be required. To some extent, the Imperial Government's attitude would be determined by the colonial reaction to the draft terms of an agreement with China and the likelihood of concluding such an agreement.

The first response came from McIlwraith in Queensland. He expressed his appreciation of the Imperial Government's endeavours to meet the views of the Australian Colonies, but he was rather non-committal whether the proposed terms of an agreement would be satisfactory. This was partly because he placed little importance on a treaty as a solution to the Chinese problem. He raised no real objection to lowering the passenger limitation to 300 tons, but he thought there would be much opposition in Queensland to the other proposals. McIlwraith greatly

I Loch to Knutsford, Vict. No. 209, 16 Nov., 1888, records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria, Letterbooks of Governor's Despatches, vol. II.

The Queensland Government, like the S. Australian Government, understood the tonnage limitation to apply to the whole of the Australian Colonies collectively.
exaggerated the Chinese threat. He probably did so deliberately in order to defend the excessively stringent provisions included in the Queensland bill, and justify his omission of any assurance that he would introduce amending legislation after an agreement had been concluded with the Chinese Government. Such an assurance was given by Gillies before the Victorian bill had received the royal assent; but Playford waited until several months afterwards before he implied that South Australia would consider amendments only in concert with the other Colonial Governments. The long delay before Playford replied to the Imperial Government gave added point to his statement that the 1888 Act provided "all that is at present desired in South Australia".

While the negotiations with the Chinese Government made no further progress and the Colonial Governments made no effort to urge a speedy conclusion, the Colonial Office faced the difficult problem presented by the Queensland Chinese Immigration Restriction Act of 1888. Any possibility of a charge of imperial interference had to be avoided. For this reason, Herbert and Knutsford were less hasty than Bramston in deciding that the "absurdities" in the bill, such as the serious penalties imposed on masters of ships and illegal immigrants, could not be sanctioned. Herbert's Memo. by Gillies, enclosed in Loch to Knutsford, Vict.No.236, 24 Dec.,1888, records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria, Letterbooks of Governor's Despatches, vol.10. Memo. by Playford, 24 June, 1889, S.Aust.Govt.House Papers. Playford forwarded this Memo. to the Governor almost at the same time as his resignation from the Premiership. The Victorian and S.Australian Acts received the royal assent early in 1889.

2 Minutes on Palmer to Knutsford, Q'd. No.109, 6 Nov.,1888, C'O.234/49.
realistic approach towards colonial legislative powers showed once more in his doubts that assent could in the long run be refused. Knutsford, with Salisbury's agreement, determined to make assent dependent on amendments to bring the bill into line with the conference draft bill. Having reached this decision, the Colonial Office was left with the delicate task of making such amendments palatable to the Queensland Government.

For several months no compromise seemed likely because Knutsford kept the draft treaty terms in mind, and Morehead, who had succeeded McIlwraith as Premier, refused to specify the classes of persons who might be exempted from the provisions of the bill by the Governor in Council. When Morehead eventually offered to modify two other contentious clauses if Knutsford still felt unable to advise the Queen to assent to the bill, the Colonial Office welcomed the chance to reach a compromise. In the end, Knutsford decided to press for one amendment in particular: that pecuniary punishment only should be imposed on a ship's master for desertion by a crew member because imprisonment for

1 Minute by Herbert on Palmer to Knutsford, Q'ld. No.109, 6 Nov., 1888, C.0.234/49. "...though the Bill is more severe in several respects than the Model Bill, I am not sure that we should be able to sustain an opposition to it, and it would be disastrous to refuse to accept it and afterwards to give in."
2 loc.cit.; and F.O. to C.O., 9 Jan.,1889, C.0.234/50.
3 Morehead was unwilling to agree to the exemption of classes of persons who might be named in a treaty "which does not exist and which they the Queensland Government are not likely to be consulted in framing". Morehead to Palmer, 25 April,1889, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Official Letters to the Governor, vol.17 A.
4 Minutes on Norman to Knutsford, Confidential, 4 May,1889, enclosing Morehead's Memo. of 25 April,1889, C.0.234/50.
such an offence was "a cruel violation of personal rights". This willingness on Knutsford's part and on Morehead's to reach a compromise, provided essential principles were secured on both sides, saw some result in Morehead's offer to bring in amending legislation in the next session of Parliament if the royal assent was given to the bill in its present form. Despite some regret in the Colonial Office that amendment was to follow and not precede assent to the bill, Knutsford decided to act on Morehead's assurance.

By the time the Queensland Act was amended in August, 1890, the negotiations for a treaty had long since faded into obscurity. Once the colonies had achieved their aims by legislative means, the conclusion of a treaty held little interest for them, and in practice no difficulty in Anglo-Chinese relations arose specifically from the stringent colonial legislation of 1888. Although the New South Wales Government had been the first

I F.O. to C.O., 23 July, 1889, and minutes, C.O. 234/50; and Knutsford to Norman, Confidential, 31 July, 1889, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Confidential Despatches from the Secretary of State, vol. II.

Knutsford's decision meant that exemptions from the Act and the remission of punishments were left to the powers conferred on the governor in Council.


The way in which this request was communicated to the Colonial Office, first through the Agent-General and then at the Colonial Office's request through the Governor, throws some further light on the distinction made by that Office between the Governor and the Agent-General as channels of communication. Archer to C.O., 26 Sept., 1889, and minutes, C.O. 234/50.

3 Morehead's assurance was given in the Legislative Assembly on 19 Oct.; and Griffith, the leader of the Opposition, promised his support. Norman to Knutsford, telegram, 19 Oct., 1889, C.O. 234/50.
to request the Imperial Government to negotiate a treaty, that
Government offered no opinion on the draft clauses of an agree-
ment in 1888. The prospect of treaty negotiations had another
very brief flicker of life in 1892 when Knutsford reminded the
New South Wales Government that he was still awaiting its views
on the draft agreement. The New South Wales Government gave the
coup de grâce to the negotiations by remaining silent.

The Colonial Office's actions during the "crisis" in the
Australian Colonies in 1888 caused by fears of large scale Chi-
nese immigration received even less recognition in England than
in the colonies. In Parliament and in the press, the Colonial
Office was charged both with disregarding colonial wishes and
with abdicating its responsibility as the imperial power. Those
men in England, who prided themselves on their interest in colonial
affairs and their championship of colonial interests, did both the
Colonial Office and the colonies a disservice by attempting to
persuade the colonies that their interests were being disregarded
by the Imperial Government. The nature of the arguments used by
critics of the Imperial Government's policy showed how little

1 Knutsford to Jersey, Very Confidential, 18 May, 1892, N.S.W.
Govt. House Papers.
2 Among such men was J.H. Heaton, that inveterate agitator on be-
half of the colonies against the Colonial Office by means of
questions in Parliament and letters in the press. During the
"crisis" in N.S.W. he wrote to Parkes: "The Government of this
country [Great Britain] are wavering and only want public opinion
to back them to give Australia their entire support. In the
absence of this I am afraid you will suffer". J.H. Heaton to
Parkes, 1 June, 1888. Parkes Correspondence, Autograph Letters
of Notable Australians, pp.155-7, A 70 (Mitchell Library).
the nature and strength of colonial opposition to Chinese immigration was understood in Great Britain.

Knutsford had acted in conformity with his own view that consonant with imperial interests it was the duty of the Imperial Government to accede to colonial wishes. This was not necessarily a policy of weakness as several of the Colonial Office's critics implied. In trying to meet the separate or collective wishes of the Australian Colonies, the Imperial Government did not abdicate its responsibility of making the final decision on policy. The dual policy followed by the Imperial Government, of opening negotiations for a treaty with the Chinese Government and sanctioning colonial legislation at the same time, did not mean that the Colonial Office changed its attitude from lack of sympathy with colonial wishes to active cooperation; but there was such a change to some extent in the attitude of the Foreign Office after the representations of the intercolonial conference had been received.

Perhaps Knutsford could have been more insistent in pressing the Colonial Office's views on the Foreign Office at ministerial level, and in urging diplomatic action. He was a capable and conscientious minister; but he was holding office for the first time. Salisbury was Prime Minister as well as Foreign Secretary, and he enjoyed great prestige among his Cabinet colleagues and as

I e.g. Carnarvon in the House of Lords, 8 June, 1888, Hansard, 3 Ser., vol. 326, pp. 1511, 1521-2; Advertiser, editorial 4 Sept., 1888.
Conservative Party leader. Knutsford's modest and diffident nature would place him at a disadvantage, and probably make him show too much deference to Salisbury's opinions. Apart from the differences in the natures of the two men, Chamberlain, when he was at the Colonial Office, was in a very different political position from Knutsford. Chamberlain was the leader of one group in the Unionist alliance, and his support and that of his followers was essential to the Government's continued existence. Consequently, if the need arose, he would be in a much better position than Knutsford to "bargain" or to insist.

If a treaty had been negotiated with China in 1888, it would, presumably, have applied only to the Australian Colonies. It would have had little or no relevance to the position of the self-governing colonies in general imperial treaties. A specific problem arising from the latter faced the Australian Colonies after the conclusion of the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty in 1894. In some respects, this treaty opened another phase in the problem of Asiatic immigration into Australia; but in origin the whole question arose more clearly out of reconciling imperial treaty rights with colonial self-government. The Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894 provides the basis, therefore, for an examination of the changing place of the self-governing colonies in imperial treaty commitments.
CHAPTER IO

IMPERIAL TREATIES AND THE SELF-GOVERNING COLONIES: THE ANGLO-JAPANESE COMMERCIAL TREATY OF 1894

Control of tariffs was vested in the Colonial Parliaments with the grant of self-government. In the 1860s Canada and Victoria, followed sooner or later by most colonies with the exception of New South Wales, used their power to impose protective duties. From then onwards, the most-favoured-nation clauses, which featured in an increasing number of British commercial treaties, began to react unfavourably on colonial protectionist policies.

In the early 1870s, the Australian Colonies, supported by New Zealand, sought the removal of the disabilities which prevented them from imposing differential duties and thereby attempting to form a customs union. At the same time, Sir Julius Vogel, the Premier of New Zealand, raised another question which caused much concern to Gladstone as well as to Kimberley, then Secretary of State for the Colonies. Vogel asked for the self-governing colonies to be given power to conclude commercial treaties on their own responsibility. This was almost an isolated instance

1 G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, xlii (1872), C.576; and xlix (1873), C.703.
2 ibid.; and P. Knaplund, Gladstone and Britain's Imperial Policy (London, 1927), pp. 103-120.
3 Memo. by Vogel, 5 Dec., 1871, printed in C.576 (1872), p. 60. Although the Australian Colonies and New Zealand had not specifically raised this question in the resolutions adopted by the intercolonial conference in 1871, Gladstone saw that it might arise from the colonial request for power to impose differential duties. P. Knaplund, op. cit., p. 112, quoting a letter from Gladstone to Kimberley, 29 Dec., 1871.
in the late nineteenth century when one of the Australian Colonies or New Zealand sought such a power. With the exception of Sir Francis Dillon Bell in 1887, the representatives of those colonies at the Colonial Conferences of 1887 and 1894 denied that their Governments sought such powers. As a result of Canadian representations, the Imperial Government had conceded that a Canadian plenipotentiary might participate in negotiations for a commercial agreement between Canada and another Power; but the signatory would be the Imperial Government on behalf of Canada. Sir Francis Dillon Bell, the Agent-General for New Zealand, had this practice in mind at the 1887 Colonial Conference when he raised the question of concluding treaties of commerce between British colonies and foreign Powers.

Throughout his career as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Robert Herbert showed his awareness of the changing position of the self-governing colonies as a result of their growth and development. During the later 1870s, Herbert realised that the practice of colonial self-government, and particularly the use of the powers of self-government to impose protective duties, made it imperative that colonial interests should be considered when new treaties of commerce were negotiated. As a result of an oversight or by design, the most-

1 G.B. and I. Parl. Papers, lvi (1887), C.5091, pp.481-4; and lvi (1894), C.7553, pp.67-82.
3 Procs. of Colonial Conference,1887, C.5091, p.470ff.
favoured-nation clauses in the treaties with Belgium (1862) and the German Zollverein (1866) prevented any British colony from imposing differential duties in favour of Great Britain. The negotiations that were carried on from time to time for a new commercial agreement between Great Britain and France gave particular relevance to the inquiry within the Colonial Office into the effects of imperial commercial treaties on the colonies. Herbert thought it would be preferable for the self-governing colonies to make their own decision whether or not to adhere to a treaty rather than for the Imperial Government to attempt to make allowances for the needs of individual colonies in the treaty itself. Two years elapsed between Herbert's first draft of an article allowing subsequent colonial adherence to a treaty and the final draft which was accepted by the Foreign Office.

In future treaties of commerce concluded between the Imperial Government and foreign Powers, the Crown Colonies would be named as being included in the stipulations of the treaty; but the self-governing colonies would not come within the application of the treaty until a supplementary convention to that effect had been concluded by the two contracting Powers. In this way a self-governing colony could exercise its own discretion

1 D.M.Farr, op.cit., pp.233-6, based on C.O.323 Colonies General series in the P.R.O.
2 ibid., p.233.
3 The text of the draft article was sent to the colonies in Carnarvon's Circular despatch of 22 Jan.,1878. Copy sent to Sir Hercules Robinson in N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
within a stipulated period whether it would or would not adhere to any treaty of commerce entered into by Great Britain.

The new article was used for the first time in a treaty with Ecuador in 1881. From then onwards it was almost invariably included in imperial commercial treaties. Some of the Australian Colonies, like Canada, made early use of their freedom of action. Decisions not to adhere became more frequent in the 1890s. In general, a decision not to adhere was made when the existing and future prospects of trade appeared negligible.

In 1888 the Gillies Government in Victoria realised almost with surprise that certain treaties of commerce clearly precluded preferential treatment of British goods in British colonies. Gillies' concern was not on account of any immediate desire to accord preferential treatment to British goods in protectionist Victoria, but because he felt that no fresh obligations of a

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1 It was previously believed that the first use of the clause was in a treaty with Montenegro in 1882. A.B.Keith, Responsible Government in the Dominions (London, 1912), vol.3, p.1109; and D.M.Farr, op.cit., p.237. Also see Note C, The Self-governing Colonies and Adherence to Imperial Treaties, 1678-1881.

2 N.S.W., Victoria and Tasmania did not adhere to the treaty with Ecuador (1881); and the treaties with Montenegro (1882) and Italy (1883) did not apply to S.Australia. G.B.and I. Parl. Paper (1888) xcviii, C.5569, Return re treaties of commerce precluding preferences in colonies; Jervois to Kimberley, S.Aust. No.48, 16 Aug., 1882; and Sir W.Robinson to Derby, S.Aust. No.87, 12 Oct., 1883, S.Aust.Govt.House Papers, Letterbooks of Governor's Despatches.

3 e.g. Victoria did not adhere to the treaty with Egypt (1890); and South Australia did not take advantage of the treaties with Serbia (1893) and Bulgaria (1897). In 1897 all the Australian Colonies declined to be included in a treaty with Tunis. Hopetoun to Knutsford, Vict. No.II8, 8 Oct., 1890, records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria, Letterbooks of Governor's Despatches, vol.II; Kintore to Ripon, S.Aust. No.35,
similar nature should be included in commercial treaties unless the colonies were consulted and given the option of adhering.

In view of the practice followed by the Imperial Government since 1881, Gillies' apprehensions on this score were unnecessary; but it was not unimportant that the attention of the Victorian Government, and that of the Governments in the other Australian Colonies and New Zealand, had been drawn to the clauses in the treaties of commerce with Belgium and the German Zollverein which prevented any colony from giving preferential treatment to Great Britain. This awareness led a few years later to the association of the Australian Agents-General with Sir Charles Tupper, the Canadian High Commissioner, in requesting the termination of those clauses. At the same time, the High Commissioner and the Agents-General sought the formal concession by the Imperial Government of the existing practice whereby no new imperial commercial treaty was made binding on the colonies without their consent. The Colonial Office merely intimated that there was no likelihood of any change in policy.


4 i.e. on receiving a copy of G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, xcvi (1888) C. 5369, Return re treaties of commerce precluding preferences in colonies.

1 At Gillies' request, the Agent-General brought the matter to the notice of the Colonial Office, Berry to C. O., 17 Dec., 1886, C. O. 309/I35.

2 Vict. V. and P. (1891), Legis. Assembly, vol. I, Paper C. 10, Correspondence between the Premier of Victoria, the Agent-General and the Colonial Office. See Chapter II.

Although no self-governing colony had requested the power of withdrawal from a commercial treaty, Sir Robert Herbert, with the South African Customs Union particularly in mind, saw that this power might be of great advantage should the circumstances of a colony change and make its release from a treaty desirable. With Knutsford's approval, the Foreign Office was asked if a special clause could be inserted into a treaty to provide for a colony's withdrawal at a year's notice. The Foreign Office saw no objection in principle, but thought it would be preferable for a colony to withdraw at twelve months' notice when the stipulated duration of a treaty terminated. A different problem would arise should a colony wish the terms of a general treaty to continue to apply to itself after the treaty was no longer binding on the mother country.

It was not until 1899, in a treaty with Uruguay, that the right of separate withdrawal was generally conceded. In 1896, the Japanese Government was willing to concede the right of separate withdrawal as an inducement to the Australian Colonies to adhere to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of 1894.

2 Draft C.O. to F.O.,8 Jan.,1889, C.O.309/I35.
4 loc.cit.
II

When the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty was concluded in 1894, the Australian Colonies for the first time faced a major problem in exercising their option of taking advantage of the terms of an imperial treaty. Adherence to this treaty raised two serious issues: trade expansion and competition from cheap Japanese labour in imported manufactures and through immigration.

Article III of the treaty stated: "There shall be reciprocal freedom of commerce and navigation between the dominions and possessions of the two High Contracting Parties. The subjects of each... may trade in any part of the dominions and possessions of the other by wholesale or retail in all kinds of produce, manufactures and merchandise of lawful commerce... and shall enjoy, respectively, the same treatment in matters of commerce and navigation as native subjects, or subjects or citizens of the most-favoured-nation...." This clause opened up the whole question of the place of the self-governing colonies in imperial agreements which included most-favoured-nation clauses.

The treaty had been negotiated at a time when trade expan-

1 The treaty was signed on 16 July, 1894, and the ratifications exchanged on 25 August, 1894. Under Article XIX of the treaty, the self-governing colonies had the right to notify their adherence to the treaty within two years from the date of the exchange of ratifications; but the treaty would not come into operation until 1899 at the earliest. A Supplementary Convention covered the intervening period.

2 The text of the treaty was forwarded in Ripon's Circular Despatch of 31 Dec., 1894. Printed in N.S.W. V. and P. (1894-5 Session), vol.6, p.1320ff.
sion became an urgent necessity for the Australian Colonies. Future prosperity, a matter of vital importance in years immediately following a serious depression, was seen in expanding markets for their export trade. This meant that prospects of increasing their trade with Great Britain, as well as with other countries, had to be explored. Because the Anglo-Japanese Treaty came at a time when protectionist colonies, such as Victoria and South Australia, were for the first time seriously beginning to discuss in principle the possibility of tariff reductions in favour of Great Britain or another British colony, the real effects of most-favoured-nation clauses, and particularly of clauses which precluded the concession of tariff preferences to Great Britain, had to be given closer attention.

The great importance of trade expansion to the Australian Colonies led to more emphasis on the duties of the Agent-General in trade promotion - an emphasis which was epitomised perhaps from 1894 onwards by the gradual removal of the offices of the Agencies-General from the Westminster area to the City. In addi-


2 e.g. Memo. by R.W. Best, Victorian Commissioner of Trade and Customs, 10 July,1896 (copy in N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letter Public Offices 96/7238); and a debate in the Victorian Legis. Council, Vict. Parl. Deb. 25 Nov.,1896, vol.83, p.3682ff., and 2 Dec.,1896, vol.84, p.3928ff. The Victorian tariff was revised during the 1895–6 session; and during 1895 a reciprocity treaty was concluded between South Australia and New Zealand, but for several reasons it was never put into operation.

3 The South Australian Agency-General, during Thomas Playford's tenure of office, was the first to move to the City. Although greater emphasis was placed on an Agent-General's duties in
tion, the New South Wales Government set up a Board of Exports in November, 1895; the Victorian Government established a similar body, and government bounties on exports of dairy and agricultural produce were granted; the South Australian Government set up a Wine and Produce Depot in London; and several of the Australian Colonies appointed Commercial Agents to promote increased trade not only with Great Britain but also with Europe, India and the Far East.

Between 1895 and 1897, official trade commissioners were sent to Japan by the New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian Governments. The South Australian commissioner was instructed "to inquire into and report upon the conditions of Trade, Commerce, Currency, Finance and Manufactures in China and Japan, and the possibilities of the establishment and extension of commercial relations between China and South Australia and between Japan and South Australia..." On a number of occasions individual merchants or their agents visited Japan to sound out the prospects of trade, and the colonial press featured reports from them. In general, it was only in the wool trade that much prospect was seen of any great increase in exports to Japan; but promoting trade, there was no lessening of the importance of his other duties in the years before the Commonwealth of Australia was established.

I J.L. Parsons was sent to China and Japan by the South Australian Government in July, 1895, and he returned about a year later to report on his mission; Rowe and Kelly, as Victorian commissioners, were referred to in the Legislative Council on 23 July, 1895, Vict. Parl. Deb. (1895-6 Session), vol. 77, pp. 1050-1; and a report by J.H. Want to the N.S.W. Government was referred to in the Legislative Assembly on 26 August, 1896, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 84, p. 2625.

2 A copy of the Commission issued by the Lieutenant-Governor was
this would be a welcome development when not only prices but also total wool exports had fallen considerably as a result of the economic depression. Little hope was held out for establishing a trade in chilled, frozen or tinned meats. The accuracy of these forecasts is borne out by the official export statistics for the Australian Colonies between 1894 and 1900.

The examination of trade prospects between the Australian Colonies and Japan was not one-sided. Japanese interests were also surveying Australian markets, and it was the likelihood of a far greater advantage to the Japanese manufacturer and exporter that caused some New South Wales and Victorian manufacturers to be more apprehensive of increased trade with Japan than their merchant counterparts. A few months after the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty was concluded, the British Minister in Tokio pointed out that the end of the Sino-Japanese War would mean that "a large number of merchant steamers which have been purchased by Japan for the purpose of the war will then be thrown out of employment, and it is proposed to utilise them by the establishment of new lines of steamers to the Australian ports and elsewhere..." Some weeks later the British Minister's view was corroborated enclosed in Way to Ripon, Confidential, 16 July, 1895, C.O.13/I50. 3 e.g. S.M.H., 13 Dec., 1894, and 21 Feb., 1895; Brisbane Courier, 1 June, 1895, 6 June, 1895, and 14 Sept., 1895. 4 e.g. report in S.M.H., 21 Feb., 1895.

1 e.g. report in S.M.H., 2 Jan., 1896.
2 See Table III (iv).
3 Trench to Kimberley, Confidential, 26 Dec., 1894, copy enclosed in Ripon to Darley, Confidential, 7 May, 1895. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
by an article in the Japanese press in which the establishment of a steamship line to Australia and Japan's development as a manufacturing country were discussed. On subsequent occasions, there were reports that Japanese interests had optimistic expectations of a great expansion in Australian wool exports for the Japanese woollen manufacturing industry, of a growing market in Japan for Australian frozen beef, and of a possible market in Australia for Japanese-caught fish. Japanese consuls in the Australian Colonies expressed similar expectations.

For all these reasons, the issues raised by the prospects of trade expansion with Japan, should the Australian Colonies adhere to the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty, were complex. Merchants in New South Wales and manufacturers in Victoria, where over-production in manufactures had contributed to the depression, did not see the same benefits accruing to the Australian Colonies. The Colonial Governments, therefore, could find no quick or easy answer to two questions. First, would the advantages of increased exports of Australian products to Japan outweigh the disadvantages to Australian manufacturers of the free entry of Japanese goods into free trade colonies, such as New South Wales? Secondly, there was a more technical question: would adherence to the treaty operate against tariff preferences in favour of Great Britain.

1 Japan Daily Mail, 19 Feb., 1895, copy enclosed in Ripon to Darley, Confidential, 7 May, 1895, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
2 Reported in (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, 6 Jan., 1897, and 3 July, 1897.
3 e.g. reports in S.M.H., 14 June, 1897.
should such preferences prove to be in the interests of the Australian Colonies?

The second serious issue raised by the treaty was much wider in its ramifications and more likely to be influenced by emotion and prejudice. Article I of the treaty stated: "The subjects of each of the High Contracting Parties shall have full liberty to enter, travel or reside in any part of the dominions and possessions of the other Contracting Party and shall enjoy full and perfect liberty for their persons and property..."

In 1894 the Australian Colonies began to realise that a more potentially dangerous threat from Japan had been added to their old fears of China. Some Australian colonists, who had previously believed that Australia's isolation was her best defence and her only danger lay in her connection with Great Britain, were led by Japan's success in her war against China to revalue Australia's position and see an advantage in what they described as "alliance" with Britain. But the immediate threat from Japan was of increased emigration to the Australian Colonies, and in particular to Queensland, the Northern Territory and the northern

2 The British Minister in Tokio was also aware of this potential threat. Trench to Kimberley, Confidential, 26 Dec., 1894, copy enclosed in Ripon to Darley, Confidential, 7 May, 1895, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. Trench stated that a large part of the indemnity paid to Japan by China was likely to be used to increase the Japanese navy. In the future this could be a possible threat to the Australian Colonies, New Zealand and Canada.
3 e.g. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 91, Legis. Assembly, 16 Nov., 1897, E.W. O'Sullivan, p. 4902; and 24 Nov., 1897, W.J. Lyne, pp. 5043-4.
parts of Western Australia. The establishment of a direct line of steamers between Japan and the Australian Colonies in 1896 would provide facilities for greater numbers of emigrants as well as for increased trade. With Japan's development as a manufacturing country, the competition between Asiatic immigrant and Australian workman would no longer be solely in unskilled work: it would also apply to semi-skilled and skilled trades. The latter was not such an immediate problem because the Japanese Government was unlikely to encourage the emigration of skilled labourers; but it could eventually affect New South Wales and Victoria.

In the years straight after the depression of 1891-1893, there was a renewal of the agitation against coloured immigrants. The Chinese had already been dealt with by stringent Chinese Immigration Restriction Acts. Agitation now centred on the Japanese who were entering northern Queensland and the Northern Territory, and on other coloured immigrants who were vaguely described as "Syrians", "Hindoos" and "Afghans". For this reason, overt expressions of opposition to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty in the Colonial Parliaments and in the press centred on unfair competition from cheap labour either in imports from Japan or in the labour market in the colonies unless immigration was severely restricted. The opposition to coloured immigration, and particular—

I Trench to Kimberley, No.13, II Jan.,1895, and enclosing Memo. by H.S.Wilkinson, Yokohama, IO Jan.,1895. Copies forwarded in Ripon to Darley, Confidential, 7 May,1895, N.S.W.Govt.House Papers.

2 e.g. N.S.W. Parl. Deb. (1894-5 Session), vol. 77, Legis.Assembly, 8 May,1895, p.5955; vol.78, Legis. Assembly, II June,1895, p.70II.
larly to the Japanese, was not exclusively motivated by the fear of competition with local labour. As had been the case with the Chinese in the 1880s, it was also a question of sentiment. The radical Bulletin in Sydney, and radical as well as labour members in the Colonial Parliaments, declared that the treaty should be rejected because of the dangers it offered to an Australian national life.

Unrestricted Japanese immigration into the Australian Colonies was a cause for concern before the treaty was finally concluded. During 1895, Sir Henry Norman, the Governor of Queensland, drew the attention of the Colonial Office to the arrival of another four hundred Japanese in Queensland at a time when wages had been lowered in the colony on account of the financial distress. Because some of these immigrants were tradesmen, Norman thought there would be agitation for immigration restrictions if the influx assumed "large dimensions". The Japanese Minister in London was told of reports that numbers of Japanese in the Torres Straits and Thursday Island were unemployed. Although the dangers of ill-feeling in Queensland against the Japanese were pointed out to the Japanese Minister, nothing was said about the

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1 As Hampden correctly told Chamberlain at the time of the passage of the 1896 Coloured Immigration Restriction Bill through the N.S.W. Parliament. Hampden to Chamberlain, private, 27 Nov., 1896, C.O.201/619.


3 Norman to Ripon, Confidential, 22 Feb., 1893, Q'Id. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Confidential Despatches, vol. 2; and Norman to Ripon, Secret, 30 June, 1893, Q'Id. Govt. House Papers, Letterbooks of Secret Despatches, vol. I.
possibility of colonial legislation against Japanese immigrants because the negotiations for the treaty were still in progress.

A few months after the treaty was concluded, the Foreign Office's attention was drawn to the dangers that were likely to arise from increased facilities for Japanese emigration to Australia and Canada. At the same time, the British Minister in Tokio forwarded a suggestion that an attempt should be made to reach an agreement with the Japanese Government on immigration restrictions before the colonies declared their adherence to the treaty. Such an agreement could possibly be on the lines of a recent treaty between Japan and the United States; but any agreement concerning British colonies should cover artisans as well as labourers. To attempt a settlement of the immigration problem by means of an agreement with the foreign Power concerned was reminiscent of the fruitless negotiations with the Chinese Government in 1888. The Australian Colonies had then had greater faith in their own restrictive legislation, and in 1895-6 the agitation against Japanese immigration was for similar colonial legislation against all coloured immigrants.

The fear of unrestricted coloured immigration was a very real one, but it was capable of greatly exaggerating the actual volume of immigration. It also wielded much more political power
to force the Colonial Governments to restrictive action than was borne out by the numbers of coloured immigrants entering the colonies. This was especially the case in New South Wales where the Reid Government needed to retain Labour Party support. Similarly, there were exaggerations of the fear that Australian markets would be flooded by cheap Japanese manufactures. Between 1894 and 1900 the major imports from Japan were silks, china, matting, fancy goods and rice. Leaving aside the influence which their short and often insecure tenure of office had on making the Australian Governments extra sensitive to various interests and opinions, those Governments could not afford to disregard the strong expressions of opinion, by both manufacturers and working men, against cheap Japanese manufactures and possible competition from Japanese immigrants in the Australian labour market in the years of recovery immediately following a serious depression. The Colonial Governments, therefore, were inclined to approach the Anglo-Japanese Treaty rather cautiously. In some colonies, this question might be the most important of all: could the prospects of wider markets for Australian products outweigh

1 e.g. a report of thousands of cheap boots flooding N.S.W. markets boiled down on investigation to one pair worn by a merchant who had visited Japan. S.M.H., 15 Feb., 1895.
2 See Table III (iii).
3 Admittedly the Reid, Turner and Kingston Governments in N.S.W., Victoria and South Australia were to hold office longer than most of their predecessors; but this was an unknown factor in 1894-5.
the dangers from Japanese labour in imported manufactures and through immigration?

III

As a result of G.H. Reid's initiative in August 1894, shortly after he became Premier of New South Wales, the Australian federation movement entered a new phase. The prospect of an early achievement of federation had no little influence on the way in which the majority of the Colonial Governments reached their decision on the Anglo-Japanese Treaty, and not the least because they expected that an Australian federation would be established before the treaty came into force in 1899. Reminders were not wanting that any attempt to deal with the question collectively or federally - a term the colonies now liked to use - would be nullified should one colony act differently. There was some reason for a feeling that the attempt to act unitedly on Chinese immigration in 1888 had not been fully successful on account of colonial particularism.

On 30 September, 1895, after the Colonial Governments had been in possession of the text of the treaty for several months, C.C. Kingston, the Premier of South Australia, suggested an inter-colonial conference for the purpose of discussing the Anglo-Jap-

1 This led to the Premiers' Conference in Hobart on 29 Jan., 1895.
2 e.g. Kingston to Reid, telegram, 13 August, 1896. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices, 96/8710.
3 e.g. S.M.H., editorial, 28 Feb., 1896.
4 e.g. S.M.H., editorial 1 Oct., 1895.
apanese Treaty and Japanese immigration: "It occurs to us that Australasian relations with Japan are of such importance that it is desirable that they should be discussed by a conference of the representatives of the Australasian Governments with a view to united action... We think that the Japanese Treaty might well be made a federal question, and that the influx of Japanese in Northern Australia requires prompt federal consideration..."

Kingston's suggestion for united action was in keeping with his role as a leading supporter of the Australian federation movement. There was also an antecedent for his action in the South Australian Government's initiative in 1888 for an intercolonial conference on the Chinese question. As in 1888, South Australia was playing the role of the middle colony interposing itself between the two main colonies, New South Wales and Victoria.

The other Colonial Governments had so far shown no signs of regarding their adhesion to the treaty as an urgent matter, and they saw no reason to discuss the treaty or Japanese immigration before the Parliaments went into recess in December. Probably Sir John Forrest, the Premier of Western Australia, showed most reluctance to attend an intercolonial conference; and he appeared

1 Kingston to the Premiers of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, 30 Sept., 1895, and Cabinet minute of same date, S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters, draft with 95/1244.
2 South Australia was not a member of the almost moribund Federal Council which had been set up under Victorian leadership in 1885. Her initiative, therefore, did not open up the question of New South Wales' position outside the Federal Council.
3 e.g. Turner to Kingston, telegram, 1 Oct., 1895, S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters 95/1244.
to be so far out of touch with feeling in the eastern Australian Colonies that he inquired whether at the conference it was "proposed to restrict Japanese immigration or to facilitate it".

The lack of urgency, or the Premiers' reluctance to reach any decision on adhering to the treaty or on curbing Japanese immigration, caused difficulties and delays in arranging when and where the conference would be held. One major difficulty lay in arranging another conference in addition to a session of the Federal Council to which neither New South Wales nor South Australia belonged, and another was to choose a time when Nelson, the Premier of Queensland, could be present. Kingston and Reid both felt that Nelson's presence at the conference was important because Japanese immigration particularly affected Queensland.

Before the conference met, Turner and Reid became reluctant to give the Japanese treaty and immigration undue prominence. Reid, therefore, suggested that the scope of the conference should be widened to make federal defence the principal subject.


2 After an exchange of views with Reid, Kingston suggested that the conference should be held in Sydney on 14 Jan., 1896. Kingston to all the Premiers except N.S.W., telegram, 21 Dec., 1895, S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, draft with in-letters 95/1244. The meeting of the conference was postponed when it was known that Nelson would be out of Australia until February. Finally 4 March was set down as the date for the conference; but as this conflicted with an election campaign in Queensland, Nelson could not attend. Nelson to Reid, telegrams, 27 and 28 Feb., 1896. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public offices 96/2367 and 2368.

3 Turner suggested combining a conference on the Japanese treaty and immigration with the Postal Conference which was to discuss the Pacific Cable project. Turner to Reid, telegram, 30 Dec., 1895. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters 95/12479.
and the treaty included in the more imprecise subject of "undesirable immigration". One of the reasons, if not the main one, for the Premiers' reluctance to bring the treaty and the problems it raised into prominence, was to avoid arousing the pressures of public agitation. Kingston was less fearful that Reid or Turner of the possible effect of public pressures. He contended that the treaty must be dealt with federally because "its importance is bound to secure great public attention..."

When the conference met in Sydney on 4 and 5 March, 1896, Reid, Kingston and Braddon (Tasmania) were the only Premiers present. Victoria and Queensland were each represented by two ministers. The Anglo-Japanese Treaty and undesirable immigration were two of the five subjects brought before the conference. A long discussion appears to have preceded the adoption of the resolution: "That... it is desirable to extend without delay the provisions of the Chinese Restriction Act to all coloured races".

1 Reid to Kingston, telegram, 10 Feb., 1896. S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters 95/I244.
2 i.e. in the forthcoming elections in S.Australia. Kingston to Reid, draft of telegram, 10 Feb., 1896. S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters 86/I244.
3 Sir John Forrest had declined to attend. Telegrams to Kingston, 7 Jan., 1896 (S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters 95/I244), and to Reid, 18 Feb., 1896 (N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/I925). Forrest asked Queensland to represent W.Australia, but he reserved the right of his government not to be bound by the resolutions of the conference. Forrest to Reid, telegram, 19 Feb., 1896. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/I925.
4 Victoria was represented by J.G. Puffy (Postmaster-General) and R.W. Best (Minister for Lands and Commissioner of Trade and
Queensland's adherence to this resolution was made subject to the continuance of the Pacific Islands Labourers' Act.

After a full discussion on 4 March, a unanimous decision was reached the following day that the colonies represented at the conference would not adhere to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. There is no record of the arguments put forward by each colony before this decision was made. At the time, ministers in the Colonial Governments and the press expressed considerable satisfaction at the way in which the colonies had agreed together to restrict coloured immigration and to stand out from the treaty. But a complaint was later made in the South Australian Parliament that the House had been given no opportunity of knowing "what were the reasons and principles which actuated the Sydney Conference of Premiers in coming to a decision that the Treaty was of no benefit to Australia". The decision was not as unex-

1. Queensland was represented by H. Tozer (Colonial Secretary) and A. H. Barlow (Minister for Lands and Agriculture).
2. The other subjects were federal defense, ocean coast lights and quarantine.
pected as this complaint might imply; but it was probably dependent on whether or not the conference decided in favour of restrictive legislation against coloured immigrants.

As early as August, 1895, a member of Reid's Government had stated that New South Wales would not adhere to the treaty; and Reid had said later that the treaty was of great importance because it brought up "the whole of the alien labour question". When Holder, the South Australian Treasurer, visited Sydney and Melbourne in January, 1896, he had been reported as saying that the question under discussion by the Governments was "a matter involving not so much the Japanese Treaty as the admission of the Japanese and other races into these Colonies...." Holder's remark was later borne out by Kingston's statement that his Government's policy was clear because it had been returned to office on the immigration question. One of the Queensland representatives at the conference reminded an interviewer of an election statement by Nelson that he would be no party to the Japanese treaty "because it would result in flooding the markets here with cheap goods and raise the labour question".

Unless the Japanese Government was willing to recognise that the Australian Colonies, like the United States, could

2 Reported in S.M.H., 22 Oct., 1895.
3 Reported in S.M.H., 10 Jan., 1896.
4 i.e. in the elections held shortly after the Premiers' Conference. S.Aust. Parl. Deb. (1896 Session), H. of Assembly, 14 July, 1896, p. 156.
5 Reported in S.M.H., 4 March, 1896.
impose immigration restrictions, the Colonial Governments could not adhere to the treaty because restrictive enactments against Japanese immigrants would contravene Article I. In many ways, the questions of trade and immigration were inextricably mixed in 1896; but it is likely that the commercial aspects of the treaty took second place to the immigration question in leading the Premiers' Conference to decide against adherence to the treaty. Subsequent correspondence between the Colonial Office and the Colonial Governments, as well as between the Foreign Office and the Japanese Government, concerned colonial powers to restrict immigration. As far as Victoria was concerned, the trade question was probably of more pressing moment than immigration; and Braddon, the Premier of Tasmania, pointed out that "other reasons than the prevention of an influx of Japanese moved the Conference... to stand aloof from the treaty". When the question of colonial adherence to the treaty was brought before the 1897 Colonial Conference in London, Chamberlain and the colonial Premiers almost exclusively concerned themselves with the purely commercial aspects of the treaty. The treaty itself was barely mentioned when Australian restrictions on coloured immigration were discussed.

1 See forward, pp.448,458.
2 Braddon to Reid, 9 July,1896. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/7I21.
For some reason, the Colonial Governments made no immediate moves to notify the Imperial Government of their decision to stand out from the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. While they delayed, a danger arose that their united front might be undermined.

In August, 1895, the Colonial Office had taken up the suggestion made by the British Minister in Tokio at the beginning of the year: that an attempt should be made to obtain the Japanese Government's agreement to a proviso allowing the self-governing colonies to legislate with regard to the immigration of labourers and artisans without infringing Article I of the treaty. The Australian governments do not appear to have urged the Colonial Office to this course of action, and they were not told of the approach to the Japanese Government until after Sir Ernest Satow, the British Minister in Tokio, had reported that a proviso might possibly be concluded. The Colonial Office was acting on the precedents of the negotiations with China in 1888 and the recent treaty between the United States and Japan in attempting to secure Japanese acquiescence to colonial immigration restrictions. Since Chamberlain's accession to office in July, 1895, the Colonial Office was probably also acting on the assumption that in the long run the commercial provisions of the treaty would be of great value to Canada, the Australian Colonies.

I C.O. to F.O., 26 August, 1895, copy enclosed in Chamberlain's Circular despatch (Confidential) of 22 Feb., 1896. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
and New Zealand. Several months later, Sir Ernest Satow reported that the Japanese Government had agreed to the conclusion of a proviso "but without the mention of labourers". As far as the colonies were concerned, the Japanese Government was also willing for the agreement to be terminated on either side by six months' notice. These terms were less than those conceded to the United States; but the latter concession meant that the colonies were being given the right of separate withdrawal. They could give a conditional adherence instead of being bound for the full twelve-year term of the treaty.

So far the negotiations did not seem to offer much that would satisfy the Australian Colonies. It was little wonder that Kingston commented that the negotiations were of little importance now that the colonies had decided not to adhere to the treaty, or that Braddon should say that Japan's concession of something less than she had conceded to the United States was an insufficient reason for departing from the decision reached at the conference. During May and June, some of the Colonial Governments, therefore, began to notify the Colonial Office of the

1 F.O. to C.O., 10 Feb.,1896, copy enclosed in Chamberlain's Circular despatch (Confidential), 22 Feb.,1896. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
2 loc.cit.
I
decision taken in March.

The negotiations with the Japanese Government continued; and, because the two-year period for the notification of colonial adherence to the treaty would expire on 25 August, Chamberlain asked the Colonial Governments at the end of June whether their decision was final or whether an arrangement with Japan covering labourers and artisans would lead to an alteration in their decision.

When Chamberlain made this inquiry, the Colonial Governments were just entering on another phase of activity and joint consultation. They were about to discuss the implementation of the conference decision to introduce legislation restricting coloured immigration, and they were faced with Queensland's possible deviation from the decision not to adhere to the Japanese treaty.

When the Queensland representatives had agreed to the resolution showing the colonies' determination to restrict coloured immigration, they had specifically excluded Pacific Island labourers. Although there had been strong expressions of opinion in the

1 e.g. Buxton to Chamberlain, Confidential, 7 May, 1896, C.O.13/151; Brassey to Chamberlain, Vict. No. 38, 1 June, 1896, C.O.309/143. Inquiries by Bramston showed that a copy of the proceedings of the Premiers' Conference had not been sent to the Colonial Office. The Agent-General for N.S.W. was only able to supply a newspaper account which the Colonial Office was asked to return "when done with". Minutes on Buxton to Chamberlain, Confidential, 7 May, 1896, C.O.13/151.

2 Minutes on Buxton to Chamberlain, Confidential, 7 May, 1896, C.O.13/151; and on Brassey to Chamberlain, Vict. No. 38, 1 June, 1896, C.O.309/143. Also telegrams from Chamberlain, e.g. to Hampden, 25 and 29 June, 1896, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers; and to Nelson, I August, 1896, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers.

3 See the various letters and telegrams from the Colonial Govern-
press and in the Queensland Parliament against a possible flood of Japanese immigrants, a regulated flow would be useful in the pearl-shell fishing and sugar milling industries. Some apprehension, therefore, arose in the other colonies that Japanese settlements were being encouraged by some interests in Queensland. Regulation of Japanese immigration, rather than prohibition, might best suit Queensland's needs; and Nelson thought that regulation became a more practical possibility in 1896 when agitation in Queensland against Japanese immigration greatly decreased.

If, as the British Government believed, the Japanese Government was reluctant to encourage emigration, a proviso, whereby the Japanese Government would recognise colonial powers to restrict immigration if necessary, seemed likely to suit Queensland's needs and allow her to adhere to the treaty. The reasons for the Queensland Government's change in attitude are obscure; but the most likely explanation seems to be that Nelson saw an opportunity to satisfy the divergent interests of different groups in Queensland. Among these were those who saw that the colony would benefit from an expansion of trade with Japan after the establishment between March and Sept., 1896, in the N.S.W. Treas. Papers (Public Offices); and a statement by Reid in the N.S.W. Legis. Assembly on 14 May. N.S.W. Parl. Deb. (1896 Session), vol. 82, p. 165.

I For example, 50 Japanese had been brought in to work at Hambleton. They were bound to return to Japan after a specified period. One third of their wages was remitted to Japan, one third was paid to the men and one third was retained until their return to Japan. Norman to Ripon, Secret, 12 Dec., 1893. Q'd. Govt. House Papers, Secret Despatches to Secretary of State, vol. I.

2 e.g. the Victorian Memo. of 10 July, 1896, copy in N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/7238.

ment of a direct steamship line. Moreover, Nelson himself had not been present at the Premiers' Conference in March. However much he would have liked to accept the opportunity offered by the negotiations with the Japanese Government, Nelson reluctantly concluded that on the basis of his knowledge of the state of the negotiations in May, 1896, Queensland could not adhere to the treaty; but he added that the Queensland Government would have no objection to the treaty stipulations if a proviso covering I labourers was included.

The latter statement immediately provoked a hostile response from the other colonies; and Nelson's explanation of his attitude did not remove their objections. Apart from his having shown an inclination to take unilateral action to depart from a unanimous decision of the conference, Nelson put forward some cogent reasons in favour of adhering to the treaty with its proviso. When the colonies had adopted the resolution at the conference in March, Nelson claimed, the drawbacks from increasing Japanese immigration seemed to outweigh the possible advantages arising from closer commercial relations. After the Japanese Government had shown no objection to concluding a proviso which would allow the Colonial Governments to introduce immigration restrictions, the Queensland Government could see no reasons for rejecting the other advantages offered by the treaty. On account

2 A copy of Nelson's statement was sent to the colonial Premiers, e.g. to Kingston on 29 May, 1896. S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters 97/1171.
of her geographical position, Queensland was more interested than
the rest of Australia in restricting alien immigration; the pro-
viso would allow legislative restrictions to be imposed and be-
come effective immediately because the bill would not have to be
reserved for the Queen's assent.

Led by Kingston and Reid, the other colonies tried to pre-
serve a united front. Queensland's possible deviation from the
conference decision came at a time when her apparently lukewarm
attitude towards the federation movement was being criticised
in the other colonies. As Kingston saw it, acting in the federal
spirit was far more important than the justice of any of Nelson's
arguments. So he bluntly told Nelson that "federal arrangements
will become of little worth if they are lightly departed from
at all without prior consultation between representatives of the
3 colonies concerned". A similar sentiment led Braddon to insist
that "a policy agreed to by Colonial representatives at a duly
convened Conference... should only be set aside or modified by
the concerted action of those who formed it".

Although Reid and Turner did not hesitate to join King-
ston in persuading Queensland to act with the other colonies,

I Nelson to Reid, 19 June, 1896, copy forwarded to Kingston,
2 See telegrams and letters filed in S. Aust. Chief Sec. records,
in-letters 97/II71; and N. S. W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public
Offices 96/6783, 6891, 7121.
3 Kingston to Nelson, 8 July, 1896, draft of telegram in S. Aust.
Chief Sec. records, in-letters 97/II71.
4 Braddon to Reid, 9 July, 1896, summarising his arguments to
Nelson. N. S. W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/
7121.
they saw some reason in Nelson's arguments in favour of the provi-
so, and at one stage Reid wondered whether it might not be advis-
sable for all the colonies to consult together and possibly
adopt a similar "wait-and-see" attitude to that of Queensland.
For the time being, Reid did not notify the Colonial Office of
the New South Wales Government's final decision not to adhere to
the treaty. The Victorian Government was led to draw up a state-
ment of its objections to the treaty. When these were known to
the Imperial Government, Turner hoped that the colonies would
find out if there was any likelihood of their being overcome.

The Victorian Government's statement implied that the trade
question and its associated problems were more important in that
colony than the immigration issue. As far as the latter was con-
cerned, it was useless for the colonies to reconsider their deci-
sion not to adhere to the treaty as long as the Japanese Govern-
ment excluded artisans from the term "labourers". The commercial
stipulations in the treaty gave rise to two main objections.
First, the treaty seemed to offer little to Victoria's export
trade. Japan had commercial treaties with most countries: Victoria
would be placed either in competition with almost the whole

I e.g. Reid to Kingston, telegram, 3 July,1896. S.Aust. Chief Sec,
records, in-letters 97/I171.
2 In reply to Chamberlain's telegram of 26 June, Hampden told
Chamberlain that Reid deprecated any individual action by Queen
land, and that he was suggesting further consultation between
the colonies. Hampden to Chamberlain, telegram, 26 June,1896,
C.O.20I/619.
3 Turner to Reid, 14 July,1896. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters
Public Offices 96/7238.
4 Memo. by R.W. Best, Commissioner of Trade and Customs, 10 July,
1896, copy enclosed in Turner to Reid, 14 July,1896.
Best thought that Articles 4 and 5 of the treaty would particu-
larly affect Victoria. "In view of the hampering effect these
world on equal terms or she would be put out of competition altogether unless Japan allowed wool and breadstuffs to enter duty free. The list of articles in the supplementary convention, which covered the period until the treaty came into force on 16 July, 1899, included nothing which Victoria exported with the possible exception of leather. Secondly, the treaty might adversely affect Victoria's power to offer tariff concession to another British colony unless a similar concession was made to Japan.

Without any doubt, the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Tasmania were sincere in their desire to uphold a form of federal action. At the end of July and the beginning of August, their consultations aimed at returning a united and final reply to the Colonial Office on the question of the treaty, and, if possible, to re-associate Queensland with them in that reply. Kingston tried hard to ensure that this would take the form of a joint representation. He wanted the Colonial Office to be made to realise the "inexpediency of any extension of the Japanese Treaty to any part of Australasia pending federal

Articles would have on the probable future policy of the Colonies the recent Conference decided that it was not advisable that they should become parties thereto".

I loc. cit. Best thought that this point should be settled before any step was taken with regard to adhering to the treaty. Issues, the Victorian Attorney-General still had some doubts on this point which had not been removed by Ripon's despatch of 28 July, 1895, in reply to the resolution of the Ottawa Conference in 1894, on the operation of most-favoured-nation clauses and their effect on tariff preferences in favour of another colony or Great Britain. See Chapter II.
I agreement on the subject”.

In the end, each colony notified its decision to the Imperial Government. Reid and Turner sent identical messages couched in language somewhat less uncompromising than Kingston’s. They adhered to their former decision, "but if there should be any disposition on the part of the Japanese Government to allow us to come under the Treaty whilst reserving to ourselves full power to restrict immigration from Japan we would reconsider the matter". Queensland’s decision was not finally made until a week or ten days after the other colonies. By that time, the Australian Colonies had received further information on the course of the negotiations with the Japanese Government.

In March, 1896, Sir Ernest Satow had become more optimistic that the Japanese Government might recognise the right of the British colonies to restrict the immigration of Japanese labourers, although he understood that this concession had been granted to the United States in return for tariff concessions. Towards

1 Kingston to Reid, telegrams, 16 July, 1896 (draft in S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters 97/II7I), and 12 August, 1896 (N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/8710).
2 Turner to Reid, telegram, 7 August, 1896, N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/8425; Brassey to Chamberlain, telegram, 8 August, 1896, records in the office of the Governor of Victoria; and Hampden to Chamberlain, telegram, 10 August, 1896, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
3 Enclosed in Chamberlain’s Circular despatch (Confidential) of 8 July, 1896, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
4 Satow to Salisbury, No. 59, 23 March, 1896, enclosed in Chamberlain’s Circular despatch of 8 July, 1896. Satow’s hopes were partly based on the difference of opinion between the Minister-President and the Foreign Minister over granting the concessions to the colonies.
the end of March, he had reported that the Japanese Government was willing to include labourers in a proviso but not artisans, and to make the treaty terminable for the colonies at one year's notice. In view of this concession, Satow had asked if the inclusion of artisans might be conceded by the British Government provided the Japanese Government was willing to extend the duration of the treaty for the colonies to the full term of twelve years. Satow had subsequently urged this course more strongly on the British Government because he believed the Japanese Government would give way on the length of the treaty in order to secure the adherence of Canada, the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. The successive Japanese concessions made it appear to him that opening up markets in the British colonies had become important to Japan in view of the nearness of the establishment of the new steamship lines. In response to Satow's inquiry, Salisbury sought to know whether a proviso including these stipulations would satisfy the Australian Colonies.

When the Australian Governments knew that the Japanese Government refused to include artisans in the proviso, Nelson

2 Satow to Salisbury, No. 59, 23 March, 1896, enclosing a Memo from the Japanese Foreign Minister, 19 March, 1896.
3 Satow to Salisbury, No. 80, 10 April, 1896, and No. 85, 16 April, 1896, copies enclosed in Chamberlain's Circular despatch of 8 July, 1896.
4 loc. cit.
reluctantly decided that Queensland could not adhere to the treaty. The Queensland Government's final action in this phase of the question appeared to herald a victory for the federal spirit of united action after all. But that Government's earlier and more favourable attitude towards the negotiations with the Japanese Government encouraged the British government to persevere in seeking further concessions.

The Colonial Office had taken the earlier attitude to imply that the Queensland Government wished the negotiations to continue "independently (if necessary) of the other Colonies". Once the Japanese Government knew that Queensland was favourably inclined towards the treaty, provided the Colonial Governments could legislate with regard to labourers and artisans, the Colonial Office hoped that further concessions would be made by the Japanese in order to gain colonial adherence to the treaty.

Immediately after he had notified the decisions of the colonies against adhering to the treaty, Satow informed Salisbury that the Japanese Government was disposed to accede to the inclusion of artisans provided the three colonies of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria adhered to the treaty. Satow was thereupon

1 Nelson to Lamington, 18 August, 1896; Lamington to Chamberlain, Confidential, 20 August, 1896, and telegram of the same date. Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Confidential Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol. I.


4 Selborne (for Chamberlain) to Hampden, Confidential, 16 Sept., 1896, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. The exchange of notes between Satow and the Japanese Government took place on 24 August.
instructed to seek a year's extension of time for the colonies to notify their adherence to the treaty; and Chamberlain asked the Colonial Governments if they wished to alter their decisions "in view of the concession now made by the Japanese Government".

The question of adherence to the Japanese treaty was reopened in the Australian Colonies in the latter months of 1896 while the Coloured Races Restriction Bills were still before the Parliaments of New South Wales and South Australia. Despite some misgivings at one stage that New South Wales and Victoria might take advantage of the concession offered to them by Japan, those two colonies, with South Australia and Tasmania, declined to reverse their earlier decision. Their attitude was confirmed by a resolution adopted at a Premiers' Conference in Hobart in

1 Selborne (for Chamberlain) to Hampden, Confidential, 16 Sept., 1896, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
2 The terms of the proviso, showing the Japanese Government's willingness to include artisans in the term "labourers", and the texts of the Notes requesting and agreeing to an extension of one year in which the colonies might adhere to the treaty were forwarded to the Australian Colonies at the end of October, 1896. Chamberlain to Hampden, 21 Oct., 1896, enclosing a copy of Satow to Salisbury, No.158, 19 August, 1896, and No. 163, 21 August, 1896, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
3 In November, Chamberlain asked the Colonial Governments to signify their acceptance or rejection of the draft protocol. Chamberlain to Hampden, Confidential, 27 November, 1896, enclosing a copy of Satow to Salisbury, No.184, 8 Oct., 1896, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
4 e.g. Braddon to Reid, 25 Nov., 1896. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/13336.
5 See the correspondence between Nov., 1896, and Jan., 1897, filed in the S.Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters 97/I711.

Some of the colonies notified Chamberlain of their decision almost immediately on receipt of his despatch of 27 Nov., 1896, e.g. Buxton to Chamberlain, Confidential, 17 Jan., 1897, C.O.13/I51.
February, 1897.

The refusal of New South Wales and Victoria to reverse their decision meant that Queensland on her own could not take 2 advantage of the concession offered by Japan; but a few days after the Colonial Office had been informed that Queensland could not adhere to the treaty, the Japanese Government made a further concession. On 16 March, 1897, Sir Ernest Satow signed the protocol and the treaty on behalf of Queensland alone.

IV

In June, 1897, the final phase in the question of the adherence of the Australian Colonies to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty took place at the Colonial Conference in London. The trade issue had become somewhat obscured during the negotiations with Japan. The concessions made by the Japanese Government to encourage the colonies to adhere to the treaty had been concerned solely with immigration restrictions. At the Colonial Conference, the commercial advantages or disadvantages in the treaty came back into prominence.

I "That this Conference, having considered the Japanese Treaty with its proposed alterations, affirms the decision of the Sydney Conference of March, 1896, not to take advantage of its provisions."

Seddon had not been present at the Sydney Conference, but at the Hobart Conference he agreed to this resolution. By that time New Zealand had adopted a Coloured Races Restriction Bill.

2 Nelson to Lamington, 4 March, 1897, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Official Letters to the Governor, vol. 26; and Lamington to Chamberlain, Q'ld. No. 19, 9 March, 1897, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Despatches to Secretary of State, vol. 16.

3 Chamberlain to Lamington, Confidential, 18 June, 1897, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Confidential Despatches from the Secretary
The Colonial Office was still anxious for the colonies to benefit from the commercial advantages offered by the treaty. Chamberlain, therefore, emphasised the uniqueness of the proviso: "it gives you all the advantages of the Treaty, and it enables you to make your special regulations with regard to labour and immigration and leaves both countries free on that, and also permits any colony desiring it to denounce the Treaty or to come out from the Treaty by 12 months' notice...

The right of separate withdrawal by a self-governing colony was a significant new stipulation in an imperial treaty; but the imminence of restrictive legislation in some of the colonies in 1896 made this concession of no avail unless the Japanese Government was prepared to recognise the rights of the colonies to restrict the immigration of labourers and artisans. When the Japanese Government did recognise this right, was it sheer obstinacy that prevented the

of State, vol.4,
The Queensland Government signified its concurrence in August, 1897. Lamington to Chamberlain, Confidential, 5 August, 1897, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Confidential Despatches to the Secretary of State, vol.2.

Under the terms of Queensland's adherence to the treaty, the stipulations in Articles I and III would not "in any way affect the laws, ordinances and regulations with regard to trade, the immigration of labourers and artisans, police and public security, which are in force or may hereafter be enacted" in Japan or Queensland, and the treaty could be terminated at twelve months' notice on either side.


New South Wales, Victorian and South Australian Governments from reversing their decision not to adhere?

By the time the conference met in London, the majority of the Premiers of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, having disposed of the treaty as they thought, were more interested in the fate of the Coloured Races Restriction Bills. These had been reserved for the Queen's assent. Reid had gained support in New South Wales for his attending the Jubilee celebrations in London on the grounds that he would then have an opportunity to discuss the reservation of the bill with Chamberlain; and Chamberlain himself had postponed any final action on the bills until he had had an opportunity of discussing them at an informal conference with the colonial Premiers.

Chamberlain objected to the bills primarily because they discriminated against coloured British subjects. This was a reason which had not featured in the 1880s in objections to the various colonial Chinese Immigration Restriction Bills. The objection had then been to the offence discriminatory treatment would give

I Coloured Races Restriction Bills had been passed in New South Wales, South Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.

Hampden reserved the N.S.W. bill at the end of November. Hampden to Chamberlain, private, 27 Nov. and N.S.W. No. 79, 3 Dec., 1897, C.O. 201/619.

Buxton informed Chamberlain by telegram on 21 Dec., 1897, that he had reserved the S. Australian bill. C.O. 13/181.

2 N.S.W. Cabinet minute, 15 March, 1897, published in S.M.H., 16 March, 1897.

3 Minute by Anderson, 2 April, 1897, on Playford to C.O., 1 April, 1897, C.O. 13/182.

to the Chinese Government. Although discrimination would be offensive to the Japanese Government, and the Colonial Office was aware of the possible effect of colonial legislation on Japanese susceptibilities, inter-imperial and not international repercussions took first place in 1897. The negotiations with Japan between 1895 and 1897, unlike those with China in 1888, had not primarily been intended as a move to avoid the need for colonial legislation; but the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office probably hoped that an agreement with the Japanese Government, recognising the rights of the colonies to impose immigration restrictions, would remove any cause of friction. The primacy of inter-imperial considerations in Chamberlain's attitude towards restrictions on coloured immigration meant that during the Colonial Conference the question of colonial adherence to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was treated as an entirely separate one from the Coloured Races Restriction Bills. However, the adoption by the Australian Colonies of restrictions on coloured immigration similar to those in the recent Natal Act would smooth Japanese susceptibilities as well as those of coloured British subjects.

The discussion at the Colonial Conference provides the most conclusive evidence of the importance of the other factors.

1 See a long minute by Anderson on Hampden to Chamberlain, N.S.W. No.79, 3 Dec., 1896, C.O.201/619. The first Japanese protest, dated 25 Nov., 1896, was caused by the N.S.W. and New Zealand bills. See F.O. to C.O., 30 Nov., 1896, C.O.201/620.
2 See Chapter 12.
which helped to sway the colonies against adhering to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. Turner, the Victorian Premier, insisted that his Government could see no advantages to Victoria in the treaty: "That is what has always troubled us, we saw no benefits, nothing but disadvantages to us". The most obvious disadvantages were the operation of most-favoured-nation clauses, which would lessen any benefits Victoria might otherwise have obtained, and the prevention of preferential trade arrangements within the Empire.

The greatest potential disadvantage to the Australian Colonies lay in the danger of their being flooded with cheap Japanese goods "to the prejudice of Australian and British manufacturers". This seemed a particularly relevant argument to raise against the treaty in view of Chamberlain's inquiry two years earlier into the effects of foreign competition on British trade. Increased exports from the colonies to Japan, as a result of adherence to the treaty, would not necessarily be sufficient to counter Japanese imports; and, indeed, Chamberlain himself went so far as to suggest that special legislation might be needed to deal with an excessive increase in imports from Japan to the detriment of colonial and British goods. The premiers' fears that trade would become one-sided to Japan's advantage were bol-

2 This led Chamberlain to deny the converse of Turner's argument: that by means of most-favoured-nation clauses the colonies would share in any commercial benefits Great Britain obtained without their own adherence to the treaty. ibid., p.48. Yet the colonies did benefit later from the political provisions of the treaty, e.g. Chamberlain to Beauchamp, Circular, 2 Dec., 1899, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
stered by sentiment in favour of trade with Great Britain. Seddon, the New Zealand Premier, voiced this attitude most clearly: "It does not seem to me a proper thing to do to enter into a treaty with a nation that we know will, to a great extent, interfere with our trade with the mother country". The Australian Colonies and New Zealand were geographically closer to Japan than to Great Britain; and Japan was going in for cotton spinning, one of Britain's major exports. Japanese commercial activity in Hawaii showed only too clearly that trade and commerce became one-sided to Japan's advantage.

Chamberlain's arguments in support of the advantages of the treaty were to no avail. Turner, Braddon, Seddon and Laurier, on behalf of Canada, declared their intention of standing out from the treaty. Reid, the sole colonial free trader at the conference, made no contribution to the discussion until he


Ibid.
2 Ibid., p.51.
3 Ibid. When the conference opened, only Queensland and Natal had adhered to the treaty. During the course of the conference, Newfoundland announced her adherence which, like Natal's, was not subject to the modifications granted by the Japanese Government in Queensland's favour. The final decisions of the colonies were conveyed to the Japanese Government before the expiry of the year's extension of the period allowed for colonial adherence. Chamberlain to Hampden, 30 July, 1897, enclosing a copy of Salisbury to Lowther (in Tokio), telegram, 13 July, 1897, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
intervened to suggest that the Premiers need not "multiply refusals". In the same way as the resolution of the Premiers' Conference a few months earlier had done so, the resolution adopted by the Colonial Conference stated that the non-adhering colonies upheld their former attitude to the treaty.

While the commercial aspects of the treaty were being discussed, Nelson made no attempt to explain Queensland's attitude or to urge the other Premiers to follow suit. He reserved his explanation of Queensland's attitude towards the treaty until the Coloured Races Restriction Bills were brought before the conference. He felt that it was best to deal with each coloured race separately. The Chinese had already been dealt with, and Queensland saw in the proviso to the Japanese treaty a means of dealing with the Japanese separately - "and that is the principal reason why I and my colleagues have not dissented from the proposal to join the Treaty..." Because legislation against Japanese immigration could be sanctioned immediately, the Queensland Government felt itself in a stronger position to deal with a threatened Japanese influx, if public opinion should again force action on the Government, than the other colonies with bills applying "to Asiatics all round".

Nelson's rider, that Queensland adhered to the treaty "subject to modifications as to artizans" was not included in the part of the resolution referring to Queensland. ibid., p.92.
2 ibid., p.136, session on 8 July.
3 ibid.
Nelson's confidence in the strength of his position was soon tested. While he was still in London, growing complaints in the colony about the large numbers of Japanese arriving in Queensland were brought to his notice; and he was asked if the Government could introduce restrictive legislation against them. Nelson consulted both the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office, and then informed his colleagues that legislation against Japanese immigration was impracticable. He himself saw no necessity for legislation, and he opposed the introduction of any measure during his absence. As an alternative to legislation, Nelson hoped that the Foreign Office would urge the Japanese Government to introduce a passport system to prevent emigration. Nelson had the Foreign Office's support in his insistence that legislation would be a violation of the 1894 treaty and give rise to formal objections on the part of the Japanese Government.

Between 1895 and 1897, some of the influences which shaped the attitudes of the Colonial Governments towards the Anglo-Japanese Treaty formulated themselves more clearly; others lost their relevant weight of importance when they proved to have shaky foundations. It became more and more evident that the

1 Tozer to Nelson, 9 August, 1897, Letterbooks Chief Sec. to Agent-General (State Archives of Queensland).
2 Nelson to Tozer, telegrams, 13 and 23 August, 1897, Queensland Agent-General Letterbooks, vol.65 (State Archives of Queensland).
3 F.O. to C.O., 23 August, 1897, C.O.234/66.
4 A.T. Yarwood's examination of the attitudes of the colonies towards the treaty is not fully satisfactory for two reasons. He interprets those attitudes solely in terms of the immigration question; and, arising from this, he assumes from his examination of the debates in the N.S.W. Parliament and a N.S.W
Victorian decision not to adhere to the treaty was primarily
dictated by fear of cheap labour in the form of cheap Japanese
imports rather than from Japanese immigrants in the colony it-
self. Immigration was a lesser issue in Victoria than in some of
the other Australian Colonies. The trade figures for the 1890s
bear out the Victorian Government's contention that there was
little advantage in the treaty for Victoria's export trade in
comparison with the volume of Japanese imports.

In free trade New South Wales the situation was more com-
plex. There were importers who saw advantages in opening up trade
with Japan; and in that colony the steadily increasing import
trade was matched in value by exports to Japan through New South
Wales ports. Fears that colonial markets would be flooded with
Japanese imports, far in excess of exports, appeared to be ground-
less. In New South Wales and South Australia, the latter on ac-
count of the Northern Territory, the main motive appears to have
been political pressure against possible large-scale Japanese

file of official correspondence that N.S.W. attitudes are applica-
table to all the Australian Colonies with the exception of Queens-
land's decision to adhere to the treaty. Moreover, Reid's leader-
ship of the colonies in this as in other instances arose to a
greater or lesser extent from his position as Premier of the
senior colony. A.T. Yarwood, Asian Immigration to Australia. The
Background to Exclusion, 1896-1923 (Melbourne, 1964), chap. I.

1 Although a draft bill was prepared in 1896, a Coloured Immigra-
tion Restriction Bill was not introduced into the Victorian
Legislative Assembly until 1898.
2 See Table III (ii) (iii) (iv).
3 ibid. It should be noted that the figures for N.S.W. ports do
not necessarily mean that all exports were produce of N.S.W.
or that all imports into a free trade colony were for N.S.W.
consumption. The direct steamship services to and from Japan
terminated at Sydney.
immigration. This was an aspect of opposition to coloured immigration in general rather than specific opposition to Japanese immigrant labour or to cheap Japanese imports as competitors with colonial manufactures. Reid's political dependence on his Labour Party supporters has to be kept in mind; but Kingston's lead against adherence to the treaty appears to have been as much if not more a case of personal conviction than political necessity. Among the Premiers, Kingston was the most strongly motivated by opposition to the colonies' adherence to a treaty which would be binding on a federated Australia.

In Queensland, the trade statistics suggest that Nelson was justified in his belief that trade advantages would accrue to the colony. The more significant increase after 1894 was in Queensland's export trade. On the average, its value for the years 1898 to 1900 equalled that of imports from Japan. In addition, political pressures for limited Japanese immigration in the interests of the plantation owners and others in northern Queensland influenced Nelson's decision to adhere to the treaty. On the other hand, he had to find some means of satisfying those who opposed adherence to the treaty and wanted restrictions on coloured immigration in the interests of a homogeneous society and to remove any threat of cheap labour. Nelson was personally against restrictive legislation, and he saw in the proviso to

I See Table III (ii) (iii) (iv). Steamers on the Japan-Australia run called at Queensland ports.
the treaty a means of regulating Japanese immigration should it prove to be excessive. Possibly his personal attitude was the major influence behind Queensland's decision to adhere to the treaty.

The decisions of 1896 and 1897 did not end the problems raised by the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. Some important questions remained unresolved. The first and most important of these arose out of Japanese protests against what they regarded as discrimination in the wording of the Coloured Races Restriction Bills. The so-called "Natal clause" was adopted to meet the susceptibilities of the Imperial Government on behalf of the Queen's Indian subjects; but in practice it also became a means of overcoming Japanese objections.

There was a curious attempt by J.L. Parsons, who had been sent by the South Australian Government to China and Japan in 1895 to investigate trade prospects, to persuade some Japanese capitalists to buy land in the Northern Territory for a Japanese settlement. The South Australian Government feared that this scheme would lead to a popular outcry at a time when an Immigration

I Salisbury to Kato (Japanese Minister in London), 2 August, 1897, copy forwarded in Chamberlain to Hampden, N.S.W. No.102, 8 Sept., 1897, N.S.W. Govt.House Papers (encl. filed in N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 97/10357); and Chamberlain to Hampden, N.S.W. No.118, 20 Oct., 1897, concerning further Japanese representations, N.S.W. Govt.House Papers.

2 See the correspondence between the Governor, the Colonial Office Ministers and the Agent-General concerning the introduction of a new bill into the S.Australian Parliament. C.O.13/152.
See also the correspondence between the Premiers of N.S.W. and S.Australia in the N.S.W. Treas. Papers and S.Aust. Chief Sec.
tion Restriction Bill on the lines of the Natal Act was to be introduced into the South Australian Parliament. In the end, after a warning from the Japanese Minister in London, the Japanese Government took steps against the scheme and agreed to enforce restrictions on Japanese emigration to Australia.

The Queensland arrangement was not free from difficulties with regard to the numbers of Japanese immigrants entering the colony. As a result the Queensland Government had to enforce restrictions. The most serious legacy of Queensland's adherence to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty was that inherited by the Commonwealth Government. The question had to be settled whether or not the Queensland agreement was still valid. Chamberlain took the view that it was. The Japanese Government was willing to recognise that it terminated when Queensland became part of the Australian Commonwealth. With the passage of the Commonwealth Immigration Restriction Act in 1901, immigration again became the

records; and C.O.201/622 and 623 with regard to the New South Wales bill.


3 e.g. see correspondence filed with Chamberlain to Hopetoun, Secret, 14 May,1901. C.P.78, Set I, Bundle 2, Commonwealth National Library Archives, Canberra.

4 Telegram, Chamberlain to Hopetoun, 29 Jan.,1902, C.P.78, Set I, Bundle 2; and telegram, Hopetoun to Chamberlain, Letterbooks of Despatches to Secretary of State, vol.I, C.P.78, Set 3, C.N.L. Archives.
most important question at issue between Australia and Japan. It played no inconsiderable part in the Japanese refusal to meet the request of the Commonwealth Government in 1906 that the provisions of the Anglo-Japanese Treaty should be extended to the Commonwealth of Australia.

Among the problems raised in the Australian Colonies by the exercise of their option of adherence to the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894 had been that of the operation of the most-favoured-nation clause in the treaty. Would it preclude a colony from granting a tariff preference in favour of the mother country or another colony? This question was relevant also when the self-governing colonies reviewed their place in all British commercial treaties, and when they began to look at imperial preference as a means of strengthening the bonds of Empire. During the 1890s, both aspects of the question owed more to colonial, and especially Canadian, initiative than to imperial advocacy. It lends itself, with the related question of communications, to treatment as an aspect of direct co-operation between self-governing colonies which were remote from each other.
CHAPTER II

MATERIAL INTERESTS AS A BOND OF EMPIRE: INTER-IMPERIAL TRADE
AND THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE OF 1894

During the 1880s free trade theories and policies remained almost unchallenged in Great Britain. Although some imperial federationists in Great Britain examined the means by which the commercial and financial relationships between the mother country and the colonies might be more closely knit together, the commercial aspects of imperial relations were never treated as fully as political federation or colonial participation in imperial defence. The two obvious stumbling blocks to a uniform imperial tariff were British free trade and colonial protection. There was, therefore, little hope of establishing an imperial customs union until either Great Britain was converted to protection or the colonies turned to free trade. The majority of imperial federationists took it for granted that any changes in fiscal policy would have to be made by the colonies and take the form of the removal of their protectionist tariffs. Those who expected such a change overlooked the all-important fact that customs duties provided the major source of revenue in the self-

1 E.g. Of the papers read at the Royal Colonial Institute between 1869 and 1890 only one dealt specifically with the commercial aspects of imperial federation. From 1890 onwards, papers on commercial matters became much more frequent.

2 These existed in all the self-governing colonies with the exception of New South Wales. Those in force in Canada and Victoria were by far the most strongly protectionist.
governing colonies.

A few in Great Britain wanted to see some modification in British tariff policy in order to enable her to compete on more favourable terms with her protectionist rivals, Germany and the United States. But such was the strength of free trade doctrines that they were chary of raising the protection issue in England. In the early 1880s they disguised the real nature of their agitation under the name of "Fair Trade". Through the work of the Fair Trade League, closer commercial relations between the mother country and the self-governing colonies were not discussed solely in terms of a free trade zollverein. In the immediate years after its formation in 1881, the members of the Fair Trade League were primarily concerned with finding means of off-setting the effects of growing foreign competition on British industry. They advocated the imposition of a moderate duty on foreign grown foodstuffs and free entry of colonial grown food. In return they expected the colonies to increase their imports of British manufactures and impose only a small revenue duty. They hoped this would lead to some adjustment in the volume of foreign trade by increasing the proportion of colonial trade.

By the time of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition and the first Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire in 1886,

2 Between 1880 and 1884, the percentage shares of the exports of British produce were: Europe 33.7%, U.S.A. 12.2%, British Empire 34.5%, South America 6.9%, China and Japan 3.1%.
the ways of establishing a commercial federation of the Empire by means of free trade or on the basis of differential duties were being examined more specifically. Schemes drawn up on either of these bases presupposed that the whole Empire had to be dealt with comprehensively. In 1887 Salisbury cautioned the Colonial Conference against being too sanguine that an imperial *zollverein* might be formed in the near future. He reached the crux of the problem when he said: "I do not think that in the nature of things it is impossible; I do not think that the mere fact that we are separated by the sea renders it impossible.... But the resolutions which were come to in respect of our fiscal policy forty years ago set any such possibility entirely aside, and it cannot now be resumed until on one side or the other very different notions prevail from those which prevail at the present time".

None of the imperial federationists or Fair Traders visualised a piecemeal operation whereby the various parts of the Empire, including Great Britain, reached limited agreements wherever possible and without any major alteration in their free trade or protectionist policies. At the Colonial Conference in 1887 Sir Samuel Griffith appeared to have something of this nature in mind. Alfred Deakin and James Service were also sympathetic to-

I Procs. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.5091, p.5.
2 Ibid., pp.462-3. Sir John Downer, the South Australian Premier, had also suggested that preferential trade should be discussed. Downer to Holland, 3 April,1887, C.5091, vol.II, p.5.
wards a form of imperial preference which did not interfere with full colonial control of tariffs and was unconnected with a political federation of the Empire or with a kriegsverein. Neither Griffith nor Deakin expected any proposals for differential treatment to be made in the near future; and Deakin more specifically than Griffith was thinking in terms of reciprocity. Deakin also thought that the people of Great Britain would have to make the first move by modifying their policy of free trade.

Griffith's and Deakin's remarks, together with J.H. Hofmeyr's scheme for an additional uniform imposition to be used to improve imperial defence, led imperial federationists and Fair Traders in Great Britain to over-estimate the degree to which opinion on imperial preference had been formulated in the colonies by 1887. In particular, they were led to think that there was as much favourable opinion in the Australian Colonies as in Canada. In 1887, Griffith's, Deakin's and Service's attitudes were indicative of the way in which politicians in the Australian Colonies had not yet formulated any clear ideas about preferential trade within the Empire. On the lines along which they

1 Procs. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.5091, pp.471,475. Strictly speaking, the term "imperial preference" was not current until very much later than 1887; but it is the most convenient term to use to describe the imposition of differential duties in favour of Great Britain and British colonies.
3 The N.S.W. representatives and Sir F. Dillon Bell refused to discuss Griffith's remarks or Hofmeyr's proposals at the conference. Because of the limitations in their instructions they could not discuss imperial federation or seek changes in Great Britain's fiscal policy. Procs., C.5091, p.473 (Wisdom), p.476-7 (Bell).
were thinking, Victoria, as the most strongly protectionist colony in the Australian group, would probably have to take the lead if the initiative in offering preferential treatment within the Empire was to come from the colonies. This was most unlikely in the late 1880s. Nor was there any likelihood that Hofmeyr's scheme would be welcomed in the Australian Colonies. It looked too much like imperial federation.

At the Colonial Conference Sir Henry Holland admitted that a commercial federation of the Empire was theoretically possible without political federation. As long as the Imperial Federation League remained in existence, those who favoured commercial federation saw it as a parallel aim with that of political federation or as a prelude to political federation. In the early 1890s the British advocates of imperial preference came out more openly in favour of a revision of Great Britain's free trade policy. The United Empire Trade League, like its predecessor the Fair Trade League, was not motivated solely by sentiment in its advocacy of closer imperial relations. It concerned itself with what

2 Many of the Fair Traders, who later became members of the United Empire Trade League, were active in the section of the Imperial Federation League which favoured the commercial federation of the Empire. The Canadian branch of the Imperial Federation League, through the work of Colonel George Denison, also supported commercial federation as a step to political federation. G.T. Denison, *The Struggle for Imperial Unity. Recollections and Experiences* (London, 1909), pp. 136-150. In a private rather than in an official capacity, Sir Charles Tupper, the High Commissioner for Canada, supported the work of the United Empire Trade League.
3 The United Empire Trade League was formed in 1891 under C.E. Howard Vincent's leadership.
advantages Great Britain could offer the colonies in return for tariff concessions in favour of British manufactures. Either Great Britain could offer the colonies a preference on the remaining items on which she imposed revenue duties, that is, on tea, coffee, tobacco and wines; or she could impose differential tariffs on certain items such as wheat, wool, meat or lumber which were the major exports of the self-governing colonies. The latter would be an impetus towards a wider revision of Britain’s free trade policy. She would no longer be without any means of commercial defence against her main protectionist rivals.

In 1889, those who were interested in the commercial federation of the Empire failed to persuade Salisbury to call a colonial conference to discuss steps towards closer unity. A similar request was made to Salisbury early in 1891. From that time onwards, the imperial federationists’ agitation in favour of closer


2 In the summer of 1889, Sir Charles Tupper, acting in support of his own beliefs rather than on behalf of the Canadian Government, proposed that a colonial convention should be held in London. J.E.Tyler, op.cit., pp.179-181; Sir C.Tupper, Recollections of Sixty Years (London, 1914), pp.247-8, including a letter from Sir John Macdonald to Tupper, 13 Sept., 1889.

The Imperial Federation League, acting on Rosebery’s advice, asked Salisbury whether such a convention would be useful. Salisbury thought it inexpedient for the Imperial Government to take the initiative when it had no proposals to make; but he could see no objection if the colonies liked to meet among themselves. Salisbury to I.F.L., 25 July, 1889, Imperial Federation, August, 1889.

3 Motions for a colonial conference by Lord Dunraven in the H. of Lords and C.E. Howard Vincent in the H. of Commons, Hansard 3 Ser., vol.350, cols.435-453 (12 Feb., 1891); and cols.908-944 (17 Feb., 1891); and deputation from the I.F.L. to Salisbury, 17 June, 1891, Imperial Federation, July, 1891.
imperial commercial relations went side by side with their own
and the Canadian Government's demands for the termination of the
commercial treaties with Belgium (1862) and the German Zollver-
ein (1865). These two treaties precluded the colonies from grant-
ing tariff preferences to Great Britain. Any concessions granted
to Great Britain would apply to Belgium and Germany, and, through
the operation of most-favoured-nation clauses, to many other
countries as well.

In 1891 Salisbury countered both demands, for a colonial
conference and the denunciation of the two treaties, by suggest-
ing that their full implications needed to be thought out. First,
there was no purpose in summoning a colonial conference unless
the Imperial Government had some proposals to put before it.
Secondly, if the Imperial Government imposed duties on foreign
grain and wool as a step towards the commercial unity of the
Empire, the resulting increase in prices in Great Britain would
have wide political ramifications. Thirdly, the Belgian and Ger-
man treaties included provisions which were of great benefit to
British trade at a time when German trade rivalry with Great

Evidence given before the Trade and Treaties Committee (under
the chairmanship of A.J. Mundella, the President of the Board
of Trade) on 25 Jan., 1891. Correspondence printed in N.S.W.
Legis. Council Journal, 1891 (second session), pp. 501-4; and
A deputation from the United Empire Trade League to Salisbury,
16 June, 1891, requested the termination of the Belgian and
German treaties. Imperial Federation, July, 1891.
In the early 1880s the Canadian government had tried unsuccess-
fully to gain exemption from the provisions of the two trea-
ties. D.M. Farr, op. cit., pp. 240-1. On 30 Sept., 1891, the
Canadian Parliament adopted an Address to the Queen in which
a request was made for the denunciation of the Belgian and Ger-
man treaties and Canada's freedom from being bound by most-
favoured-nation clauses in imperial treaties.
Britain was increasing. These advantages had to be balanced against colonial objections to the treaties.

Despite Salisbury's reluctance to summon a colonial conference or to denounce the two treaties, imperial federationists saw some hopeful signs of a reappraisal of Great Britain's free trade policy provided the Conservative Government remained in power. Salisbury's remark that Great Britain had stripped herself of all weapons in a war of tariff retaliation was regarded as a particularly hopeful pointer.

However, the slight prospects of a change in Great Britain's tariff policy faded during 1892. In February, the House of Commons refused to countenance the denunciation of the Belgian and German treaties. The second Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire rejected the institution of a system of preferential tariffs between Great Britain and the colonies and supported free trade within the Empire. These setbacks counteracted the

2 According to the Imperial Government's interpretation, the colonies were not precluded from offering tariff preferences to each other, and Great Britain was not precluded from granting tariff concessions to the colonies.

1 Imperial Federation, July,1891; J.E.Tyler, op.cit., pp.193-4.
2 In 1895 Ripon claimed that British trade with Belgium and Germany equaled that of all the colonies with Great Britain. Despatch of 28 June,1895, G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, lxx (1895), C.7324, pp.12-5.
3 Speech at Hastings, 18 May,1892, reported in The Times, 19 May, 1892, p.10 a.
Canadian Parliament's offer to allow British manufactures into Canada at a lower rate of duty provided Great Britain allowed Canadian products to enter British markets on more favourable terms than foreign products. Although the Canadian offer had some effect in lessening the deep apprehensions in Great Britain that the mother country would have to make all the sacrifices in the interests of closer inter-imperial commercial relations, free trade doctrine and practice remained strong among manufacturers and others with commercial interests. In August, after a Liberal victory in the general election, Gladstone returned to power. For these and other reasons, commercial relations were given an unimportant place in the Imperial Federation League's scheme for an imperial federation. In April, 1893, Gladstone brought this phase of activity in Great Britain to an end by rejecting both the possibility of any changes in Great Britain's fiscal policy and the Imperial Federation League's suggestion that a colonial conference should be called to discuss the League's proposals for closer imperial unity. The demise of the Imperial Federation League followed soon afterwards.

The next phase of activity was the outcome of Canadian and not of British efforts to extend inter-imperial trade and communications. These efforts directly involved the Australian Colonies.

1 Motion by Alexander McNeill, 28 April, 1892. The motion was adopted by 98 votes to 64. McNeill was a Vice-President of the Canadian I.F.L. G.T. Denison, op. cit., p. 195; J.E. Tyler, op. cit., pp. 195-6.
2 Imperial Federation, Dec., 1892.
3 I.F.L. deputation to Gladstone, 13 April, 1893. Imperial Federation, May, 1893.
II

Any substantial increase in inter-imperial trade depended on expanding the network of imperial communications; but, because Great Britain's trade with the colonies was less than 25% of her total trade, her participation in the development of new and improved communications within the Empire would be likely to benefit the colonies to a much greater extent than herself.

Sir John Macdonald's Government in Canada and its successors believed in the interdependence of commercial relations and communications. Inter-imperial preferential trade arrangements and an equal share of responsibility among Great Britain and the colonies in establishing essential steamship and cable communications were the practical forms this interdependence should take. From 1887 onwards, the Canadian Government's determination to seek new markets and an expansion of trade prompted its advocacy of projects to lay a telegraphic cable across the Pacific and to establish fast Atlantic and Pacific steamship services. Imperial sentiment and business were combined in these projects. With the Canadian Pacific Railway which had been opened for traffic in

<table>
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<th>Mid-19th. Century</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Re-exports</th>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>30.0%</td>
<td>I4.0%</td>
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<td>1890</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>35.6</td>
<td>I2.8</td>
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<td>1895</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>32.4</td>
<td>I2.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>I2.9</td>
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November, 1885, they would make Canada a highway for trade and communications and help to knit the Empire together. An important tripartite relationship between Great Britain, Canada and Australia would be the end result.

The strongest pressure in Canada in favour of imperial preference came from the Canadian branch of the Imperial Federation League; but it did not necessarily follow that all Canadian members of the League wanted to go as far as commercial federation with Great Britain and the Empire. Many of them saw closer commercial relations with Great Britain and other parts of the Empire as the alternative to unrestricted reciprocity or commercial union with the United States. They, and others who feared that unrestricted reciprocity would lead to political absorption or annexation, saw the development of compensatory markets elsewhere as a means of retaining Canada's national identity as well as her place within the British Empire. To some extent, this had been part of Macdonald's "National" policy since 1879 when he provided for some small tariff preferences in favour of British

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1 As, for example, Colonel George Denison did. In the early 1890s, Sir Charles Tupper was another of the more outspoken and convinced of the Canadian advocates of imperial preference; and he was one of those who were the most inclined to regard to regard a form of imperial reciprocity as a necessary step towards an eventual commercial federation of the Empire.

2 Unrestricted reciprocity was the term used by the Canadian Liberal Party in 1891 when a general election was fought and lost by the Liberals on this issue. By the time the Liberal Party under Laurier gained power in 1896, there was little difference between its policy on imperial preference and that of the Conservatives. Commercial union was regarded as a more extreme term. It had been advocated by Goldwin Smith and Sir Richard Cartwright for a considerable time before 1891.
I goods.

In the late 1880s and early 1890s, the Macdonald Government, its Conservative successors and those Canadians who supported closer ties with Britain and the Empire were agreed on the broad objective in view. This was to achieve a favourable balance of trade, and, at the same time, strengthen Canada's ties with Great Britain and with other parts of the Empire. The methods suggested for securing this objective varied. In the long run, whatever the policy adopted, Canada's natural resources in producing foodstuffs and raw materials would be developed; she would replace the United States as the chief supplier of wheat to Great Britain and thereby end Great Britain's dependence on foreign food supplies; and some compensatory markets would have been found to counteract the effects on Canadian trade of the failure to secure a reciprocity treaty with the United States in 1888 and of the imposition of the heavily protective McKinley tariff in 1890.

The Australian Colonies might offer one of these compensatory markets. The first step was to seek their co-operation and

I D.M. Ferr, op. cit., pp. 193-4. Macdonald's circumspection on imperial preference in 1887 was probably connected with the Tariff Bill which was passed soon after the Colonial Conference ended and levied heavier duties on iron and steel imports.

2 According to J.B. Brebner a clear-cut choice between closer trade relations with the United States or Great Britain probably was not open to Canada. A policy weighted in favour of either Great Britain or the United States would only lead to a shifting of the emphasis in "a triangular to-and-fro movement of people, capital and goods among Canada, Great Britain and the United States".

Great Britain's in expanding the network of inter-imperial communications by the establishment of regular and fast steamship services and a telegraphic cable across the Pacific from Vancouver to the eastern Australian Colonies.

At the Colonial Conference in 1887, the Canadian representatives took no part in the discussions on Griffith's and Hofmeyr's suggestions for preferential trade within the Empire. Sandford Fleming, one of the two Canadian representatives, was mainly interested in advocating schemes already mooted for a Pacific Cable and a fast mail service between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies via Canada. Some of the Australian representatives were sympathetic towards the latter, but they had no instructions from their Governments to offer any support. During 1888 direct approaches were made to the Canadian Government and to the Governments of the Australian Colonies by a private company willing to lay a cable between Australia and Canada. At the

1 The service from Vancouver to Australia was not the only Pacific service which the Canadian Government was interested in establishing. As a result of negotiations with the Imperial Government for a subsidy to maintain a mail service from Vancouver to Hong Kong, a steamship service, subsidised by the Canadian and Imperial Governments, was established in 1889.

2 The Canadian representatives were Sir Alexander Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Ontario and a personal friend of Sir John Macdonald, and Sandford Fleming, Chief Engineer during the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

3 Proc. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.509I, vol.II, pp. 95-104; I30-1, I34 (Pacific Cable); pp.85-90 (Pacific mail service). Also see Notes D and E on the establishment of the Pacific Cable and the Canadian-Australian steamship service.


5 During 1886-7, Fleming had been active in the formation of the Pacific Telegraph Company. Owen Jones, a director of the company visited the Australian Colonies and Canada during 1888.
In response to one or both of these pressures rather than on its own initiative, the Macdonald Government invited the Australian Colonies to send representatives to a conference in Canada to discuss trade relations, the Pacific Cable and the steamship route from Vancouver to the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. In comparison with its attitude at the Colonial Conference in 1887, the Canadian Government from this point onwards placed equal importance on the cultivation of commercial relations, the laying of the Pacific Cable and the establishment of new and faster Pacific and Atlantic steamship services. This change in emphasis meant that the commercial importance of the Pacific Cable was brought to the fore, and its strategic purpose, which had been stressed in 1887, became one of the subsidiary arguments to be impressed more specifically on the Imperial Government.

At the beginning of 1889 a favourable response from the

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1 A deputation from the Imperial Federation League was received by Lord Lansdowne, then Governor-General, in May, 1888, G.T. Denison, *op. cit.*, p. 118. In November a committee of the League was appointed to urge the calling of a conference. J. Castell Hopkins (Hon. Sec. Canadian I.F.L.), to Samuel (Agent-General for N.S.W.), 4 Feb., 1889, copy enclosed in Samuel to Parkes, 27 March, 1889, N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters 89/4962 (Archives of N.S.W.).

2 Stanley of Preston, Governor-General, to Carrington, 17 Nov., 1888, enclosing a copy of a Minute of the Canadian Privy Council of 13 Nov., 1888. Filed with Sydney G.P.O. Papers on the Pacific Cable.
Australian Colonies seemed likely. During the previous year they had urged the completion of an Admiralty survey of a possible route for laying a cable across the Pacific; and, with Victoria playing the most prominent role, they had offered to share in the cost of this survey with Great Britain and Canada. By the end of the year little progress had been made with the survey. The Colonial Office was unenthusiastic about the Pacific Cable project, and the Admiralty was determined to do nothing beyond its general programme of taking soundings in the Pacific. The Australian Governments might, therefore, have seen a Canadian-Australian conference as a useful means of exerting pressure on the Colonial Office and the Admiralty; but they realised that the Canadian Government wanted them to move quickly to commitments far beyond a survey of the route. Because they chose to regard the conference as being almost exclusively concerned with the Pacific Cable and they were unprepared to do more than contribute towards a survey of the route, they saw little practical use in its being held. In suggesting that a conference might be

2 Minutes on telegram, Loch to Knutsford, 7 March, 1888, C.O. 309/131. At bottom the Colonial Office and the Admiralty were disinclined to take any further action about the survey until there were prospects of funds for laying the cable.
3 See the correspondence between the Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand in the records of the Premier's Dept., Victoria, and in the Sydney G.P.O. Papers.
held in Australia instead of in Canada, they did not close the door entirely.

The Canadian Government made no new approach until after the Imperial Federation League's failure to persuade Salisbury to call a colonial conference in London and two important decisions had been made in Canada. First, the construction of the Pacific Cable was not to be left to a private company. It was to be a work of "Imperial partnership", as Sandford Fleming termed it, shared between the Canadian, Australian and Imperial Governments. Secondly, the Canadian Parliament provided for a subsidy of £25,000 per annum for ten years for a fortnightly steamship service between Canada and Australia. A subsidy from some or all of the Australian Colonies was needed in addition.

In August, 1889, J.C. Abbott, a member of the Canadian Government who was then in London, was appointed to visit each of the Australian Colonies as trade commissioner and to attend an intercolonial conference. Sir John Macdonald had a three-fold purpose in view for the conference. It should discuss the establishment of a fast steamship service supported by Canadian and Australian subsidies; the laying of a Pacific Cable subsidised

1 Their inability to send representatives to Canada was attributed to difficulties arising from the absence of ministers at the beginning of the parliamentary sessions in May and June.
2 By August, 1889, the Canadian government thought it had become urgent to reach an arrangement with the Australian Colonies before an American company gained exclusive cable landing rights in Hawaii.
3 Minute of the Canadian Privy Council, 17 August, 1889. Abbott was to be joined by one of his colleagues in Australia.
by the Governments; and the development of trade, including tariff reciprocity, between Canada and the Australian Colonies.

To meet the convenience of the Australian Governments, Abbott's visit was postponed until March, 1890; but this attempt also proved abortive. When intercolonial conferences could be called very quickly to deal with matters of vital importance, such as the intercolonial conference on Chinese immigration in June, 1888, there seemed little reason for the failure to arrange a conference with the Canadian mission. Although the Canadian Government obviously tried to meet their convenience, the Australian Governments were in no way prepared to move as fast as the Canadian Government on any one of the three subjects Macdonald had suggested for discussion. Pending the holding of a conference with Australian representatives, the Canadian Government had offered no fully formulated proposals. On more than one occasion the New South Wales Government commented on the lack of information about the Canadian proposals; but in view of the development of the Pacific Cable and Pacific steamship projects between 1887 and 1890-I the vagueness of the Canadian proposals was more apparent than real.


The absence of ministers during the parliamentary sessions was put forward again as the main difficulty in the way of arranging an intercolonial conference. See correspondence in Vict. Premier's Dept. records and in Sydney G.P.O. Papers, and especially the Victorian memo. of I4 April, I890 in the former.
In 1890, the Morehead Government in Queensland adopted the most constructive approach towards the visit of the Canadian mission. At that time there was a prospect that the cable and the steamship service would terminate in Queensland. The Queensland Government, therefore, regarded a meeting with the Canadians as being very desirable and indicated its willingness to send representatives to a conference. On account of the Federation Convention, the other Australian Governments, while assuring the Canadian Government that they would keep the Canadian proposal in view, would not commit themselves to arranging a conference in 1891. Macdonald, believing that the postponement of Abbott's visit was only a temporary setback, agreed to wait until after the outcome of the Federation Convention was known. The prospect of the establishment of an Australian federation would be a welcome one to the Canadian Government both for its own sake and the future simplicity of dealing with one government instead of six and New Zealand in addition. If the Canadian Government expected the Australian Governments to take the initiative later, New South Wales at least had no intention of doing so; and, with the possible exception of Queensland, the other

2 Gillies' minute for Hopetoun, 5 May, 1890. Vict. Premier's Dept. records, in-letters 90/784. The National Convention was scheduled to meet before the opening of the colonial Parliaments.
colonies were unlikely to act differently.

On the Canadian side during 1891, attention was absorbed by a general election in which the issue of unrestricted reciprocity with the United States was a main plank in the Liberal programme. Macdonald’s victory might perhaps have led to a renewal of his attempts to establish closer trade relations and new means of communication with the Australian Colonies; but his death shortly after his return to power postponed any further Canadian moves for the time being.

Several factors contributed to the Australian Colonies’ failure between 1889 and 1891 to respond to the Canadian initiative. First, there was the existing division among them caused by adherence to free trade or protectionist policies. Would it be possible for the separate colonies to embark on offering tariff preferences or would a uniform Australian tariff be an essential prerequisite? In 1891 the federal Convention endorsed a uniform tariff for a federated Australia. In all probability this would mean free trade between the Australian States and protection against the outside world. Adye Douglas, one of the Tasmanian representatives, alone appears to have implied that

1 In Sept., 1890, the N.S.W. Government decided to let the matter rest until Canada took some further action. Minutes dated 29 and 30 Sept., 1890. Sydney G.P.O. Papers, B 90/14389.
2 Adye Douglas, one of the Tasmanian representatives at the Colonial Conference in 1887 and the National Convention in 1891 thought so.
Great Britain might then be accorded preferential treatment.

Although by the early 1890s there were stirrings of interest in the implications of commercial questions beyond the immediate confines of the Australian Colonies, imperial preference had hardly been discussed. The "lion in the path" of Australian federation, that is, the removal of internal customs barriers, was given an overwhelming preponderance of attention. In addition, there were the particular disabilities in the Constitution Acts which prevented the Australian Colonies from entering into differential tariff arrangements except among themselves and with New Zealand. During the Federation Conference in 1890 and the National Convention in 1891, these disabilities were criticised on the ground that they prevented the full exercise of self-government and not because any colony wanted to enter into preferential arrangements with Great Britain or Canada. Should the Australian Colonies wish to enter into preferential tariff arrangements with Canada, and later participate in a comprehensive form of imperial preference, they would have to agree to request the Imperial Parliament to remove these disabilities, and they would also have


See also a letter from the Victorian Chamber of Manufacturers to the Convention, enclosing a resolution adopted by the Chamber on 2 March in favour of the removal of the existing statutory disabilities so that differential duties might be imposed in favour of Great Britain and British colonies. ibid., p.xxviii.

2 The statutory disabilities had been modified to this extent in 1873.

to consider how far preferential tariff arrangements would help to solve their own need to find new markets and extend existing ones in order to overcome the effects of the trade and financial depression of the early 1890s.

Further, the establishment of a direct steamship line was an essential preliminary to the development of trade between the Australian Colonies and Canada. To discuss tariff preferences before either a regular and direct steamship service or any appreciable amount of trade existed might well have seemed premature. Once these conditions were fulfilled, a division was likely to arise from the geographical position of the eastern colonies facing Canada across the Pacific and that of the southern and western colonies. The latter would be more likely to favour the established route to Great Britain by way of Suez.

III

In 1893 the Canadian Government renewed its efforts to establish closer trade relations with the Australian Colonies. Two important differences still distinguished Canadian and Australian attitudes. The position adopted by the Canadian Government on both imperial preference and the removal of disabilities imposed on the colonies through imperial treaties was still far more advanced and more clearly defined than that of the Australian Governments. The other major difference arose from the extent to which public opinion had been formed. Because of the pressure of relations with the United States, public opinion in
Canada had well-organised means of expression in favour of closer commercial links with Great Britain and other British colonies. Neither the pressure nor the means of expression existed in the Australian Colonies; but the lack of clearly articulated attitudes did not preclude a sympathetic reaction to Canadian approaches for co-operation once the Australian Governments began to face some of the issues involved.

On the other hand, Canada had become less remote to Australia. The growth of the Australian federation movement provided a means of keeping Canada in mind as she had been the pioneer in that direction among British colonies. Apart from personal contacts of Australians, such as Sir Edmund Barton, who visited Canada in the 1890s and the federationists' interest in understanding the constitutional structure of the Canadian Dominion and the means whereby it was achieved, the importance of the influence of Canadian federation on the movement cannot be accurately assessed.

From 1893 onwards, the Australian Colonies began to seek wider markets both in Great Britain and elsewhere as a means of recovery from the trade and financial depression. In that year also, James Huddart, a Melbourne man, began to operate a monthly service between Sydney and Vancouver. This was the immediate inspiration of the new attempt by the Canadian Government to reach agreements with the Australian colonies on trade and com-

I See Note E, The Canadian-Australian Steamship Service.
The means of increasing mutual trade had now been provided; but the Canadian Government believed that a telegraphic cable across the Pacific was essential if the opportunities offered by the new steamship line were to be utilised to the full. Although Huddart himself was very optimistic about the future expansion of trade over this route, some more immediate justification would have to be shown for the Canadian subsidy to the service.

For these reasons, the visit of Mackenzie Bowell, the Canadian Minister of Trade and Commerce, to the Australian Colonies in October, 1893, was significant as a preliminary step towards the meeting of a colonial conference in Ottawa in June, 1894. Bowell's mission had a threefold purpose: To seek further subsidies for the steamship line; to discuss the next steps to be taken towards the construction of the Pacific Cable; and to investigate how trade between Canada and the Australian Colonies could be increased. Bowell evidently understood that the third subject included discussions with the Australian Governments on tariff concessions; but he found that he could not take any

1 E.g. Huddart to Dibbs, 13 July, 1893, after the arrival of the first ship at Vancouver. N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters in Box 200 93/I0365.
2 The Canadian Parliament now granted a subsidy of £25,000 per annum for 10 years for a monthly service.
3 N.S.W. had so far been the only Australian colony to grant a subsidy. The N.S.W. Parl. had agreed to a subsidy of £100,000 per annum for three years.
5 Bowell to Dibbs, 7 July, 1893, N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters 93/I0804.
immediate steps to negotiate tariff preferences on account of the statutory disabilities imposed on the Australian Colonies. From the time of Bowell's visit onwards, the removal of these disabilities became one of the immediate aims of those who advocated any form of imperial preference.

Bowell was satisfied with the sympathetic reception he received in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Adelaide. In keeping with its earlier attitude, the Queensland Government, now led by McIlwraith, seemed the most outspoken in favour of the Pacific Cable and of developing trade with Canada. The Queensland Government was also far more likely than the Victorian Government to agree eventually to subsidize the Canadian-Australian line provided the New South Wales Government was willing for the ships to call at a Queensland port. Bowell found strong interest by businessmen and fruitgrowers in the development of trade with Canada. His report on future trade prospects, based on detailed examination, was cautious yet optimistic. He was impressed by the volume of the import and export trade of the Australian Colonies. He could see that if Canada was to benefit she would have to replace the United States and Europe as the source of

1 The Canadian Government had not previously been aware of these disabilities. Procs. of Colonial Conference, 1894, lvi (1894), C.7555, p.53.
2 Bowell's Report, p.21-2; and Dibbs to Bowell, 31 Oct.,1893, N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters in Box 200, M 20094. The Victorian Government refused a subsidy because Melbourne was neither a port of call nor the terminus of the line. In Sept., 1893, the Queensland Government offered to grant a subsidy of £5,000 per annum provided the ships called at two ports in Queensland. The N.S.W. Govt. refused to consider two ports, and neither Dibbs nor McIlwraith would seek any compromise.
3 Bowell's Report, pp.27-33.
some imported items; and, conversely, she would have to import directly, instead of through the United States, the large quantities of Australian wool which already entered Canada. He therefore recommended the appointment of "a thorough businessman who understands the trade of Canada... as an Agent of Canada" to assist in increasing imports from Canada into Australia and advise on Australian export-markets in Canada. In December, 1894, J.S. Larke was appointed as the first Canadian Commercial Agent in Australia.

The need for a conference between the Canadian Minister and the Australian Governments was more immediately necessary to discuss the Pacific Cable project than to examine ways and means of extending trade between Canada and the Australian Colonies. Sandford Fleming had accompanied Bowell to Australia in the hope that a conference would be arranged and an understanding reached on the next steps to be taken to make the cable project a reality. Because an intercolonial conference could not be arranged during the time Bowell was in Australia, he left with the understanding that representatives would be sent to a conference to be held sometime during the Canadian summer of 1894.

1 Bowell's Report, pp.42-3. To a certain extent, trade expansion, especially in butter, salmon, fresh fruit and fish, would depend on the provision of cold storage in the new steamships and cold storage and transport facilities in Canada.

2 Larke was to reside in Sydney because N.S.W. was the only colony to subsidize the Canadian-Australian steamship service. Bowell to Reid, I. Dec., 1894. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 95/559.
The prospect of a conference in Canada seemingly "did not excite much attention"; but the Colonial Governments felt that it was "only proper to accept" the Canadian Government's invitation to discuss the promotion of trade relations and the establishment of direct cable communication. The Australian Governments interpreted the terms under which the conference was called to mean that the colonial representatives would discuss ways of increasing intercolonial trade, and particularly trade between Australia and Canada, and press for the removal of the Australian statutory disabilities. They did not expect the terms of reference to be extended to include preferential trade arrangements with Great Britain.

The Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand consulted with each other before they appointed delegates. The New South Wales Government decided to send a minister, F.B. Suttor.

1 The phrases quoted were used by Sir Henry Wrixon, one of the Victorian representatives, during an address to the Royal Colonial Institute. *Procs. R.C.I.* (1894-5), vol.26, p.38. The formal invitation from the Canadian Government was forwarded by the Governor-General, the Earl of Aberdeen, on 8 Feb., 1894. S.Aust. Govt. House Papers, Miscellaneous Despatches and Official Letters.

The Canadian Government suggested that one or more delegates should be sent from each colony, and the Imperial Government and Cape Colony were also asked to send representatives. Cape Colony was represented by Sir Henry de Villiers, J.H. Hofmeyr and Sir Charles Mills. Natal did not send a representative.

2 See correspondence filed in N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters in Box 200 (Archives of N.S.W.).

3 Suttor, a member of a long-established and wealthy pastoral family, was Minister of Public Instruction. The appointment was first offered to R.E.O'Connor, who had recently been Minister of Justice, and was visiting Europe.
The Dibbs Government was based on protectionist support; and if it remained in power there was a likelihood that the free trade policy in New South Wales would be modified and the major difference between that colony and the other Australian Colonies thereby lessened. The Queensland Government appointed A.J. Thynne, then Minister without Portfolio and in the following year to become Postmaster-General, and William Forrest, who was already in England on behalf of the Queensland Meat Export Company. At one stage it appeared that Robert Reid, the Victorian Minister of Defence, who was on a mission to London, might go on to Canada; but in the end three prominent public men were appointed. These were Sir Henry Wrixon, who had been Attorney-General in 1887-8, Nicholas Fitzgerald and Simon Fraser, a prominent member of the Victorian Imperial Federation League. South Australia had a forceful representative in Thomas Playford, who had recently resigned from the Premiership and had since been appointed Agent-General. With the exception of Playford, the Australian Governments did not appear to be sending any outstanding public men to Canada; but they had all had experience of colonial politics in the legislatures if all had not held office, and most of them had been delegates at the National Convention in 1891.

1 One of the Victorian representatives, Nicholas Fitzgerald, acted for Tasmania; Western Australia made no appointment; and the New Zealand Government appointed Alfred Lee Smith, a prominent Dunedin merchant.

2 William Forrest and Simon Fraser had not been delegates at the National Convention.
Before they reached Ottawa, the Australian delegates, other
than Playford and Forrest, consulted together on some of the sub-
jects which were to be brought before the conference. They seemed
to regard it as being primarily concerned with the Pacific Cable
and the Vancouver steamship service. Their instructions with re-
gard to trade relations did not appear likely to ensure a united
front; and the only specific direction given to some of the dele-

gates was to inquire into the prospects of increasing intercolon-
al trade. As far as the Victorian representatives were concerned,
this included seeking the removal of the statutory disabilities
imposed on the Australian Colonies and the termination of the
Belgian and German treaties.

Meanwhile in London, the High Commissioner for Canada and
the Agents-General attempted to gain some assurance of support
from the Imperial Government towards the Pacific Cable and the
fast Atlantic and Pacific steamship services; and, for the first

I They travelled to Vancouver on the "Arawa", one of the ships
of Huddart's Canadian-Australian line.
2 Sutor to Dibbs, 2 June,1894. N.S.W. Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters
94/9985, filed with Sydney G.P.O. Papers on the Pacific Cable.
The colonial press endorsed this attitude, e.g. S.M.H., editorial-
ials 10 April and 30 June, 1894.
3 e.g. the instructions to the Victorian representatives, quoted
In contrast, the New Zealand representative was instructed to
investigate the possibility of preferential trade arrangements
215-6. The N.S.W. representative was instructed to inquire into
the conditions under which Canada had entered into treaties
with foreign Powers. Sutor's Report of the 1894 Colonial Con-
ference, printed in N.S.W. V.and P. (1894-5 Session), Legis.
Assembly, vol.6, p.1205; also statement by Dibbs in the N.S.W.
Legis. Assembly, 16 May,1894, N.S.W. Parl.Deb. (1894 Session),
vol.71, p.3081.
4 Robert Reid, the Minister of Defence, used the opportunity of
his mission to London in 1894 to seek the amendment of the
1894, p.4c, and 26 March,1894, p.5b.
time, a formal request was made for the early amendment of the Acts which forbade the Australian Colonies to levy differential duties except among themselves and with New Zealand. These unmistakable indications of the scope of the conference, and the recommendations it would probably make, no doubt influenced the Imperial Government in deciding against its being formally represented.

The Earl of Jersey, a free trader and recently a popular Governor of New South Wales, was appointed as an observer. Although his role at the conference would necessarily be a limited one, Jersey's appointment was welcomed by the Australian Governments.

The Canadian Government, unlike Sir Henry Holland in 1887, believed that in order to be effective, or even useful, the conference must adopt resolutions; and from 1894 onwards it became the recognised procedure for a colonial conference to indicate the area of agreement among the representatives by means of resolutions. Although in 1894 the representatives of a colony might still speak as individuals, each colony was to exercise one vote irrespective of its number of representatives.

I Tupper and Agents-General to C.O., 16 March, 1894. Papers printed with the Proceedings of the 1894 Colonial Conference, C.7553, No.79, p.354. They interviewed Rosebery, the Prime Minister, and Ripon, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, on 4 April.

2 Ripon to Aberdeen, 6 June, 1894, printed in ibid., No.99, p.372. For Jersey's instructions see Ripon to Jersey, 6 June, 1894, printed in ibid., No.100, pp.372-3.

3 A motion by Sutor was adopted at the session of the conference on 30 June. Proc. of 1894 Colonial Conference, C.7553, p.59.
According to MacKenzie Bowell, the scope and purpose of the conference were confined to matters of trade and communications, and specifically to implementing the "policy of the Canadian Government in its efforts to extend trade in every direction and more particularly with its sister colonies". Matters affecting imperial politics or foreign policy were beyond the scope of the conference. Bowell, therefore, seemed to be ruling out any attempt by the conference to press for alterations in Great Britain's existing trade policy. In pressing for the removal of the statutory disabilities imposed on the Australian Colonies and for the termination of the clauses in the Belgian and German treaties which affected the colonies, the conference would be acting well within its limits; but the Canadians also intended that the conference should consider what subsequent steps could be taken once those barriers had been removed. From that point onwards, the Canadian view of the purpose of the conference was obviously far ahead of what the Australian representatives were authorised to discuss.

I Bowell's address as President of the conference at the first business session on 29 June. Proc., C.7553, p.51.

2 This limitation clearly ruled out any attempt to bring Samoa, the "Costa Rica" packet or the New Hebrides before the conference.

The Australian representatives had expected that Lee Smith, at Seddon's bidding, would bring New Zealand's attempt to gain control of Samoa before the conference. Dibbs had instructed Suttor that he should seek the support of the conference for the N.S.W. Government's criticisms of the Imperial Government's handling of claims against the Dutch Government by the captain of the "Costa Rica", a N.S.W. whaling ship, for unjust imprisonment in the Dutch East Indies. Before the conference opened, Suttor was apprehensive that the Victorians would raise the New Hebrides question; but there is nothing to show that the Victorians had any intention of doing so.
Mackenzie Bowell had in mind a pattern of preferential trade whereby each colony, free trade or protectionist, retained its own autonomy in imposing tariff rates, but granted uniform preferences on direct imports from the mother country or from other colonies. In effect, Bowell's ultimate programme was to establish a comprehensive imperial customs union. He himself made no mention of reciprocity from Great Britain; but once the colonies attempted to seek some reciprocal treatment from Great Britain, as G.E. Foster, the Canadian Minister of Finance, was to do before the conference ended, then directly or indirectly they would be advocating changes in Britain's tariff policy. A comprehensive network of communications completed Mackenzie Bowell's vision of an imperial structure. All members of the tariff union were to be linked by cables under direct British or colonial control and touching at British territory only. The cable system was to be supplemented by improved postal facilities also under exclusive British control.

The conference dealt first with the barriers standing in the way of intercolonial preferential tariff arrangements. Acting within the terms of his instructions and in line with the Victorian Government's approach to the Imperial Government a few months earlier, Wrixon put forward a motion requesting the Imperial Parliament to repeal the clauses in the Australian Constitutions Acts and in the 1873 Act which prevented the Australian...
colonies from imposing differential tariffs in favour of the mother country or any colony beyond themselves and New Zealand. In itself the motion seemed specific and limited; but some of the Australian delegates showed that they were uncertain what powers the colonies might be able to exercise after the disabilities had been removed. They discussed powers of treaty making as well as intercolonial tariff arrangements; and they failed to distinguish between independent treaty-making powers and the ability of a colony, acting through the Imperial Government, to conclude a commercial treaty with a foreign power. On account of this confusion, some of the Australian representatives seemed to be thinking that the removal of the statutory disabilities would enable the Australian Colonies to make differential tariff agreements with foreign countries rather than with other colonies. For this reason, some fears were expressed that the possession of such powers would be inimical to closer imperial unity - the broad purpose for which the conference had met.

Nothing of this extraneous discussion appeared in the terms of the unanimous request from the conference for imperial legis-

1 Procs., C.7553, Session of 30 June, p.67.
2 The former had to a certain extent been discussed at the National Convention in 1891.
4 In 1893 the Imperial Government, assisted by a Canadian pleni-potentiary, had negotiated a treaty between Canada and France. The procedure followed in the negotiations was explained to the conference by G.E.Foster. Procs., C.7553, p.77.
lation to enable "the dependencies of the Empire to enter into agreements of commercial reciprocity, including the power of making differential tariffs, with Great Britain or with one another". In recommending that the Imperial Government should accede to this request, Jersey took care to point out that it was solely concerned with intercolonial arrangements; the conference was not seeking formal recognition of any power to enable the colonies to enter into commercial arrangements with foreign Powers.

Jersey was well aware that the Australian Colonies had never used the power they already possessed to enter into tariff arrangements with each other; but that was no reason for retaining the statutory disabilities. Their removal would be in keeping with the Imperial Government's long standing, "consistent and successful policy" of removing as the need arose another of the few remaining limitations on colonial autonomy.

The Australian representatives were also indefinite in their attitudes towards the clauses in the Belgian and German treaties which adversely affected the colonies. Some of them were afraid of going too far in asking for the abrogation of the offending clauses in the two treaties or for the termination of the entire treaties. Others did not want to specify these two

Letterbooks Agent-General to Treasurer, S.Aust. Archives 613.

1 Proc., C.7553, pp.27,82.
2 Report by Earl of Jersey, C.7553, p.4.
3 ibid., pp.4,7.
treaties because they were not the only ones with most-favoured-
nation clauses applying to the colonies as well as to Great Brit-
tain. The difference in attitude depended on whether the primary
object of the resolution was to seek the removal of barriers
preventing tariff preferences in favour of another colony or
whether it was to enable the colonies to offer preferential treat-
ment to Great Britain. After making allowance for these differ-
ent attitudes, the conference unanimously requested the removal
of "any provisions in existing treaties between Great Britain
and any foreign Power, which prevent the self-governing dependen-
cies of the Empire from entering into agreements of commercial
reciprocity with each other, or with Great Britain...."

Lord Jersey believed that the conference had been mindful
of Great Britain's interests although it pressed strongly for the
termination of the treaty stipulations. Because he assumed that
the Belgian and German treaties only precluded differential treat-
ment by British colonies in favour of Great Britain, Jersey

1 The motion brought before the conference by Fitzgerald, one of
the Victorian representatives, referred specifically to the
Belgian and German treaties, ibid.,p.146. Fitzgerald disclaim-
ed making any demand for general freedom from all most-favoured-
nation agreements. ibid.,p.148.

2 e.g. Thynne (Q'I'd.) maintained that intercolonial arrangements
were the conference's objective. ibid.,p.150. Fitzgerald (Vict.)
argued that the Victorian Parliament would not countenance
tariff arrangements with Canada unless Great Britain could be
given the same benefits. ibid.,pp.148-9.

3 The amended resolution was submitted by Suttor. ibid.,pp.154,
157. The conference resolution left open whether particular
clauses in the treaties should be abrogated or the treaties
denounced in their entirety.
thought the Imperial Government should attempt to comply with the colonies' request if Great Britain wanted to benefit from preferential tariff arrangements between the colonies. But there was a significant qualification in Jersey's advocacy. He did not support the denunciation of the treaties in their entirety. Evidently the existing benefits they conferred on Great Britain would have to be weighed against prospective benefits from the colonies.

Once the conference had dealt with the barriers in the way of intercolonial preferential arrangements, the Canadians moved on to the next stage: to examine the means by which an intercolonial customs union could be established step by step.

G.E. Foster, the Canadian Minister of Finance, was far less cautious than Mackenzie Bowell. He plainly stated that intercolonial agreements were interim measures until Great Britain could be included in reciprocal arrangements. Foster's arguments in favour of trade and commerce as the greatest bond of Empire were open to a twofold interpretation. They were a confession of faith by an imperialist; and they indicated a programme for developing Canada's natural resources and expanding her trade and commerce. A subsequent declaration by Foster seemed to re-

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1 Jersey's Report, C.7553, p.5. Jersey's interpretation of the two treaties was confirmed by Sir Edward Grey in the House of Commons on 30 July, 1894; but in 1895 Ripon only specifically stated that the Belgian treaty did not prevent one colony from granting preferential treatment to another. Circular despatch of 28 June, 1895, G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, lxx (1895), C.7394, p.II
3 ibid., pp.180,182.
inforce the latter interpretation: "We are a Colonial Conference; we are brought here to look after colonial interests first; we are not an Imperial Conference... we are here to press what we think would be for the colonial advantage...."

Suttor, the New South Wales representative, might not have been the only one who entertained suspicions that Canada's object in calling the conference was "her own benefit", and that the advantages the Australian Colonies might gain would be incidental. Overt criticism and opposition were aroused by Foster's attempt to lead the conference beyond a general statement of its belief in inter-imperial trade as an efficacious means of developing the Empire. The Australian representatives might applaud Foster's sentiments in favour of imperial solidarity and looking after colonial interests, but some of them were not going to be rushed into any rash support for his proposals. On the one hand, they were evidently expected to make some response to Foster's suggestion that Canada might be willing to offer a 5% or 10% reduction in her tariff either generally or on certain articles. On the other hand, they were being asked to endorse a suggestion that Great Britain might reciprocate by granting the colonies a

3 Proc. of 1894 Colonial Conference, C.7553, p.185 (Fitzgerald) p.190 (Suttor); pp.195-6 (Thynne).
4 ibid., p.184. The average duty in the Canadian tariff was 25% ad valorem.
preference on some if not on all colonial products. Once the issue of reciprocal preferences was raised, the Australian representatives, on account of the unformed state of opinion in the colonies and the necessity to avoid committing their Governments, became divided among themselves. Some of them were willing either to endorse the principle of reciprocal preferences or to admit that the conference was concerned with the trade relations of the whole Empire and not just intercolonial relations. The others, among whom Suttor put this point of view the most forcefully, claimed that the conference had been summoned to discuss trade between Canada and Australia: it had not been called to ask Great Britain to reverse her free trade policy and introduce a tariff which discriminated between colonial and foreign products. At its narrowest, the latter point of view meant that the Australian representatives had gone to Ottawa mainly with their own interests in mind and would not go beyond practical trade questions which did not raise the preferential tariff issue. On a

1 ibid., p.183. Foster subsequently intimated that the reciprocity from Great Britain he particularly had in mind was the imposition of a preferential tariff rate to encourage colonial produced grain to replace American grown wheat. ibid., p.204.

2 Wrixon seconded Foster's motion; but he stated that he did not do so in the name of Victoria. ibid., p.184 and 192-3. Fraser, swayed by imperial sentiment, also supported Foster's motion. ibid., pp.188-9. Playford went as far as accepting that the conference was concerned with the trade relations of the whole Empire. ibid., pp.192-3.


4 e.g. the direct buying and importation of Australian wool into Canada, and the import of Canadian paper into N.S.W. Both were classed as duty free imports. Suttor, ibid., p.191.
broader level, they were reluctant to raise the issue of reciprocal preferences with Great Britain because she in her turn might require from the colonies the one form of reciprocity they could not grant: that is, duty free entry for British manufactured goods. In addition, they questioned the use of asking Great Britain for preferential treatment when there was no likelihood for years to come that she would modify her free trade policy.

As the debate on trade relations continued, attitudes hardened on both sides. Foster came out more definitely in support of some form of reciprocity from Great Britain as well as from other colonies. "Commerce in inexorable, sentiment is free", he asserted; and there would have to be some unmistakable and worthwhile advantages to Canada for her to give unilateral preferences to the British Empire. Foster attributed the Australian representatives' reluctance to urge a policy of reciprocal preferences on Great Britain to undue solicitude for British interests. In order to look after their own advantages, the colonies would have to press Great Britain to give them better terms than she gave to foreign countries.

In the resolution adopted by the conference, the area of

3 ibid., p. 206. This emphasis on reciprocity led Lee Smith, the New Zealand representative, to change his attitude and support those Australian representatives who were critical of what Foster wanted the conference to endorse. ibid., pp. 206, 208.
agreement between the representatives was clearly enunciated; but the differences also stood. The colonies unanimously agreed that closer imperial ties were necessary for the progress and stability of the Empire, and that those aims would be promoted by the extension of inter-imperial trade. New South Wales, Queensland and New Zealand refused to advocate preferential tariff arrangements between Great Britain and the colonies; but all the colonies agreed that until the time came when Great Britain could reciprocate, "the Colonies of Great Britain, or such of them as may be disposed to accede to this view, take steps to place each other's products, in whole or in part, on a more favourable customs basis than is accorded to the like products of foreign countries". For all Foster's insistence that the conference must achieve something practical towards extending inter-colonial trade relations, the Canadian Government knew that none of the representatives was empowered to make trading arrangements. The Australian and New Zealand delegates did not go beyond informal inquiries into the range of products by means of which trade with Canada might be increased.

1 At Suttors's suggestion, the three parts of Foster's draft resolution were put to the vote separately. ibid., p.212.
2 ibid., p.215.
3 ibid., pp.213-4, 216.
4 As a result of his inquiries, Suttor endorsed Mackenzie Bowell's conclusions about the likely range of products in trade between N.S.W. and Canada; but he was less optimistic than Bowell about the rate of trade expansion. Suttor's Report, N.S.W. V. and P. (1894-5 Session), vol.6, pp.1222-7.

There was a striking difference in approach between Lee Smith, a "commercial man", as he described himself, and the politicians who represented the Australian Colonies. Lee Smith did not think that the question of trade relations could be "satisfactorily completed with a few abstract discussions". He wanted
Lord Jersey interpreted the attitude of the conference as showing that in theory the delegates favoured intercolonial reciprocity and wanted to place Great Britain in a more advantageous position than foreign countries. They thereby rejected the establishment of a free trade union with Great Britain. The conference had shown that imperial preference "means in the Colonies the remission of existing taxation, but in Great Britain the creation of new taxation; not a mere variation in the existing machinery, but the introduction of a new system". As a free trader, Jersey did not think that the future increase in the proportion of Great Britain's trade with the colonies as they increased in population; in comparison with her foreign trade, would be sufficient to justify the creation of new customs barriers against foreign produce.

Several factors helped to limit the significance of the discussions on imperial preference in 1894. One of the most obvious points of difference between the Australian Colonies and Canada was the width of the gap between the views which had been formulated on the scope and purpose of preferential trade. Although Canada sincerely intended to promote trade with the Austra-

1 Jersey's Report, C.7553, p.7.
2 ibid., p.6.
3 The 1893 figures, quoted by Jersey, showed that 77% of British imports came from foreign countries and 23% from British possessions; and two-thirds of British exports went to foreign countries and one-third to British possessions. ibid., p.7.
lian Colonies and utilise the means of expanding that trade pro-
vided by the new Pacific steamship service and by the projected
Pacific Cable, this policy had increasingly become part of a
wider concept of imperial preference. In 1894 Canada expected
tariff concessions to be reciprocal. With the exception of Vic-
toria, Canada's protectionist policy was far more strongly en-
trenched than similar policies in the other self-governing colon-
ies. By 1894 she alone had entered into an agreement with a for-
eign Power to gain tariff concessions.

A strong and united Australian voice was lacking at the
Ottawa Conference for several reasons apart from the separate
existence of the six Australian Colonies. The hesitations and the
differences of opinion among their representatives arose partly
from colonial politics and the strength or weakness of protection-
ist feeling in each colony; but the real basis of the Australian
representatives' weak position, in comparison with the clearly
enunciated Canadian view, was the lack of any definite views on
imperial preference as a result of deliberations in the colonial
Parliaments, agitation through public meetings or even discussion
in the colonial press. Indeed, the Ottawa Conference itself pro-
vides the most authoritative statements of Australian attitudes
on imperial preference before the premiers of the Australian

I. e.g. S.M.H. (free trade) in editorials 10 April, 1894, and 8
Dec., 1894, stated that intercolonial reciprocity offered
"little to captivate the political imagination of Australians"
and the Age (protectionist) in an editorial 4 Dec., 1894, saw
little of interest in the trade resolutions of the conference.
Colonies discussed Chamberlain's proposals for an imperial zoll-verein at the 1897 Colonial Conference in London. Only on one point were attitudes defined in 1894. The Australian Colonies could not support a free trade commercial union of Great Britain and her colonies; and this attitude would be likely to harden when they formed an Australian federation.

A further divergence between the Australian and Canadian attitudes arose from differences in the existing circumstances and patterns of trade. In 1894 the Australian Colonies were only just beginning to make efforts to increase their export trade in directions other than to Great Britain. For this reason, the disabilities resulting from the Belgian and German treaties were not felt as immediately in the Australian Colonies as in Canada. The concentration on expanding their export trade was in part the financial Australian Colonies' response to the over-heavy borrowing, almost exclusively from Great Britain, which had contributed greatly to the depression of the early 1890s. Their efforts to increase their export trade were not fully under way before 1896; but, once the process had started, the enjoyment of preferential tariff treatment in Great Britain would become more attractive for colonial products in competition with similar foreign products.

1 See Table I.
2 S.M.H., editorial 3 Dec., 1894.
3 i.e. by a preferential tariff rate on the few items still subject to duty in Great Britain, such as wine; or after new duties had been imposed on foreign produce.
Even so, the Australian Colonies would not have quite the same stimulus as Canada in seeking preferential treatment in Great Britain. They had a ready market in Britain for wool, their major export, and for their expanding frozen meat trade. Canada faced the problem of replacing the United States and Russia as the chief suppliers of wheat for the United Kingdom market. Only with regard to butter and wine exports did a similar problem affect the Australian Colonies.

The disunity among the Australian Colonies had its most serious implication when the Canadians sought their joint support for the Pacific steamship service and the Pacific Cable. Any compensatory strength in the Australian position at the Ottawa Conference lay in some of the delegates themselves. They refused to be drawn into broad resolutions, especially into ones affecting Great Britain's tariff policy, on which their Governments and public opinion in the colonies had reached no conclusions; and they saw no practical advantages in adopting resolutions on matters which lay beyond what they had understood to be the purpose of the conference: that is, to examine ways of increasing trade between Canada and the Australian Colonies.

The conference agreed to ask the Imperial Government to subsidize the fast Atlantic and Pacific services; but no further support was forthcoming from the Australian Colonies. Procs. of 1894 Colonial Conference, C.7553, pp. 35, 240-252.

After much discussion and strong opposition from Playford in defence of S.Australia's interests, the conference adopted resolutions that the Canadian Government should find out the cost of the proposed cable, the Imperial Government should be asked to secure landing stations and also to complete the survey of the route as soon as possible at the equal expense of Great Britain, Canada and the Australian Colonies. ibid., pp. 30, 168-170, 252-6.
Mackenzie Bowell was satisfied that the conference had accomplished all that was possible at the time. Prospects of further steps towards practical arrangements between Canada and the Australian Colonies became uncertain when there were changes of government in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. If the colonial press was a guide to the degree of political support for tariff agreements with Canada, little encouragement was offered to the Australian Governments in 1894-5 to meet any Canadian overtures or to continue to press strongly on Great Britain the resolutions of the conference. In any case, further moves by the Australian Colonies were dependent in the first place on the Imperial Government's response to the request for the removal of the statutory disabilities imposed on them, and, secondly, on the termination of the Belgian and German treaties.

IV

The Australian representatives at the Ottawa Conference had regarded their mission as being far more concerned with the Pacific steamship service and the Pacific Cable than with prefer-

1 In N.S.W. the Dibbs Government was replaced by a free trade one under G.H. Reid; in Victoria the Patterson Government was replaced by a Government led by George Turner; and in Queensland McIlwraith had already been replaced by Hugh Nelson.

2 E.g. the free trade S.M.H. held that the trade questions discussed at the conference offered little to Australia's advantage, and that preferential trade arrangements with Great Britain and other colonies were too far removed from the sphere of practical politics. Editorial, "Editorials 10 April and 8 Dec., 1894."

The protectionist Age took the view that a common imperial tariff was a delusion and reciprocal agreements among the colonies would be the only practical form of imperial preference. The advantage of preferential terms for colonial wheat, butter and wine in Great Britain might open the question of preferential treatment for British manufactures in the colonies. The Age
ential trade arrangements. The Canadians were concerned with the interdependence of trade and communications. Assistance from the Canadian and Australian Governments to the Pacific Cable and the Pacific steamship service would be of little avail unless the accompanying trade was developed by means of reciprocal tariff arrangements. In Great Britain, closer imperial trade relations were regarded as the main purpose of the conference, and the Pacific Cable and the Pacific and Atlantic steamship services as being both subsidiary and dependent questions. This last interpretation of the purpose of the conference arose largely from the special interests that would be served by Great Britain's adoption of the conference's trade resolutions. Howard Vincent's United Empire Trade League saw the conference, therefore, as having endorsed its policy of providing Great Britain with some means of retaliation against protectionist foreign Powers, of increasing the proportion of exports of British manufactured goods absorbed by the colonies and of lessening Britain's dependence on foreign food supplies. Some of those who were primarily

was also suspicious of the influence of the United Empire Trade League in Canada and on Canadian policy. Editorials 5 July, 13 July and 4 Dec., 1894.

3 e.g. The Times, article by special correspondent in Ottawa, 10 August, 1894, p. 8a; and editorial 11 July, 1894, p. 2f. Pall Mall Gazette, 15 May, 15 June, 9 July and 2 August, 1894.
4 The Times, 11 July, 1894, p. 7e. Under Howard Vincent's chairmanship, the Conference of the National Union of Conservative Associations unanimously supported the Ottawa resolutions.
concerned with the Empire's defence needs saw the conference as practically endorsing Hofmeyr's 1887 scheme for a uniform imposition to be used for improving imperial defence. Others, who were far more cautious in their expectations, believed that the conference had provided added proof of the strength of practical and material interests as a bond of unity. However, this attitude did not prevent some wishful thinking that the colonies were more likely to move towards free trade than the mother country towards protection.

If imperialist writers and speakers in Great Britain had looked more objectively at Lord Jersey's reflections on the conference and had been less concerned with their own lines of propaganda, they would have noticed that he emphasised how important it was that the Imperial Government should try to meet the immediately practical requests of the colonies. These were, first, the removal of the statutory disabilities which prevented the Australian Colonies from entering into differential tariff arrangements with Canada, and, secondly, the Imperial Government's participation in the Pacific Cable and the fast Atlantic and Pacific steamship services. Jersey believed that in both cases the advantages to the Empire as a whole would outweigh the disproportion of the advantages to Great Britain and the colonies respectively.

I e.g. Pall Mall Gazette, 15 June, 9 July and 2 August, 1894.
2 The Times, editorial, 11 July, 1894, p.9f.
3 The Times, 26 Sept.,1894. Editorial on the offer of a prize of £1000 gns. by the Statist for a scheme for an imperial zollverein.
5 Ibid., p.17. Although Jersey admitted that future action depended to a large extent on a sufficient amount of agreement among the Australian Colonies, he did not think that this invalidated his recommendation.
He had also clearly understood that the colonies of their own volition had taken the initial steps in practical projects which would enhance imperial unity. The next steps would depend on how willingly and generously the Imperial Government met them. In the colonies there was "an impatience for action which would be tried by delay, and most sadly disappointed by indifference...."

In the months following the conference, Rosebery and Ripon appeared to be disregarding Jersey's warning against delay or indifference. Their inertia contrasted with the action of some of the colonies. The Canadian Government called for tenders for laying a cable across the Pacific, and the response proved the feasibility of the project; but after a half-hearted attempt the Imperial Government failed to secure a landing station in the region of the Sandwich Islands. The Canadian Parliament provided for a subsidy for a fast Atlantic service as well as for the Pacific steamship service; but James Huddart found himself engaged in seemingly fruitless negotiations for a subsidy from the Imperial Government for the proposed Atlantic service. In 1895

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1 ibid., p.17.
2 This was an alternative approach to proving the feasibility of the project because there was little or no hope that the Admiralty survey would be completed.
3 The Australian Colonies were partly responsible for the slow development of the Pacific service because N.S.W. was the only colony to grant a subsidy. Despite this drawback, which lessened the frequency and speed of the service, there was an appreciable increase in the amount of produce and goods carried during the next two years. See Table II.
Additional ports of call would be advantageous in increasing the opportunities for the carriage of goods and produce; but this conflicted with the primary purpose for which the service had been established and subsidies granted by the Canadian and N.S.W. Governments. This was to provide a fast mail service between Australia and Great Britain via Canada.
the New Zealand Government offered to grant a subsidy to the Pacific service provided the ships called at a New Zealand port.

Early in 1895, South Australia attempted to act within the powers already possessed by the Australian Colonies and negotiated a reciprocal tariff agreement with New Zealand. Although New Zealand evidently intended the treaty as a first step in the direction of putting the principles of the Ottawa resolutions into practice, in South Australia it was unconnected with ideas of imperial preference, and it did not cause any renewed discussion of the subject in the Australian Colonies. The other Australian Colonies were led to oppose the treaty on the ground that it would hinder freer intercolonial trade, raise hostility against South Australia and New Zealand and have an adverse effect on the Australian federation movement. The first two arguments could easily become relevant also to the effect on imperial unity.

1 The New Zealand Government negotiated a provisional agreement on the basis of £20,000 p.a. for a port of call in New Zealand or £30,000 for a terminal port in New Zealand. N.Z. Appendix to Journals of the H. of Representatives, vol. II (1895), Paper F.9. The ratification of this agreement was held over until the 1896 Session, and new negotiations took place in 1897. In 1895 Fiji agreed to grant a subsidy of £1500 p.a.

2 The treaty was signed by C.C. Kingston and J.G. Ward, the New Zealand Treasurer on 2 Feb., 1895. It was to last for 7 years. S. Australia was to admit barley, oats, hops and horses from New Zealand duty free; whereas New Zealand was to admit wines, salt and olive oil from S. Australia duty free. S. Australia was likely to reap a greater advantage than New Zealand from the operation of the treaty because of the inclusion of wine.

3 S. Australia's purpose in negotiating the treaty appears to have been the very limited one of securing better terms for the entry of wine into New Zealand.

4 The other Australian Colonies and the Colonial Office objected to Clause 3 which stated that during the term of the agreement neither S. Australia nor New Zealand was to reduce existing duties on similar goods from other colonies or countries. Minutes on Way to Ripon, S. Aust. No. 10, 12 Feb., 1895, C.O. 13/150.
of separate tariff agreements between any two self-governing colonies inside or outside the Australian and New Zealand group unless the benefits in each agreement were extended to all colonies. The Colonial Office sympathised with the arguments of the other Australian Colonies against the South Australian treaty, but was reluctant to disallow it. When the South Australian Parliament failed to ratify the treaty, the Colonial Office was saved from having to make a difficult decision.

The first positive action on the part of the Imperial Government was the passage of the Australian Colonies Duties Act through the Imperial Parliament in March, 1895. No immediate negotiations for a tariff agreement between Canada and any of the Australian Colonies followed; but New Zealand negotiated a treaty with Canada in 1895. On the Canadian side, the failure to press for agreements with the Australian Colonies was probably


2 58 and 59 Vict. cap.3. Hansard 4 Ser. vol.XXXI, col.644ff. This Act removed the statutory disabilities imposed in the Consitution Acts and in the 1873 Act. Bills imposing differential duties were to contain a suspending clause or they should be reserved by the Governor.

3 J.G. Ward negotiated the agreement during a visit to Canada. The S. Australian and Canadian agreements were embodied in the Customs Duties Reciprocity Bill of 1895. N.Z. Parl. Deb. (1895), vol.91. On Oct. 30 Seddon announced that the Canadian treaty and the Vancouver steamship subsidy agreement would be held over. ibid., p.961. After Ward's resignation as Treasurer, Seddon stated that the Government intended to bring in a bill to enable New Zealand to enter into reciprocity agreements with the mother country and with other colonies. Although this bill was introduced it was later withdrawn. N.Z. Parl. Deb. (1896), vol.92, pp.273-9, 290, 326; vol.96, p.441; vol.96, p.376.
due to the crisis over domestic issues which led to the formation of a Liberal Government under Laurier's leadership in 1896. By that time, tariff preferences in favour of Great Britain were of much greater importance in Canadian policy than intercolonial tariff arrangements. On the Australian side, there was the overriding interest in Australian federation.

No response was made to the other trade issues raised by the Ottawa conference until Rosebery's Liberal Government was about to quit office. Ripon believed that the commercial interests of the Empire must be viewed as a whole, and he saw the Imperial Government as the guardian of those interests. Free trade doctrine and practice were rigidly upheld. There might be no objection in principle to free trade within the Empire; but Ripon opposed the formation of an Imperial Customs Union. The arguments he put forward against differential duties were those an orthodox free trader believed were best designed to secure Great Britain's commercial interests and supremacy. The same

2 ibid., p.4. Note that in 1894 Ripon had rejected Cecil Rhodes' scheme for a free trade zollverein south of the Zambesi with a preferential tariff to favour British goods over foreign goods.
3 ibid., p.4-8. These arguments were to be heard over and over again in the following years and especially after Chamberlain opened the campaign for tariff reform in 1903.

(i) Differential duties could only be imposed by raising duties on foreign goods; and this would divert trade from its regular and natural channels, e.g. intercolonial preferential arrangements would divert trade from the mother country and from one colony to another.
(ii) Because Great Britain's inter-imperial trade was much less than her foreign trade, the imposition of differential duties would lead to increased taxation, loss of trade and higher prices for foodstuffs and raw materials; they would have adverse effects on British industry, the carrying trade and the re-export trade of colonial and foreign produce.
reasoning led Ripon to conclude that the Empire's best interests would not be served by abrogating the Belgian and German treaties. Free trade orthodoxy also caused the Imperial Government to maintain that any tariff concessions included in a treaty negotiated between the Imperial Government and a foreign Power on behalf of a colony must be extended to Great Britain and to other colonies, and all Britain's existing most-favoured-nation obligations must be observed.

Die-hard free traders in Great Britain accepted Ripon's arguments uncritically; but others found cause for criticism in Ripon's insistence on the pre-eminent position that had to be given to Britain's export trade, and the implication that the greatest benefits arising from trade were enjoyed by the exporting country. Ripon overlooked the benefits accruing to the colonies, and therefore to the Empire, through the increasing volume

(iii) The colonial proportion of Britain's trade was not increasing; therefore the imposition of differential duties would make the dangers of retaliation by foreign Powers more serious.

1 *ibid.*, pp.10-13. Because the Belgian and German Governments refused to remove the articles in question, the treaties could only be abrogated in their entirety. Ripon claimed that British trade with Belgium and Germany equalled that with the colonies.

2 *ibid.*, pp.15-16. In addition to the example cited by Ripon of the reason for Canada's rejection of a proposed treaty with the U.S.A. in 1892, Canada had objected for a similar reason to a treaty between the United States and Newfoundland in 1890. D.M.Farr, *op.cit.*, p.209, fn.III3.

The 1893 treaty between Canada and France had at first excluded from its benefits all other colonies and foreign countries having most-favoured-nation agreements with Great Britain. Minute by Anderson on Brassey to Chamberlain, Vict. No.23, 10 April, 1896. C.O. 309/143.

of their exports to the United Kingdom. The strongest criticism of Ripon's lack of sympathy for colonial aims came from those who wanted to see the Imperial Government make some definite moves towards closer imperial unity, and to provide itself by means of imperial preference with a weapon of retaliation against foreign countries. Even some of those who had no sympathy with imperial preference hoped that Chamberlain and the Conservative-Unionist Government would make an effort to give practical assistance to imperial projects in which the colonies were interested, such as the Pacific Cable and the fast Atlantic and Pacific steamship services.

The Australian Colonies were much less disappointed with the Imperial Government's negative response to the conference resolutions than Canada. They had gained the two immediate objectives some of them had sought: that is, the removal of the statutory disabilities which prevented differential tariff agreements beyond the Australian and New Zealand group of colonies; and a recognition of the procedure of asking the Imperial Government, aided by a colonial plenipotentiary, to negotiate commercial agreements with foreign Powers when such a need might arise. The

1 e.g. The Times, 21 July, 1895; Morning Post, 23 July, 1895.
2 e.g. the United Empire Trade League; also Globe, 20 July, 1895, and St. James Gazette, 22 July, 1895.
3 e.g. Morning Post, 23 July, 1895.
4 Ripon confirmed this procedure in his circular despatch of 28 June, 1895. C.7824, p.16.
issues involved in imperial preference were still not discussed very seriously in the Australian Colonies in 1895-6; but there was a gradual clarification of attitudes as a result of the attention being given to trade development. Most progress was made in Victoria in seeing the increased benefits which might accrue to a federated Australia from an imperial customs union based on protection, or from a less ambitious policy of granting unilateral preferences to Great Britain. Although the Victorian Government had no present intention of claiming the right of independent action in negotiating with foreign powers, it realised that a federated Australia might eventually claim that power and seek exemption from British commercial treaties. This was a point which also raised some interest in South Australia. In the other Australian Colonies, the major uncertainty remained unresolved. Were there any real advantages for the colonies or for Great Britain in a system of imperial preference in which the latter would have to discard her free trade system and impose new duties?

The impact of Ripon's pronouncements in the Australian

I e.g. Age, editorials 4 Dec., 1896, and 27 April, 1897.
2 Memo. by the Attorney-General (Isaac), enclosed in Brassey to Chamberlain, Vict. No. 24, II April, 1896. C.0.309/I45.
3 e.g. Holder, the S. Australian Treasurer, was led by Ripon's statements to remark that if the colonies were bound by imperial treaties and if those treaties precluded tariff arrangements among the self-governing colonies, they might have to request omission from such treaties and seek separate agreement. Minute dated 4 Sept., 1895, on Ripon's despatches on 28 June, 1895. S. Aust. Govt. House Papers.
4 e.g. S.M.H., editorials 23 and 29 July, 1895; Brisbane Courier, editorial, 24 July, 1895.
Colonies was also lessened by the knowledge that he had been replaced by Chamberlain. Changes were expected in the Imperial Government's attitude towards the colonies as a result of Chamberlain's appointment. Because a new spirit would enter the Colonial Office with Chamberlain, there would be a better appreciation of the value of the self-governing colonies both as customers and as suppliers of Britain's needs in foodstuffs and raw materials; and, above all, as partners in the Empire the colonies would in future meet with a readier and more favourable response. Some hopes were raised that Chamberlain would initiate changes in Britain's fiscal policy in the interests of the Empire as a whole; but in general no major or radical alterations were expected.

Two of the Australian delegates who attended the Colonial Conference in Ottawa emphasised the effect on them of visiting a Dominion which spoke with one voice in imperial affairs. Although the Australian federal framework did not follow the Canadian pattern and Canadian hopes for mutual preferential trade were not fulfilled, the contacts established as a result of their

I e.g. S.M.H., editorial, 14 Nov., 1895; Brisbane Courier, editorials 24 July, 1895, and 26 August, 1895.
2 e.g. the S.Australian Government inquired officially if Chamberlain agreed with Ripon's statements. Way to Chamberlain, S.Aust. No. 77, 26 Oct., 1895. C.O.15/150. The inquiry was probably motivated in part by the decision which still had to be made whether or not to disallow the S.Australia- New Zealand reciprocity agreement.
3 e.g. S.M.H., editorial, 29 July, 1895; Brisbane Courier, editorial, 24 July, 1895.
5 Negotiations for a preferential tariff arrangement between Australia and Canada were not opened until 1908-9.
own efforts between the two major groups of self-governing colonies made a significant contribution in the long run to intercolonial understanding as a facet of imperial relations. They demonstrated that the imperial relationship was not entirely based on the links between each colony and Great Britain, but that widely separated colonies had some mutual interests that helped to bind them together.

The Colonial Conference of 1894, therefore, marked a new departure. Unlike the 1887 Conference, it had been called by a Colonial Government and not by the Imperial Government. Did it give any support to the idea that discussion in conference between the Imperial and Colonial Governments might be the solution to the problem of the position of the self-governing colonies in the Empire? The Governments in Great Britain and in the colonies saw no difficulty about calling the gathering in Ottawa a "Colonial Conference" because it met to discuss certain questions which had imperial as well as colonial bearings. Although Lord Jersey was an observer on behalf of the Imperial Government and not a representative or a plenipotentiary, his role in some respects was not very different from that of Sir Henry Holland in 1887 or of Chamberlain in 1897 and 1902 in listening to colonial opinion.

1 Unlike The Times which insisted that it was an "intercolonial conference" because it met in a colonial capital with a colonial statesman as president. The Times, 3 July, 1894, p.4a; 2 August, 1894, p.8a.
2 That is, in the business sessions after Salisbury's opening address in 1887, and Chamberlain's in 1897 and 1902.
The undoubted usefulness of a Colonial Conference as a means of discussing matters of mutual interest led to a suggestion in 1894 that some continuity should be established between a conference and its successor. As in 1887, after the first conference, hopes were raised that the Ottawa Conference would in its turn be followed by further gatherings in London, or in Australia or Cape Colony. A Colonial Conference provided a means of discussing as they arose specific questions of imperial interest, such as the development of commercial relations, improved communications and mutual assistance. The Colonial Conference of 1894 was regarded in some ways as showing the continuity of the colonial policy of the Conservative and Liberal Governments. It was also significant in marking "a stage in that spontaneous and almost unconscious organisation of the Empire which is silently proceeding upon quite other methods than those of the advocates of Imperial Federation..." Only those with imperial federalist leanings went on to claim that colonial conferences tested the feasibility of imperial federation, and that the Imperial Govern-

I Wrixon at the session of the conference on 9 July. Procs., C.7555, p.257. Wrixon's suggestion in 1894 was far more tentative than Deakin's in 1907 for an imperial secretariat. In practice after the 1894 conference, the Canadian Government fulfilled this role by calling for tenders for the Pacific Cable, and by keeping the steamship services and preferential trade before the Imperial and Colonial Governments.

2 e.g. Sir John Thompson, the Canadian Prime Minister, at the 1894 Colonial Conference. Procs., C.7555, p.38. Also a motion by Fitzgerald for a conference to meet in Australia within the next five years. ibid., p.287. See also a motion put forward at a meeting of the Colonial Party in the H. of Commons, 7 June, 1894. Reported in the S.M.H. 9 June, 1894.

At one stage it was suggested that a conference should follow almost immediately in London to discuss imperial defence. The Times, 12 April, 1894, special article, p.12a.
ment should accept the colonies' advocacy of protective duties or attempt to secure colonial contributions to imperial defence in return for a voice in framing the foreign policy of the Empire.

After the setback in 1895, the hopes of the imperial federationists were raised again when Salisbury became Prime Minister and Chamberlain took office as Secretary of State for the Colonies. In 1895 there was no immediate indication that their expectations were justified, and that Chamberlain's appointment to the Colonial Office would lead to an imperial customs union, based either on free trade or on preferential tariff arrangements, or to the establishment of a political federation with imperial defence as its cornerstone.

3 e.g. Age, editorial, 13 July, 1894; The Times, 4 June, 1894, p.8a; Pall Mall Gazette, 17 May, 1894.
4 e.g. The Times, 9 July, 1894, p.9c.
5 S.M.H., editorial, 10 April, 1894.

Also spokesmen for the United Empire Trade League and the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee as reported in The Times during 1894-5.

The Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee was formed in May, 1894. On 6 Sept., 1895, there was a deputation to Salisbury in the hope of furthering the aims of the Committee. These were, first and foremost, to secure contributions from the colonies to the naval defence of the Empire and to associate the colonies with Great Britain in determining imperial policy.
PART III
THE DEBATE ON THE BASES ON IMPERIAL UNITY RENEWED: THE NEW
IMPERIALISM OF THE CHAMBERLAIN ERA

CHAPTER 12
THE NEW IMPERIALISM AND THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES: THE COLONIAL
CONFERENCE OF 1897

"What is Imperialism to a community whose interests are
confined to an outlying corner of the British Empire? The very
phrases Empire and Imperialism are at once distasteful and inap-
propriate. They correctly indicate the relations of the British
Crown to such a country as India; but they are offensive mis-
nomers when used of countries living under free representative
institutions, and acknowledging Victoria as Queen." The question
was an Australian counterpart of Lord Blachford's assumption that
the widely scattered parts of the Empire had no common interests
to bind them together apart from the tie with Great Britain. In
addition, the questioner assumed that the Australian Colonies had
no interests beyond the immediate confines of the Australian con-
tinent. The "separateness" of the Australian Colonies from Great
Britain geographically and as a result of their political auton-
omy was emphasised.

In the late 1880s and early 1890s, the denunciations of
imperial policy by the strident and determined voices of a minor-
ity who wanted to break the imperial link were sometimes augment-

I Brisbane Courier, editorial 4 Sept., 1893.
ed by the critics of others who believed that British policy in the South Pacific disregarded Australian interests. To acknowledge imperial ties, other than loyalty to the Crown, was regarded by some who were not republicans as proclaiming the dependent status of the Australian Colonies. By 1900 Empire and imperialism were accepted by the great majority in the Australian Colonies as being compatible not only with self-governing institutions, but also with the development of an Australian national feeling and the creation of a federated Australia. By the end of the century they also had a much greater awareness of the importance of Australia and the Empire to each other; and before the Australian Commonwealth was formed some of the colonies had shown in practical ways that they had interests in common with other parts of the Empire.

Although this change in attitude was a gradual one over more than a decade, its pace quickened and its progress was more clearly in evidence after Joseph Chamberlain became Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1895. The coincidence was certainly not fortuitous. The importance of the colonies to Great Britain was demonstrated when the most prominent and able of Salisbury's colleagues took over the Colonial office. Chamberlain's appoint-

I Notably by N.S.W., Victoria and Queensland in their participation in the Pacific Cable project; and by N.S.W. in subsidising the Canadian-Australian steamship line.
ment was welcomed in the Australian Colonies because it was thought to mark a new departure in colonial administration. Expectations were raised that Australian interests would not now be relegated to an obviously secondary place in Great Britain's imperial and foreign policy.

Chamberlain himself stressed the continuity in the colonial policy followed by Liberal and Conservative Governments. By and large this was true. By 1895 allegiance to a political party had little effect on the general attitude towards the Empire. Harcourt and Lebouchère were the last of the so-called "Little Englishers". Both parties accepted that the integrity of the Empire must be maintained; and they believed that British sentiment, or "racial" sentiment as they termed it, was one of the strongest of imperial ties. However, leaving aside the question of Ireland, there was a distinct divergence of viewpoint between the Liberals and the Conservatives. Liberals such as Asquith and Morley claimed for their party the preservation of the Empire through the grant of self-government; and they emphasised the looseness of the imperial tie. Rosebery was nearer to this group than he was...

I e.g. editorials in the S.M.H., 14 Nov., 1895; and Brisbane Courier, 24 July and 26 August, 1895.
3 e.g. Chamberlain at the Royal Colonial Institute, 31 March, 1897. Procs. R.C.I. (1896-7), vol.26, pp.236-238.
Salisbury at the Imperial Institute banquet, 18 June, 1897. Reported in The Times, 19 June, 1897, p.13.
4 e.g. speeches by Morley at Forfar, 4 Oct., 1897, reported in The Times, 5 Oct., 1897; Asquith at Reading, 10 June, 1897, reported in The Times, 11 June, 1897; and at Wormit, 12 Oct., 1897, reported in The Times, 13 Oct., 1897.
The Times thought Asquith "strangely deficient in Imperial feeling". 12 June, 1897.
to Unionists like Chamberlain or Devonshire, both of whom urged
the strengthening of imperial ties. At the extreme on the Conser-
ervative-Unionist side were men like Howard Vincent, Sir John
Colomb and H.O. Arnold-Forster who agitated openly and distinctly
for either commercial federation or a colonial share in imperial
defence commitments.

One idea clearly distinguished Chamberlain from his prede-
cessors in office and presaged most for the future. This was his
deepening and expanding vision of the Empire as an entity and of
its role in world affairs. He saw the Empire as "a living entity
in which each part shall contribute to the success and security
of the whole... in which the ideas of kinship and mutual obliga-
tion have been substituted for the mere pride of possession or
of huckstering calculation about profit and loss..." The inter-
dependence of the various parts of the Empire would help to de-
velop its resources to the full. In the changing climate of world
affairs a closely-knit British Empire would exercise greater
power and influence than Great Britain alone. Because he observ-
ed that power was being concentrated in the hands of great Em-

I Rosebery believed that the Empire rested on a two-fold basis:
imperial unity (embodied in the symbol of the British Crown),
and local self-government. e.g. speech at the Imperial Insti-
tute, 13 June, 1897. Reported in The Times, 19 June, 1897, p.1:
For a colonial appreciation of Rosebery's views, see the Bris-
bane Courier, 26 August, 1895.
2 e.g. Arnold-Forster at the Constitutional Club, 7 April, 1897.
Reported in The Times, 8 April, 1897.
3 Speech at the Grocers' Hall, London, 1 August, 1902. Reprinted
in C.W. Boyd (ed.), Mr. Chamberlain's Speeches (London, 1914),
vol.II, p.70.
4 e.g. see Chamberlain's speeches at Birmingham, 11 Oct., 1894,
reported in The Times, 12 Oct., 1894; and at Walsall, 15 July,
1895, reported in The Times, 16 July, 1895.
This idea led Chamberlain to support the Pacific Cable and the
pires, Chamberlain believed that "if Greater Britain remains united, no Empire in the world can ever surpass it in area, in population, in wealth, or in the diversity of its resources..."

These were two aspects of an imperialism in which the self-governing colonies had a role to play commensurate with their size, population wealth and resources. Imperial trade and imperial defence were closely connected in Chamberlain's mind; but the former had to be dealt with first.

Shortly after Chamberlain became Secretary of State for the Colonies he took the first steps towards realising two aspects of his vision of the interdependence of the various parts of the Empire. One of these mainly concerned Great Britain; but it touched the self-governing colonies at two points. The Empire's civilising mission had to go side by side with developing the "estates" of the Empire. This was primarily a work for Great Britain in her responsibility for India and the colonies in East and West Africa; but in 1897 Chamberlain implied that the Australian Colonies were associated in this work through their administration of New Guinea, and he suggested that they might take over the administration of the British Solomon Islands. Imperial cit-

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1 Speech at Royal Colonial Institute, 31 March, 1897. Procs. R.C.I. (1896-7), vol.28, p.236.
2 E.g. speech at Birmingham Jewellers' Association, 30 March, 1895; at Walsall, 15 July, 1895; and at R.C.I., 31 March, 1897, Procs. (1896-7), vol.28, p.236.

In later years Jebb suggested that the self-governing colonies might be associated with Great Britain in her civilising mission in India. R. Jebb, Studies in Colonial Nationalism (Lon-
citizenship, by virtue of being the Queen's subjects, was the corollary of the Pax Britannica in India, in parts of Asia and in the tropical dependencies in Africa. In 1896-7 Chamberlain was led by this concept to object to legislation restricting the entry of the Queen's coloured subjects into the Australian Colonies.

The second aspect directly concerned the self-governing colonies. Chamberlain shared the disquiet of many in Great Britain that the colonial proportion of Britain's trade was not increasing. At the end of November, 1895, he instituted inquiries designed to be the first step towards increasing the colonial proportion of Britain's total trade, securing as large a share of colonial trade as was possible for British manufactured goods and developing "our estate". These aims met with wide support in Great Britain from Chamberlain's political supporters and opponents alike. His immediate aim was to discover why and to what extent foreign products had replaced British products in colonial

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1 See forward.
2 Circular despatch of 25 Nov., 1895, printed in G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, lx (1895), C.8449, with replies from the colonial Governors re British Empire trade and foreign competition. Chamberlain consulted the Canadian High Commissioner and the Agents-General before the despatch was sent to the colonies. Samuel to Reid, 5 Dec., 1895, and enclosures. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, Agent-General 96/442.
3 e.g. staunch free traders thought that Chamberlain's inquiry did not violate the spirit or the principles of free trade. One free trade paper asserted that the full realisation of Cobden's ideal would be getting nearer if the Empire became virtually self-supporting for most articles of consumption. Daily Chronicle, 4 Dec., 1895.
I imports. Chamberlain also wanted to gain information about colonial products which might be exported to the United Kingdom or to other colonies but were not already being exported. The detailed information obtained from the colonies would conclusively prove or refute the current contention in Great Britain that British trade with the colonies was declining on account of foreign competition. The colonial returns did not bear out some of the alarmist statements current in Great Britain; and, as far as the Australian Colonies were concerned, the returns showed that Great Britain was maintaining her pre-eminent position in their import and export trade. Before the colonial returns were received by the Colonial Office, Chamberlain opened up an associated line of approach towards strengthening the interdependence of the Empire.

In 1895–6 Chamberlain was still a free trader, but he was more open-minded on trade questions than his ministerial colleagues. Late in 1895, he thought that in dealing with the resolutions of the Ottawa Conference on preferential trade his predecessor, Ripon, had been concerned too exclusively with "the direct financial aspects of the question" and had ignored other "indirect and Imperial interests". The Ottawa proposals were

1 Circular despatch of 25 Nov., 1895, printed in C.8449. Prices of British and foreign articles were to be compared and the cost of transport; also the suitability, quality and finish of British and foreign products.

2 Colonial returns in C.8449; and see Table I forward. The figures for Victoria, the most strongly protectionist of the Australian Colonies, showed that for the three years 1893–4 British imports were 41.4%, 38.74% and 38.16% respectively of the total imports, and foreign imports were 9.92%, 9.94% and 10.51% respectively. Brassey to Chamberlain, Vict. No.41, 10 June, 1896. Records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria, Letterbooks of Despatches, vol.II.
"too one-sided and could not be entertained"; but it was not impossible "that they might be so amended as to become tempting".

Chamberlain's own business experience, and the recent interest the colonies had shown in their commercial relations with Great Britain and with each other, suggested to him that an advance towards a commercial federation of the Empire might be a practical policy for both Great Britain and the colonies. From the time of Chamberlain's initiative onwards, the idea of a preferential tariff by one colony in favour of the mother country or another colony no longer went out as a challenge to British free trade from a centre of gravity in Canada. In the new stage in imperial relations which was opening in Great Britain, imperial preference became the response to Chamberlain's concept of an imperial Zollverein.

In two public speeches during the first half of 1896, Chamberlain examined three propositions for closer commercial relations within the Empire. The first proposition was that of the Ottawa Conference in favour of tariff reciprocity within the Empire. Chamberlain saw insuperable difficulties in this because

it involved a complete reversal of the United Kingdom's trade policy and would mean the imposition of duties on food imports. The second proposition, that of an Empire-wide free trade policy, was impossible because of the consequent loss of revenue to the colonies. A third proposition, put forward by Chamberlain, was an attempt to overcome the insurmountable difficulties in the other two. In an imperial zollverein there would be free trade within the Empire, and colonies favouring protection could impose a tariff on foreign imports. Chamberlain did not deny that Great Britain would, if necessary, do likewise with foreign imports; but the strength of the belief in free trade in Britain made him realise only too well that great difficulties would be involved in making even small changes and it would be imperative to tread warily.

Although the proposal for an imperial zollverein was put into a very tentative form in 1896, the idea seems to have been growing in Chamberlain's mind for several years. It showed the broad vision and the practical clear thinking which were both a part of his approach to imperial problems. In March and June, 1896, his intention was to arouse discussion in Great Britain and the colonies and to see if any positive response came from

1 The last mentioned was to remain one of the chief arguments of the opponents of imperial reciprocity.
2 J.L. Garvin, Joseph Chamberlain (London, 1934), vol. III, pp. 180-181. Mrs. Chamberlain is Garvin's authority for the view that the idea had developed over a period of time. Chamberlain's minute towards the end of 1895 (see previous page) seems to be a more immediate pointer.
the latter. Since Chamberlain had assumed office as Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1895, enthusiasts for imperial unity and some sections of the British press showed a wilful determination to read too much into his speeches as steps towards the official submission of definite schemes to the colonies. Imperial federationists in Great Britain made no exception to this when they read into Chamberlain's suggestion for inter-imperial free trade an indication that the Imperial Government would attempt an advance along the lines of commercial federation as a first step towards the political federation of the Empire.

By 1896 the more doctrinaire enthusiasts for imperial unity supported either a commercial union of the Empire, with the majority of this group favouring tariff preferences, or they concentrated on improving the military and especially the naval defence of the Empire by means of colonial contributions and commitments. In both cases, the ultimate end was still a political federation of the Empire. The moderates, who favoured securing imperial unity by whatever approach should in the long run prove most likely, probably had the most practical influence in British politics. Many of them were to be found in the British Empire.

1 The die-hard advocates of commercial federation were concentrated in the United Empire Trade League. The extremists on the side of the defence method of federation were gathered in the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee which had grown out of the City of London branch of the Imperial Federation League.
2 The moderates had had most influence on the Imperial Federation League's scheme for an imperial federation in Nov., 1892; but before its demise the League had come out more on the side of those who wanted to concentrate on the defence aspects of imperial federation. See the I.F.L. scheme of Nov., 1892, Imperial Federation, Dec., 1892.
League which had been formed in 1896 with the Duke of Devonshire as President. According to Devonshire, the League had "the general objects of doing everything in our power to bring about closer commercial and other connexions between the colonies and ourselves, but on the principle of a complete elimination of any attempt at the present time to bring about any political or organic change in our relations". The League probably moved further towards favouring a colonial share in imperial defence, as the most promising avenue towards imperial federation, after the colonies had shown that they would have nothing to do with a commercial union based on free trade within the Empire. By the time the Colonial Conference met in June, 1897, the organisations favouring a commercial federation of the Empire were interpreting Chamberlain's idea of an imperial zollverein as involving changes in Great Britain's fiscal policy.

II

The response in the Australian Colonies to Chamberlain's...
initiative was conditioned by several factors. First, there was the inherent suspicion of any moves which appeared to be attempts to meddle with the existing loose and ill-defined ties between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies. Secondly, British trade with the Australian Colonies was not seriously diminishing. A belief that closer trade relations with Great Britain and with other parts of the Empire were desirable did not necessarily mean that an imperial zollverein was needed to foster inter-imperial trade.

Reluctance to see any interference with the existing imperial ties arose in part from a more general acceptance of the mutual benefits arising from the links between the Australian Colonies and Great Britain. Early in 1896 there was a sudden realisation that the Empire might one day be in danger from foreign Powers. The Australian Colonies' declaration of solidarity with Great Britain was a swift response to the Kaiser's telegram to President Kruger in January, 1896. The rights and wrongs of Rhodes' and Jameson's actions were lost in an appreciation of the danger to the Empire and to the British people from a combi-

I e.g. S.M.H., editorial, 4 Nov., 1895. Chamberlain's despatch of 26 Nov., 1895, aroused some suspicions that it might be a prelude to moves for economic changes or for alterations in fiscal policy, or that attempts might be made to diminish the growing foreign imports which had become necessary in return for exports of colonial wool. Samuel to Reid, 5 Dec., 1895, N.S.W. Treas. Papers, Agent-General 96/442. Also editorials in the S.M.H., 10 Dec., 1895, and Brisbane Courier, 13 Dec., 1895.

2 The initiative for a joint message to the Imperial Government expressing colonial loyalty and support came from Kingston. Telegram to Reid and to the other Australian Premiers, 11 Jan., 1896, N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 96/382, and the subsequent correspondence between the Premiers; also the text of Reid's telegram to Salisbury, 12 Jan. and Salisbury's reply of 13 Jan., 1896.
ation of hostile Powers. Proof was thus given of the importance of sentiment as an element in the solidarity of the various parts of the British Empire. It was significant that Chamberlain's outline of an imperial zollverein followed shortly after this expression of imperial unity.

Loyalty to the Crown and to the British connection was expressed more frequently and openly in the Australian Colonies in 1897 than in 1887. With the growth of the Australian federal idea, much of the belief in separation as the destiny of Australia had vanished. This did not mean, however, that no-one thought that separation might not still be the ultimate result. There was an appreciation, neither clearly apprehended nor expressed, that Australian federation might be a middle way between immediate independence and imperial federation. The term "alliance" came into currency in the Australian Colonies. Provided Australian autonomy was assured, the imperial tie might be retained.

I See speeches during the election campaign in March for the National Australasian Convention; also S.M.H., editorials 15 Jan., 1896, and 12 July, 1897.

2 At the Canada Culb banquet, 25 March, 1896.

3 e.g. statements by Reid at Wagga (S.M.H., 26 Feb., 1897) and at Goulburn (S.M.H., 26 Feb., 1897); by W.J.Lyne in Sydney (S.M.H., 2 March, 1897); the Age, editorial, 18 June, 1897.

The Bulletin claimed there was less active loyalty, less republicanism and much more indifference, 10 Oct., 1896; 13 Feb. and 19 June, 1897.


5 The term had no particular meaning, but it generally indicated a kind of equality with Great Britain, e.g. the Bulletin used the phrase "Alliance not Dependence". The Brisbane Courier used the term to describe the ties of race and sentiment, 7 April, 1894. The S.M.H. described the informal connection between Great Britain and the Australian Colonies as a "bond of natural and loyal alliance". 12 June, 1896.
It rested on a three-fold basis of British sentiment, loyalty to the monarchy and self-interest.

When the force of the financial crisis and economic depression of the early 1890s weakened and there was no longer a pressing need to concentrate on local problems, the material benefits in retaining the imperial link became more manifest. Despite an important increase in foreign trade, Britain remained the Australian Colonies' chief market, and they turned first and foremost to Britain in their efforts to boost their export trade. The growing strength of foreign Powers in the Pacific and the Far East led many who had wanted an independent Australia to realise that she could not stand alone and her isolation was no longer her best defence. This still left the problem of how Australian autonomy could be made compatible with reliance on Great Britain and especially on the Royal Navy.

When Chamberlain outlined an imperial zollverein in 1896, the integrity of his motives was recognised in the Australian Colonies. For the first time, the question had been brought "within the range of everyday politics". Few or none in the Australian Colonies denied the need for closer inter-imperial trade relations or the advantages that would accrue to all; but two major difficulties stood in the way of an imperial zollverein. First,

2 S.M.H., editorial 31 March, 1896.
the colonies would lose their major source of revenue. Secondly, an imperial zollverein based on inter-imperial free trade envis-aged Great Britain as the supplier of manufactured goods while the colonies concentrated on the production of foodstuffs, the development of their natural resources and the export of raw materials. This conflicted directly with a protectionist policy, such as that of Victoria, where the tariff had been imposed in the interest of building up colonial manufactures. By the time the Canadian Government offered a unilateral preference of 12½% to Great Britain in April, 1897, there was some open support in the Australian Colonies for offering tariff preferences to Great Britain; but there was no likelihood that any of the Australian Governments would immediately emulate the Canadian action.

On the whole, neither free traders nor protectionists saw any advantages to the Australian Colonies in inter-imperial free trade. The negative attitude of protectionist Victoria was only to be expected. George Turner, the Premier, would only support in

I e.g. in support of tariff preferences in principle see: the Age, editorial 27 April, 1897; E.W.O'Sullivan, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.87, Legis. Assembly, 28 April, 1897, p.87; Sir Henry Wrixon in the Vict. Legis. Council, 2 Dec., 1896, Vict. Parl. Deb., vol.84, p.3029.

2 e.g. S.M.H. (free trade), editorials 27 and 31 March, 1896; 12 June, 1896; and 24 Dec., 1896. (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, 21 Jan., 1897; Age (protectionist), 4 Dec., 1896, and 7 Jan., 1897; and Argus, 3 Dec., 1896.

One free trader who supported an imperial zollverein was Robert Reid. He had been present at the 1896 Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire. See the debate on Reid's motion in the Vict. Legis. Council, 25 Nov. and 2 Dec., 1896. Vict. Parl. Deb., vols. 83 and 84, pp.3632-4, 3928-32.

In N.S.W. a protectionist, T. Waddell, favoured an imperial zollverein because it would virtually give Australia a monopo-ly of United Kingdom markets for Australian products. N.S.W. Parl.Deb., vol.87, Legis. Assembly, 27 April, 1897, p.64.
principle the imposition of differential duties in Great Britain's
favour. Chamberlain's proposals found no favour either with G.H.
Reid, the free trade Premier of New South Wales. Reid claimed
that New South Wales already obtained as good terms of trade
with Great Britain as any that would be possible in an imperial
zollverein, and a tariff against foreign imports would lead to
international retaliation and a tariff war. The latter was an
argument which had wide currency in the Australian Colonies among
free traders and others as well as in Great Britain.

In February, 1897, the Premiers of the Australian Colonies
and New Zealand met at Hobart. Richard Seddon, the Premier of
New Zealand, had been insistent that they should examine Chamber-
 lain's tentative suggestion for an imperial zollverein and give
an official indication of their attitudes. Among the Australian
Premiers, Kingston, the Premier of South Australia, gave Seddon

1 e.g. an imposition of 30 or 35% on British goods against 40 or
45% on foreign goods. Interview with Turner published in The
Times, I3 June, I896.
2 Interview with Reid published in the S.M.H., 31 March, I896.
3 e.g. editorials in (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, 22 Jan.,I897;
Brisbane Courier, 29 June and 8 Nov.,I897; P.M.Glynn in the
4 The Premiers' Conference opened on 2 February. Those present
were G.H.Reid (N.S.W.), G.Turner (Victoria), Sir Hugh Nelson
(Queensland), C.C.Kingston (S.Australia), Sir Edward Braddon
(Tasmania), and Sir John Forrest (W.Australia). R.J. Seddon (New
Zealand) was making his first appearance at such a gathering.
5 Seddon had at first invited the Premiers to attend a conference
in New Zealand during the I896-7 parliamentary recess.
Seddon to the Australian Premiers, I4 Dec.,I896, and other tele-
grams of Dec.,I896, filed in vol.73 of the Seddon Papers (Mis-
cellaneous Papers used at the Colonial Conference,1897, and at
the Premiers' Conference, Hobart, I897), National Archives,
New Zealand.
Also Seddon to Reid, telegram, I4 Dec.,I896, and subsequent
correspondence, N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices
96/14269 (Archives of N.S.W.).
most support in arranging the conference. Reid was unfavourable, and Nelson, the Premier of Queensland, showed little interest.

By the time the conference met, so many other subjects were to be discussed that Seddon became apprehensive lest intercolonial reciprocity and Chamberlain's proposed imperial *zollverein* might be overlooked or excluded. New Zealand was less advanced in manufacturing than the eastern Australian Colonies and was concentrating on producing and exporting primary products. For this reason she was closer to the position necessary for an imperial *zollverein* to be successful. Seddon was more favourable towards the idea of an imperial *zollverein* and more optimistic of the benefits that would result from it than any of the Australian Premiers. He wanted the Imperial Government to set up a Royal Commission to inquire into the causes of the increase in foreign trade with the colonies and then summon an Imperial Conference.

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1 This was partly because of the unsuccessful South Australia-New Zealand reciprocity agreement of 1896. Seddon also wanted the Premiers to discuss intercolonial reciprocity.

2 Reid to Seddon, 23 Dec., 1896, and Nelson to Seddon, 16 Dec., 1896, vol. 73, Seddon Papers; interview with Reid published in S.M.H., 16 Feb., 1897; and comments on Nelson's indifference in the *Age*, 4 Feb., 1897.

3 Among other topics suggested for discussion were the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty, the Auxiliary Naval Squadron Agreement, and the use of coloured crews in the Australian coastal trade.

See the correspondence in vol. 73 of the Seddon Papers; also Turner to Reid, 12 Jan., 1897, listing the subjects he and Seddon thought the conference should discuss. N.S.W. Treas. Papers in-letters Public Offices 97/418 (Archives of N.S.W.).

4 See the two drafts of resolutions on an imperial customs union in vol. 73 of the Seddon papers. Seddon probably submitted these drafts to the Premiers. The ideas in the longer of the two drafts closely resemble the arguments and suggestions he put to the 1897 Colonial Conference.
to deliberate on a scheme for commercial union.

The Premiers seem to have expressed widely differing views at the conference; but finally they adopted a resolution which mainly embodied Turner's and Kingston's ideas, on the one side, and Seddon's, on the other: That this Conference favours closer commercial relations between the mother country and the Australasian Colonies on a basis of mutual advantage. The Conference further desires to state its opinion that full inquiry into the subject, whether by a commission of experts or otherwise, should be instituted, and that any definite proposals subsequently made should receive the fullest consideration from the Australasian Governments. The hint that "definite" proposals were lacking was in keeping both with the caution with which the Australian Governments had viewed Chamberlain's suggestion for inter-imperial free trade and a suspicion that it was deliberately vague. Having come out in favour of "mutual advantages", it seem-

I Draft of resolution in vol. 73 of the Seddon Papers.
The germ of the last idea is probably to be found in a suggestion by J. Lowles of the United Empire Trade League, who had recently been in Australia and New Zealand on behalf of the League, as well as in the resolution of the 1896 Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire. Lowles to Seddon, 11 Dec., 1896, Seddon Papers vol. 73; and Official Report of the Congress, p. 43.

2 According to a report in the Age, 4 Feb., 1897.

3 This interpretation is based on the similarity between the two parts of the resolution and the arguments used by Turner, Kingston and Seddon respectively at the 1897 Colonial Conference.


5 e.g. S.M.H., editorial 5 Feb., 1897.
ed to follow that any "definite proposals" subsequently considered by them would have to be based on tariff preferences.

Chamberlain's invitation to the Premiers to attend the Queen's Jubilee and to confer informally with him reached them while they were in Hobart. They did not respond with much enthusiasm. The Australian federation movement had reached a crucial point and the elections for the National Convention were near. Reid, Turner and Kingston hesitated to put attendance at the Jubilee celebrations before their hopes of reaching agreement on Australian federation during 1897.

The cabled form of the invitation was also partly responsible for the Premiers' hesitancy. They correctly understood that the main purpose of their visit to London would be to attend the Jubilee celebrations. Neither Salisbury nor Chamberlain intended to hold a full scale or a formal colonial conference because there did not appear to be any practical purpose it could serve. In a speech at Birmingham at the end of January,

Chamberlain to Buxton, telegram, 26 Jan., 1897, S.Aust. Govt. House Papers. This cable summarised the full despatch dated 28 Jan., 1897. The reference to the conference was summarised in these terms: "Should the invitation be accepted the presence of the Premiers would afford a valuable opportunity for informal discussion of many questions of greatest Imperial interest".

2 Reid attempted to gain the Premiers' support against their going to London; or, alternatively, that one representative should be appointed to represent the colonies jointly. Statement by Reid in N.S.W. Legis. Assembly, 27 April, 1897, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 87, p. 50.

3 J.L. Garvin, op.cit., p. 185. For this reason, the colonial press supported the Premiers' doubts about going to London. e.g. Age, 8 and 9 Feb., 1897; S.M.H., 2 and 9 Feb., 1897; (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, 16 Feb., 1897; Bulletin, 20 March, 1897. The S.Australian Register was an exception.

4 Letter from Devonshire to Chamberlain, 18 Jan., 1897, quoted in
Chamberlain threw some light on the scope of the "informal discussion of many questions of greatest Imperial interest". Not before the beginning of March did the Australian Premiers realise the importance of having an opportunity to discuss with Chamberlain not only commercial union, colonial defence and the political representation of the colonies in an Imperial Council but also the restrictive legislation already adopted in some of the colonies against Asiatic and coloured immigrants. Although Chamberlain continued to stress the informal nature of the conference, the Premiers themselves and the majority in the colonial Parliaments, supported by the press, came to realise the advantages offered by the opportunity to confer with Chamberlain.

The Premiers of New South Wales and South Australia were the last to decide to go to London. Reid waited until he was sure that his absence from the colony had public and parliamen-


1 Chamberlain's speech to the Birmingham Jewellers' and Goldsmiths' Association, 30 Jan.,1897, reported in _The Times_, 1 Feb.,1897.

2 Chamberlain's despatch of 28 Jan.,1897, was received in the colonies at the beginning of March. N.S.W. Govt. House papers. Note that the term "conference" was not used in either the despatch or the cable.

3 In replies to J.F.Hogan in the H. of Commons on 29 March and 29 April, Chamberlain stressed the informal nature of the conference.

Changes in colonial attitudes were shown in the debate on the Address in Reply in the N.S.W. Legis. Assembly, 27 and 28 April, 1897, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 87, p.32ff. and p.78ff; and in editorials in the _S.M.H._, 10,15 and 13 March, 1897; (Sydney) _Daily Telegraph_, 17 and 18 March, 1897. The _Bulletin_ remained a very vocal opponent, e.g. 27 Match, 10 and 24 April, 1897.

4 Reid's Cabinet minute of 18 March, 1897, published in the
I tary support. In addition, the opposition of the Labour Party, on whose political support Reid's Government depended, was overcome by his determination to use the opportunity of conferring with Chamberlain to urge that assent be given to the Coloured Races Restriction bill. The other major difficulty in the way of their going to London was overcome when the National Convention was arranged to take place before the Premiers left the colonies.

The Australian Colonial Governments, the Parliaments and the press expected no startling new departures or important results from the conferences with Chamberlain in 1897. The Premiers and the contingents of colonial troops had gone to take part in an expression of loyalty to the Queen and in a demonstration of the belief in imperial unity and of the power of the British Empire. In comparison with 1887, there was little expression in the Parliaments and in the press of fears that the Premiers would be carried away by imperial fervour and sacrifice colonial

S.M.H., 18 March, 1897.
In Kingston's case there was a personal difficulty, and he did not accept the Imperial Government's invitation until 3 April.
Buxton to Chamberlain, Confidential, 16 Feb., 1897, C.0.13/152; and minute on Chamberlain's despatch of 28 Jan., 1897, in the S.Aust. Govt. House Papers.

1 The Citizen's Banquet to Reid on 3 May, on the eve of his departure for England, was understood in the colony to be a symbol of public endorsement of his decision to go to London.
S.M.H., 4 May, 1897. Also the debate on the Address in Reply in the Legis. Assembly, 27 and 28 April, 1897, N.S.W. Parl. Deb. vol. 87, p. 32ff. and 78ff.

2 S.M.H., 15 and 19 March, 1897. Reid's "arrangement" with the Labour Party was used by some of his critics as a further indication of the insincerity of his earlier disinclination to go to London.

3 The Federal Enabling Bills could then be introduced into the Parliaments during the Premiers' absence.
interests to imperialist designs such as a *zollverein* or colonial commitments in imperial defence.

G.H. Reid and C.C. Kingston were the two commanding figures among the Australian Premiers in 1897. Not that this was apparent to the public or to the press in Great Britain. Richard Seddon, the Premier of New Zealand, appeared to tower above them on account of the image he created of ebullient imperialism and large sympathy for schemes to secure closer imperial unity. Reid and Kingston are not only the most interesting and complex of the Australian Premiers at the conference but also the most representative of Australian colonial politicians because of the contrast they provide. Reid, like Griffith in 1887, responded to the imperial fervour of the Jubilee; and yet he never lost sight of Australian interests and what it would be possible to get a colonial Parliament to accept. Kingston was more like Deakin in 1887. He showed how London led a colonial politician to defend Australian interests by outspoken criticisms of British policy and an appearance of anti-imperialism.

Reid had a strong sense of loyalty to the imperial connection; but in the 1880s and 1890s his imperialism, unlike Seddon's, was generally unassertive. He had long believed that the looser

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1 The qualities of George Turner, the Premier of Victoria, must not be overlooked. The strength of his cautious approach to controversial topics, and the tenacity with which he upheld an argument, stood out during the conference.

2 Both were lawyers. Kingston was Australian-born. Reid had come from Scotland as a child.
the ties were between Great Britain and her colonies the more
I
permanent they would be. In New South Wales, Reid appeared to be
more a supporter of Great Britain as the imperial power than he
was of Australian interests; and his critics did not fail to
charge this against him. In comparison with Dibbs in New south
Wales and Kingston in South Australia in the 1890s, Reid did not
seize every opportunity to proclaim the primacy of colonial in-
terests; but this in itself was deceptive. It did not mean that
he would hesitate to do so when the need seemed imperative to
him. In 1895, when Ripon seemed to be slighting New south Wales
by delaying so long in appointing a new Governor, Reid offered
to suggest an appointment from within Australia. In London in
1897, Reid outspokenly defended the Australian attitude on naval
defence when it appeared to him that the Imperial Government,
and particularly the Admiralty, was taking colonial loyalty and
assistance to imperial defence too much for granted.

The Colonial Conference of 1897 showed both facets of
Reid's attitude towards the imperial connection: his imperialist
sentiment and his defence of Australian interests through his
awareness of what would be politically possible in the colonies.

I See the articles by Reid in Sydney Quarterly Magazine, Oct.,
1883, p.50; Review of Reviews (Australasian edition), Nov.,
1894, p.288; and ibid., August, 1897, p.196.
2 e.g. Reid's speech on the appointment of Governors, N.S.W.
3 See Note B, Appointments to the Governorships of the Austra-
lian Colonies and New Zealand, 1889-1900.
4 e.g. speech at the Royal Colonial Institute, 2 July, 1897,
On a number of occasions, Reid appeared to weaken his own position through his ability to examine in public both sides of a question. Sometimes this ability led him into contradictions which seemed to rob his position of any strength. The two most obvious and possibly the most important occasions were his "Yes-No" attitude towards the Australian Federation Bill in the 1898 referendum and his qualified approval of the despatch of the New South Wales contingents to South Africa in 1899. Chamberlain, like many of Reid's colleagues and opponents in New South Wales, recognised that Reid was a clever politician; but Chamberlain also perceived in 1897 that Reid, despite his outspoken opposition to schemes for closer imperial relations, was "genuinely patriotic and ready to risk something for the idea".

Kingston's radicalism and Australian national feeling were complemented by a strong loyalty to the imperial connection. The latter was hidden from the Colonial Office and from some in the colonies when he was fighting for an extension of colonial autonomy and a recognition of colonial equality with Great Britain. In 1894-5 Kingston appeared to be weakening one of the strongest ties between Great Britain and South Australia. In his manoeuvres with Ripon and the Colonial Office over the appointment, salary and allowances of the Governor, Kingston's ultimate aim was to

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1 See Chapter 13.
2 Chamberlain to Devonshire, 4 July, 1897, quoted in J.L. Garvin, op.cit., p.193. See also the comment in the Pall Mall Gazette that Reid was "one of the most broad-minded and brightest of Australian statesmen". 22 June, 1897.
3 e.g. Kintore, the Governor of South Australia, 1889-1895, and Sir Samuel Way, the Chief Justice. Kintore described Kingston as "entirely disloyal". Kintore to Meade, private, 24 July, 1893, C.O.13/148.
secure a local appointment and so reduce the influence of Government House in colonial society. He also wanted the Agent-General to replace the Governor in importance as a channel of communication between the Imperial and the Colonial Government. Between 1897 and 1900 Kingston was the most likely among the Australian Premiers to agree that "commerce is inexorable, sentiment is free". Closer trade relations with Great Britain were desirable for both sentimental and business reasons; but Kingston argued that concessions must not be one-sided. Some reciprocity had to be offered by Great Britain. By 1897 he favoured a distinctive Australian contribution to naval defence in the form of a colonial naval reserve instead of the monetary contribution to an Auxiliary Squadron manned by British crews. Kingston's loyalty to the imperial connection and his belief in imperial solidarity were demonstrated in January, 1896, when he took the lead in urging his fellow Premiers to show Great Britain that she had the support of the colonies in meeting any threats from Germany to interfere in the Transvaal. In July and October, 1889, he supported the offer of colonial assistance to Great Britain in South Africa. Both actions were in keeping with his belief that the ties of "sentiment and blood" would lead Australians almost to a man to support Great Britain if any danger threatened her.

1 See Chapter 8, p.346ff.
3 In South Australia's case, the reciprocity Kingston sought was preferential treatment for South Australian wine.
4 Interview with Kingston, Pall Mall Gazette, 16 June, 1897.
III

Whatever advances Chamberlain might privately have hoped would result from the visit of the colonial Premiers, publicly he trod a very careful path between colonial caution and the enthusiastic hopes of imperial federationists in England. Salisbury was undoubtedly in full agreement with Chamberlain's cautious public approach to an informal colonial conference. As in 1896, when he sought to raise discussion by his proposal of free trade within the Empire, Chamberlain's purpose in 1897 in holding an informal conference with the colonial Premiers was to sound out colonial opinion before taking any positive steps.

In Great Britain three aspects of closer imperial relations were regarded as being ready for immediate discussion: political union, commercial union and colonial participation in imperial defence. These formed the subject matter of speeches at public functions in the Premiers' honour. The Duke of Devonshire, as President of the British Empire League, made no specific proposals. He used the opportunity to give the colonial Premiers an account of the formation of the League and of its aims. Chamberlain commended Devonshire for the tone of his speech because he felt that the important object for the time being was to impress

1 The most important of these functions were organised by the British Empire League, the Royal Colonial Institute, the Imperial Institute, the Chambers of Commerce and the United Empire Trade League.
2 At Liverpool, 12 June, 1897, reported in The Times, 14 June, 1897. Apart from understanding only too well that precipitate proposals had been the undoing of the Imperial Federation League, Devonshire was a member of the Imperial Government and President of the Defence Committee of the Cabinet. He could not associate the Imperial Government too closely with the aims of the British Empire League.
on the colonies the great privilege of being part of the British Empire. Both then and later, the Premiers showed that they saw their visit to London as an opportunity for the colonies to ask and receive further favours from Great Britain. They did not intend to agree that the colonies should undertake additional responsibilities. The reverse side of the Premiers’ attitude was a recognition in Great Britain that the mother country was showing increasing willingness to make concessions to the colonies in order to strengthen the imperial relationship.

Before the conference met, there was one other significant indication of the direction the discussions were likely to take. In any discussion on commercial relations, the recent Canadian preference of 12½% to Great Britain and demands for the denunciation of the Belgian and German treaties were bound to loom large. Discussion would almost inevitably revert to the 1894 Ottawa resolution in favour of imperial preference (and possibly reciprocity) rather than proceed to examine Chamberlain’s proposal for an imperial Zollverein.

1 Chamberlain to Devonshire, 4 July, 1897, quoted in J.L. Garvin, op.cit., p.193.
2 e.g. Seddon suggested that British subsidies should be given for the carriage of produce from New Zealand; and Nelson wanted the Queensland sugar industry to be encouraged by restrictions being placed on foreign sugar in Great Britain. Seddon at the Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.III, p.25; Nelson at Liverpool, 12 June, 1897, reported in The Times, 14 June, 1897.
3 e.g. The Times, editorial 10 June, 1897.
4 e.g. Turner at the British Empire League, Liverpool, 12 June, 1897, reported in The Times, 14 June, 1897. In Victoria, Turner and the Age always discussed the question on this ground, e.g. Age, 27 April, 15 June and 14 July, 1897.
Chamberlain's opening address to the conference gave a clear indication of the attitude he intended to pursue: to listen to colonial views rather than to make statements on imperial policy. This would be in keeping with the informal nature of the proceedings. In this way, the conference to some extent marked a departure from the 1887 gathering in a direction more acceptable to the colonial Premiers. It did not show any advance towards being a conference between heads of equal governments; but the Premiers were able, by virtue of their office, to declare "both what principles they hold and what policies they intend to urge". Chamberlain guided the course of the discussions in so far as he suggested the conference might discuss the future relations of Great Britain and the colonies in the related fields of political relations, defence and commercial relations.

A significant difference in the emphasis on each of these aspects in Great Britain and the colonies immediately showed it—

The discussions at the Third Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the Empire in June, 1896, had changed course from considering Chamberlain's proposal to advocating or opposing preferential trade.


At Chamberlain's suggestion, the proceedings were confidential. The opening session of the conference, unlike that in 1887, was private, and Salisbury did not address the gathering. Later Chamberlain suggested that his opening address and Goschen's speech on 8 July, as well as the resolutions adopted by the conference, should be published. G.B.and I. Parl. Paper, lix (1897), C.8596.

2 There would then be no grounds for a critic to assert, as Jebb did about the 1887 conference, that the colonial representatives were summoned to London to hear British policy expounded and then to act on it. R.Jebb, The Imperial Conference (London,
self. Adopting Turner's and Laurier's suggestion, the Premiers ignored the first place Chamberlain had given to political relations and preferred to give their attention to commercial relations. Chamberlain admitted that he would welcome a movement which would add material and personal interests to reinforce the sentimental link of Empire. He himself was aware of the difficulties arising from the different fiscal systems of the colonies, and he drew the Premiers' attention to some of the difficulties involved on Great Britain's side. Unless the Canadian Government was willing to accept that the preference of $12\%$ must be extended to Belgium and Germany, and thus by most-favoured-nation agreements to many other countries besides, the next step must be to abrogate the Belgian and German treaties. When the proportion of Great Britain's foreign trade to her colonial trade remained fairly stable at 75% and 25% respectively, the danger of retaliation by foreign countries, especially Germany, could not


2 The $12\%$ preference was to be increased to 25% in 1898. In an attempt to overcome the stipulations of the Belgian and German treaties, the resolution adopted by the Canadian Parliament did not mention Great Britain by name. If the German Government insisted on the letter of the treaty, or if any foreign country offered Canada such terms as would bring the Canadian preference into operation, the most-favoured-nation clauses would then apply. Ibid., p.7.
be ignored. Unlike Ripon, Chamberlain did not refuse to consider
denouncing the two treaties. Instead, he stated that the Imperial
Government would "earnestly consider such a recommendation from
the colonies" if they were unanimously in favour of such an action.
From the colonies' point of view, this marked a promising change
of attitude.

George Turner, the Victorian Premier, at one and the same
time disliking the onus being placed on the colonies of forming
a scheme for closer imperial relations and ignoring Chamberlain's
proposition for inter-imperial free trade, straightway tried to
turn the conference in the direction of discussing preferential
trade, the only basis for closer inter-imperial commercial rela-
tions he favoured. Despite some pulling back by Reid, the confer-
ence followed the leads set by Turner to discuss preferential
trade and by Laurier to request the termination of the Belgian
and German treaties.

I This fear was increased by anxiety that Germany was replacing
Britain in many important markets. The "Made in Germany" scare
was at its height. Despite these fears for the future, the
Jubilee year itself was one of great prosperity. This had a
marked effect on the spirit of optimism and confidence shown in
the celebrations.

3 Ibid., p.12.
4 See (a) Reid's suggestion at the opening session that the pre-
miers should try to iron out some of the differences of opinion
among themselves before the discussions were resumed in the
conference. Ibid., p.12. And (b) his qualified support of the
request from the conference for the denunciation of the two
treaties because he did not want to put pressure on the Imperial
Government. Ibid., pp.21,34. As a free trade colony, the two
treaties had little effect on New South Wales.
The resolution requesting the termination of the two treaties
was finally agreed to unanimously. Ibid., p.36.
Chamberlain did not press the conference to discuss his suggestion for a free trade zollverein. By asking whether any of the other colonies would be prepared to grant a preference to Great Britain, if the two treaties were denounced, he showed his acceptance of the way in which the premiers had shifted the discussion from imperial free trade to preferential trade. He recognised that this was the only approach to closer trade relations the Premiers were willing to discuss.

Australian attitudes were markedly clearer in 1897 than in 1894 in showing what would be acceptable in the colonies; but there was no certainty that the Canadian precedent of offering a unilateral preference to Great Britain, by a remission of existing duties, would at some future time be followed. Turner was favourable in principle to the offer of preferential tariff rates to Great Britain; but this would have to be done by raising duties against foreign countries and not by a remission of existing duties in Great Britain's favour. Perhaps bearing in mind those in the colonies who saw the imperial connection mainly in terms of the concrete benefits it brought to the colonies, Turner wanted to see what the colonies could expect to gain in

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I Commercial relations were discussed by the conference at the business sessions on 28 June, 1 and 8 July. The discussions at the conference followed the trend already set by several of the Premiers in speeches at public functions, e.g. at the United Empire Trade League on 11 June and at the British Empire League on 12 June.

2 Proc. C.O.Confid. Print, Misc.No.III, pp.27,34. In principle Seddon also favoured the offer of a preference to Great Britain. The Canadian attitude had been made plain before the conference. Laurier, therefore, only urged the Premiers to follow Canada's example and grant a preference to Great Britain on the grounds of sentiment and its world-wide moral effect.

ibid., pp.27-8.
return. To a colonial politician this was a pertinent question, and the more so considering the unprepared rather than the unfavourable state of public support likely in the Australian Colonies for any proposal to offer tariff preferences to Great Britain. Turner's "profit and loss" approach drew from Chamberlain one of the few sharp retorts he made during the whole proceedings: "You are perfectly justified in treating all relations between the colonies and this country on that footing, but all I say is that if we treated our relations with you on the same footing there would be a very marked change tomorrow".

Kingston spoke more plainly than Turner in insisting that the colonies would expect some reciprocity from Great Britain. With South Australia's interests in mind, he suggested that this might well take the form of lower duties on wines and spirits. Kingston, like Turner, would have welcomed a "precise Imperial suggestion as to the improvement of trade relations between England and her colonies". The only way in which he would look at an imperial zollverein was that Great Britain should impose a tariff against the outside world.

Reid's position as the Premier of a free trade colony enabled him to stand somewhat apart from this insistence on colonial interests and expected advantages. Outside the conference, he

1 ibid., pp.80-1.
2 ibid., p.29.
3 ibid., p.154.
4 ibid.
5 As a free trade colony New South Wales would benefit from the Canadian preference.
admitted that if New South Wales had been protectionist he would have
favoured preferential trade. Reid pointed out to the conference
how much Great Britain already did for the colonies in that her markets were open to them whereas foreign markets were protected. He could appreciate the wider aspects of the imperial question: "You must survey the whole relations between us and the British Empire... there are some slight ways in which we can, without injuring our people at all, show some recognition of the enormous benefits which we derive from our connection with the British Empire". In his view, the imperial question was not entirely a matter of trade; but he denied that new and closer bonds of empire were needed.

The Premiers themselves suggested two possible ways of resolving their own differences and satisfying Chamberlain's wish that the results of the conference might take the form of resolutions. Reid suggested that the Premiers should agree to discuss with their colleagues the policy of granting preferences to Great Britain. This procedure would obviate their being rushed into any commitments while they were in London. It would also be a practical means of finding one or more small ways of making a return gesture for the benefits they themselves received from their connection with Great Britain. Turner and Seddon, in order

I Interview with Reid published in the Pall Mall Gazette, 22 June, 1897.
3 Ibid., p.32.
5 Ibid., pp.80-1.
to avoid pledging the colonies, suggested recommending the ap-
pointment of a commission of inquiry. As in the resolution of
the Premiers' Conference at Hobart, this meant an inquiry into
the state of British and colonial trade, foreign competition
and freight rates. Chamberlain had thought that the Hobart reso-
lution referred to a commission of inquiry into the methods of
implementing closer trade relations between the mother country
and the colonies. After the publication of the information gath-
ered in response to Chamberlain's inquiry of November, 1895, a
suggestion for another similar inquiry was nothing more than a
"red-herring" thrown out as a means of putting off reaching any
conclusions on a subject which the Australian and New Zealand
Premiers, for differing reasons, obviously thought was not yet
ripe for decision. Kingston alone seemed favourable to an inquiry
which would lead"to the formulation of suggestions for the foster-
ing of mutually advantageous trade relations between England and
her colonies..." In the end, Reid's suggestion was adopted after
Kingston's scruples had been overcome that no reference had been
made to preferential treatment of colonial products in Great Bri-
tain.

Chamberlain realised that incidentally the Premiers had
discussed two definite suggestions for closer imperial trade

1 ibid., pp.77ff. and I49ff.
2 ibid., p.7.
3 ibid., p.152.
4 ibid., pp.84-9.
relations. A colonial preference to the mother country had been approved to a certain extent, and free trade within the Empire had been rejected. His own suggestion for a free trade zollverein had been almost completely ignored; but during the course of the long discussions he put his proposition into a more specific form than previously. Although there would be free trade within the Empire, the colonies could impose tariffs against foreign countries. In return for the removal of colonial tariffs on British goods, "the mother country should be invited to put some duty upon goods to be specified, that is to say, those which form the chief products of the colonies". Chamberlain believed that Great Britain would consider such a proposal "in a favourable spirit". The Premiers allowed the significance of this part of Chamberlain's remarks to pass by unnoticed. This was because his proposal placed on the colonies the onus of taking the first steps by lifting their tariffs on British goods and thereby exposing colonial industries to unrestricted competition. The Resolution adopted by the conference still left the first moves to the colonies; but, if it was ever translated into action, it would mean the introduction of a differential tariff by lowering existing duties in Great Britain's favour or increasing them against foreign countries.

1 ibid., p.154.
2 ibid., p.34. During a later session of the conference, Chamberlain reiterated that, although careful inquiry would be necessary, he would favour the imposition of some duties on foreign imports into Great Britain in return for the free entry of British goods into the colonies.
Closer political relations formed one of the main themes in Chamberlain's opening address to the conference. He described the political relations of the Empire as "the greatest, the most important, and at the same time the most difficult of all subjects". He himself felt that at the present time "some better machinery of consultation" between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies was needed. He thought that this might take the form of "a great Council of the Empire to which the colonies would send representative plenipotentiaries". Although an advisory body at first, the council might ultimately develop into a Federal Council. Chamberlain looked forward to the time when the colonies "would desire to substitute for the slight relationship which at present exists a true partnership". They would then share in the management and control of the Empire. The extent of the partnership was left undefined by Chamberlain: whether it was to be a partnership between equals or between a senior and several junior partners. With this partnership would come obligations and responsibility, including that of contributing towards the expense of common objects. Chamberlain realised that any progress towards these ends depended on colonial feeling; and he admitted that the federation of the Australian Colonies and of the South African Colonies must precede the establishment of an Imperial Council. However, he wanted to discover "whether

1 ibid., p.2.
2 ibid., p.3.
3 ibid.
4 ibid., p.100; also speeches at the Natal Railway banquet, 6 Nov., 1895, reported in The Times, 7 Nov., 1895, and at the Cordwainers' banquet, 8 July, 1897, reported in The Times, 9 July, 1897.
up to the present time there is such a genuine popular demand for closer union as would justify us in considering practical propositions...."

Despite these straightforward remarks, Chamberlain seemed to regard broaching the subject of political relations as a delicate matter. This was probably on account of the hopes that were fastened on the conference by those who were enthusiastic for some form of closer relations. He evidently felt that he had to attempt to obtain an opinion from the colonial Premiers if only to quieten the agitation for the time being. In 1897, Chamberlain's suggestion for an Imperial Council was no more than a feeler; but a distinct line of development in his own thought can be traced from these remarks in 1897 to his attitude over Clause 74 of the Commonwealth of Australia Bill in 1900, his approaches to the Governors of the self-governing colonies at the same time with regard to colonial opinion on the formation of an Imperial Council and his more careful framing of a similar proposal at the 1902 Colonial Conference.

The Premiers reluctantly, and only at Chamberlain's insistence, gave some attention to the political relations of the Empire. By that time, the possibility of any practical step forward had become even more remote. A decision on political relations was most unlikely after the indecisive conclusions of the

2 Ibid., pp.II2-3.  
3 See Chapters 13 and 14.
Discussions on commercial relations - the subject which one of
the Australian Premiers had seen as being the "more practicable
and easier of solution".

Several of the Premiers admitted that at some future time
the political relations between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies might have to grow stronger or weaker. Reid, and
to a lesser extent Kingston, were the most outspoken against any immediate change. In the conference and at public functions,
Reid contended that it was impossible to prove that existing relations were unsatisfactory. On the contrary, they had "automatically produced magnificent results". They would face their greatest test when England was again engaged in war: "If engaged in a defensive war you would find that sentiment would determine everything". In other words, Reid thought that it would be a question of whether or not the Empire was in danger. In October, 1899, his procrastination in supporting the offer of a New South Wales contingent to serve in South Africa was due to his doubts.

1 At the session of July 5. Procs., C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.III, pp. 99-II8. The remark was Turner's, ibid., p.I2.
2 Ibid., p.I00-1.
3 Ibid. Reid was even more outspoken outside the conference to those irresponsible bodies in favour of new and more formal political ties, e.g. at the Chamber of Commerce banquet, 9 July, 1897, reported in The Times, 10 July, 1897.
4 Procs., C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.III, p.I00. Also at dinner to Reid, 12 July, 1897, reported in the S.M.H., 14 July, 1897. This argument was in line with Reid's earlier views, e.g. in Sydney Quarterly Magazine, Oct.,1883, p.51; and Review of Reviews (Australasian edition), Nov.,1894, pp.287-9.
on this very point: whether it was indeed a defensive war in which Great Britain was engaged. In opposing the setting up of an Imperial Council, Reid also contended that colonial autonomy would be restricted and the balance of political power would be shifted from the colonies to London. The colonies would have to undertake tremendous financial burdens in return for "the mere shadow of control". The imperial unity in which Reid sincerely believed was not based on an Imperial Council or on an Imperial Parliament, but on sentiment, ties of affection, of mutual advantage and mutual esteem.

Kingston, in supporting Reid's attitude, warned that no demand for closer political relations had been voiced in the Australian Colonies. He was certain "that any attempt at anything of the sort would be productive of results absolutely opposed to what are desired". With some of the difficulties of Australian federation in mind, Kingston pin-pointed one of the major problems in creating an imperial federation. He asked if Chamberlain was prepared for a bi-cameral Parliament with equal representation in one House of all member States irrespective of population.

I *ibid.*, p. 106. This was not only a colonial belief. It was shared by more responsible opinion in Great Britain, e.g. The Times, 28 June, 1897.
2 Reid at the Town Hall reception, Sydney, 1 Sept., 1897, reported in the *S.M.H.*, 2 Sept., 1897.
To the conference Reid remarked in lighter vein, but with much truth considering the state of public opinion in the colonies, "We are ready to manage the Empire for you at any time, so long as you pay the piper". *Procs.*, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.III, p. 107.
3 *ibid.*. pp.106,110. Also at a banquet to Reid, Sydney, 3 May, 1897, reported in the *S.M.H.*, 4 May, 1897.
Chamberlain emphatically denied the possibility. Despite his remarks about a "true partnership" in his opening address, Chamberlain evidently would not accept the colonies as equal partners with Great Britain in a political federation in which the colonies could outvote the mother country on matters of policy. Imperial federationists in Great Britain had always been inclined to evade the question of "equality" or to treat it with great diffidence. There was a great difference between using the terms "equals" or "partnership", as Chamberlain had done, with nothing more than a sentiment of Empire in mind and putting equality into practice without either the loss of Great Britain's overall power or some curtailment of colonial autonomy. Statesmen and writers in the colonies were much more aware of this problem, and they continued to criticise imperial federationists for not realising that the term itself was inapplicable to the relations of the mother country and the colonies.

Although an Imperial Council might be a way of solving the problem of consultation between the mother country and the colonies, there were two difficulties to overcome. How could the colonial representatives keep in close touch with colonial

1 ibid., p.107. Also with a federal upper House in mind, Reid remarked that this would mean equal representation in the House of Lords. ibid., p.108.

2 e.g. Age, 18 June, 1897: "The word seems to indicate something like equality of power and status on the part of the federating community, and the British Empire presents no such equality".

A similar contention had always been one of Parkes' main arguments against all schemes of imperial federation. e.g. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 29 April, 1890, vol.44, p.57.
opinion? How far could the colonies honour the decisions made by their representatives without endangering their autonomy? A council formed by the Agents-General seemed one way of surmounting these difficulties; but Kingston and Reid had other views about the role of the Agents-General. Reid thought that through the existing position of the Agents-General, and through the Governors, the Australian Colonies had greater influence in imperial affairs than their position otherwise warranted. Kingston wanted greater use to be made of the Agents-General in presenting the views of the Colonial Governments. He suggested that they should be treated as the equals of the Governors, and, indeed, be preferred to them as a channel of communication between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments. An alternative means of consultation was the holding of periodic conferences on trade, finance, defence and foreign affairs. Chamberlain gave some support to this in view of the Premiers' opposition to an Imperial Council. Kingston carried the idea of consultation a stage further by suggesting that Chamberlain should visit the Austra-

2 Ibid., p. 101-3.
3 Ibid. None of the other Premiers supported Kingston in this contention. Kingston particularly had in mind that the appointment of a new Governor should be notified through the Agent-General.
4 Ibid., p. 104. Periodic conferences were suggested by Seddon. He saw the 1897 Colonial Conference as being in the nature of a "consultative Council".
5 Ibid., pp. 109, 115. Chamberlain seemed to be in agreement with the six Premiers who favoured the use of the term "periodical", rather than with the five who favoured "triennial" conferences.
Italian Colonies. Although in 1897 Chamberlain thought that such a visit would be impossible as long as he remained in office, he created a precedent in 1902-3 when he visited South Africa to see something of the problems of reconstruction at first hand, to confer with Milner and the Colonial Governments and to urge the creation of a wide imperial sentiment to replace the conflict of Boer and Briton.

The 1897 Colonial Conference went no nearer to imposing new political ties than to agree that the existing relations between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies were satisfactory "under the condition of things now prevailing"; that geographically united colonies should be federated; and that periodical conferences should be held. Although Chamberlain was disappointed with the meagre results of the conference, he readily admitted that it would be dishonest to give the impression that imperial federation could practically be accomplished. He

I ibid., p.III. Kingston returned to the matter again towards the end of 1897, and suggested to Reid that he should take the lead in sending an invitation. This was a few days before Kingston gave an account of the conference to the South Australian House of Assembly. Reid declined to act because a refusal was inevitable "unless some great Imperial object in view". Kingston to Reid, telegram, 15 Oct.,1897, and draft reply. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 97/10152 (Archives of N.S.W.).

2 Seddon and Braddon dissented from the first part of the resolution. C.O. Confid. Print, Misc. No.III, pp.I17-8. See ibid., p.I03-4 for Seddon's reasons, and p.I10 for Braddon's. Reid was doubtful about the wisdom of the resolution in case it should be misconstrued in the colonies. ibid., p.I12. On the question of the organisation of the Imperial Conferences, it is interesting to note that a definite vote was taken whether or not the exact period between the conferences should be laid down. ibid., p.I15-6. The later tradition of the Imperial Conferences was that only opinions were taken and not a majority by votes. See remarks by Earl Attlee, Listener, 22 Jan.,1959, p.I52.

saw that patience was still necessary; and, as he wrote to Devonshire, the great thing was "to get the points right. If we do this we shall go on parallel lines for the future. If we make any mistakes we shall get wider and wider apart till the separation is complete..."

Naval defence had remained a live issue in England and in the Australian Colonies since 1887. Neither imperial federationists in England nor the Australian colonists were satisfied with the Auxiliary Naval Squadron Agreement. The Admiralty and the Colonial Defence Committee, as well as those imperial federationists who interested themselves in defence questions, disliked the restrictions on the movement of the vessels and the great discrepancy between British and colonial expenditure on naval defence. At the same time, they appreciated that the principle was far more important than the actual contribution. Imperial federationists interpreted the sum of £126,000 paid annually by the Australian Colonies and New Zealand as a contribution to the navy in general. The Australian colonists saw it as a means of providing further defence for certain specific British and colonial interests, that is, for the defence of the floating trade in Aus-

1 Chamberlain to Devonshire, 4 July, 1897, quoted in J.L. Garvin, op.cit., p.193.
2 The ships of the auxiliary squadron were to be used within the limits of the Australian Station unless the Colonial Governments consented to their removal beyond the Station. Procs. of 1887 Colonial Conference, C.509I, p.508.
3 The issue was brought to wider public notice at the time of the Jubilee in 1897 when Cape Colony offered to provide the cost of a first-class battleship. This was later altered to an unconditional contribution of £30,000 p.a. to the Royal Navy.
lian waters. The auxiliary squadron had not been the means of providing a trained Australian naval reserve. It was manned as well as controlled by the Admiralty. In several colonies, the formation of a colonial naval reserve was favoured as an alternative; and Sir Hugh Nelson, the Premier of Queensland, thought that the Australian contribution would be put to better use in improving harbour and coast defences.

Suspicion about the Imperial Government's intentions concerning the Agreement had been aroused in the Australian Colonies by the Duke of Devonshire's speech to the British Empire League in December, 1896. Although the Admiralty had not attempted to seek the removal of the restrictions on the movements of the vessels of the auxiliary squadron, the Colonial Defence Committee favoured undivided control. It was unfortunate that the Committee's view was put to the Premiers at the Colonial Conference before the Admiralty made any official statement to them about the future of the 1887 Agreement. There was much plain speaking from the Australian Premiers before, Goschen, the First Lord of the Admiralty, addressed the Conference.

I A scheme by Capt. Cresswell, the South Australian Naval Commandant, for a colonial naval reserve was presented to the Colonial Conference by Kingston. Printed in C.O.Confid. Print, Misc No.III, pp.122-4.

The formation of a naval reserve was supported by the Age, e.g. editorials 3 May and 14 July, 1897; and by the Brisbane Courier, 28 Oct., 1895, and 30 June, 1897.


2 e.g. S.M.H., editorial, 3 Dec., 1896. Devonshire's speech of 3 Dec. was reported in The Times, 4 Dec., 1896.

3 Capt. L.A. Beaumont, Secretary of the Colonial Defence Committee,
Reid not only showed his grasp of the terms of the 1887 Agreement but also his awareness of the prevailing attitudes towards it in the Australian Colonies. He pointed out that the ships of the auxiliary squadron were regarded as the outer line of local defence independently of the naval defence of the Empire. He warned that if the stipulation restricting the use of the ships outside Australian waters without the agreement of the Colonial Governments was removed, there would be great difficulty in getting the Agreement renewed. The colonies were not prepared to share in the defence of the Empire as a whole or to commit themselves in peacetime. In an emergency they would be likely to cast those narrow views aside: "In committee of supply in Australia there is an intensely critical and local spirit at times... It does not perhaps fully reflect the opinion of the population, but it prevails. It is quite consistent that those very people, if war threatened, would be ready to vote any amount and go by the thousand to fight for the old country... but it is very difficult to get him [the Australian] to take up this partnership with the British Empire". Reid further contended that amicable relations between Great Britain and the colonies would undoubtedly be affected if at that time, when colonial finances were strained, increased contributions were proposed. Chamberlain privately appreciated


*ibid.*, p.140ff. At the session of the conference on 8 July.

1 *ibid.*, p.55.
3 *ibid.*, p.62.
4 *ibid.*
the difficulty of the Australian Premiers in that they were Premiers first and patriots second, and feared censure if they committed the colonies too far; but in the conference room he urged that a colonial contribution was "only a question of sentiment and the establishment of a principle and laying the foundation stone".

When Goschen, the First Lord of the Admiralty, addressed the Royal Colonial Institute on the role of the Royal Navy, Reid disabused him of any hope of either undivided control over the auxiliary squadron or an increased contribution. He claimed that the primary task of the colonies was to develop their own resources. Several days later, Goschen attended the last session of the conference and told the Premiers that the Admiralty was content to abide by the existing agreement with the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Goschen, like Chamberlain, said it was the principle and not the amount of the contribution that was important. The Admiralty defined the freedom it claimed as liberty to manage the ships to defend the Australian Station in the


2 On 2 July, 1897. Procs. R.C.I. (1896-7)vo1.28, p.255. Reid always claimed that his outspokenness was justified. He thought Goschen had been "rather nettled" at his remarks, and had assumed incorrectly that they were premeditated. G.H. Reid, My Reminiscences (London, 1917), p.149. Kingston approved of Reid's outspokenness, in Reuter interview reported in the S.M.H., 13 July, 1897. Reid's remarks also received favourable commendation in the Australian Colonies from the press and in the Parliaments.

3 Procs., C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.III, p.140. This argument had no effect in persuading Laurier that Canada should contribute towards her naval defence. Laurier upheld the old argument that the Canadian Pacific Railway had been built by
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best possible way. The Premiers did not see the full meaning of this statement. It was an oblique reference to the Admiralty doctrine that "the sea is one", and the Australian Colonies and New Zealand need not necessarily be best defended within the wide bounds of the Australian Station at all. When this doctrine was fully propounded to the Prime Ministers at the 1902 Colonial Conference, the Admiralty claimed the liberty to send all the ships beyond the Australian Station if necessary to join with other squadrons and deal a crushing blow on an enemy fleet. In 1897 the Admiralty did not press this issue. Instead Goschen smoothed the Premiers' susceptibilities, and Reid hastened to express his satisfaction with Goschen's statement. He assured Goschen that he would "strenuously move for the renewal of the treaty" as a small acknowledgement of the duty which the colonies owed to the Empire.

Kingston alone objected to a resolution that the Premiers accepted the Admiralty statement and favoured the continuance

Canada as a strategic work from which the whole Empire benefited. ibid., p.61.

ibid., p.142. The Australian Station extended about 1000 miles east and west of the Australian continent and New Zealand, and included New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, the New Hebrides and Samoa. This was a much wider interpretation of "Australian waters" than the Australian Colonies generally accepted. To them, the ships should be confined to the immediate waters around Australia and New Zealand. However, Reid was willing to recognise the validity of Chamberlain's argument that Australian interests were involved in the Pacific Islands and the colonies should, therefore, have no objections to the Admiralty's inclusion of their defence in the tasks of the auxiliary squadron. ibid., p.55ff.

ibid., p.141.
of the agreement. He had warned earlier that it could not be taken for granted that South Australia would agree to a renewal of the agreement; and he had urged that the colonial contribution should be utilised to train a colonial naval reserve. Although during the previous year Nelson had opposed the continuance of the agreement for the auxiliary squadron, he took little part in the discussions on naval defence and did not stand out from the resolution. The lack of support for the formation of a colonial naval reserve was probably due in part to a feeling that it was a matter which should be left for a federated Australia to decide. Following the first session of the Convention in April, hopes were still high of achieving federation in that year or in the following one. In addition, the existing naval agreement would not expire until 1901. Settlement of the major issues raised between the Admiralty and the Australian Colonies and New Zealand at the 1897 Colonial Conference was postponed until 1902.

I ibid., p.149. The resolution was moved by Seddon, who also favoured the replacement of the existing vessels in the auxiliary squadron by more powerful ones. He suggested that for this New Zealand would be prepared to pay a greater contribution. ibid., I45. Seddon gained no support from the other Premiers; but there was some discussion of such a proposal in the Australian Colonies. e.g. (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, editorial 30 June, 1897.


3 The 10 years of the 1887 Agreement ran from when the ships were commissioned in 1891.

4 In 1897 Chamberlain also raised another subject that would be resumed in 1902. This was the question of further colonial cooperation in military defence. The suggestion for the interchange of British and colonial military units was a part of his belief that the colonies would make common cause with Great Britain in time of war. ibid., p.6; and Circular Confidential
Among the other matters discussed at the 1897 Colonial Conference, alien immigration was the one which concerned the Australian Colonies most immediately. In 1896, following a resolution adopted by the Premiers' Conference in Sydney, New South Wales and South Australia had extended to other coloured races the restrictions imposed on Chinese immigration since 1888. Chamberlain felt that a question of great importance to the Empire generally had been raised. He decided to defer recommending the sanction or the disallowance of the bills until he had discussed the principles at stake with the Premiers of the Australian Colonies. The Imperial Government was not unsympathetic towards the colonies' desire to control the composition of their population. The attitude of the Colonial Office in 1888 and the sanctioning of colonial bills restricting Chinese immigration were sufficient proof of this. But the recent New South Wales and South Australian legislation departed from the tradition of the British Empire that no legal distinction should be made between British subjects on the grounds of race or colour. If

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1 Reference has already been made to the discussions at the conference on the Anglo-Japanese Treaty. Chamberlain broached the subject of alien immigration in his opening speech on 24 June. At Reid's request it was discussed by Chamberlain and the Australian Premiers at the last session of the conference on 8 July. Procs., C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.III, p.121.
2 Minute on Playford (Agent-General) to C.O., I April,1897, C.O. 13/I53. See also minutes on Hampden to Chamberlain, N.S.W. No.79, 3 Dec.,1896. C.O.201/619.
3 The tradition of equality before the law stemmed from the humanitarianism of the early nineteenth century. Legal equality irrespective of race or colour was laid down with regard to Cape Colony, British Guiana and Natal in the 1830s and 1840s.
the Imperial Government allowed such a distinction to be made, undesirable repercussions would be bound to arise in India and elsewhere.

Chamberlain claimed that the real intention behind the legislation in the Australian Colonies was to exclude men on the grounds of immorality or pauperism. He therefore favoured the method of restriction recently adopted in Natal. It provided an effective barrier against undesirable immigration without hurting the feelings of the Queen's coloured subjects. When the conference had been discussing preferential treatment within the Empire, including special privileges for British subjects, Chamberlain thought that colonial legislation against some of the Queen's subjects was inconsistent with that concept. He believed that the principle for which he was contending was "of very great importance in regard to the future administration of the Empire as a whole".

Reid put the case for colonial legislation against coloured immigrants. On this issue, even more so than on naval defence, the two facets of Reid's attitude towards the imperial connection

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1 This was a point Chamberlain emphasised in his opening address. Procfs., C.0.Confid. Print, Misc. No. III, pp. 9-10.
2 ibid., pp. 10, 137. The Act adopted in Natal in 1897 included a language test whereby an immigrant would be required to write a passage in English from dictation.
3 ibid., p. 134. This led Reid, Kingston and Forrest to declare that they had no intention of including Indians in their consideration of closer imperial unity. In this respect, the colonial Premiers were in line with the majority of imperial federationsists in England. Very few writers on closer imperial relations included any but white subjects in their schemes. Even Jebb did not visualise non-white peoples as equal partners in the imperial alliance.
4 ibid., p. 137.
were manifest. He forcefully defended the Australian interests involved and the policy adopted by the colonies. Then, having done this, he sought to meet as far as possible "the complex circumstances of the British Empire" without straining imperial relations or departing from the vital principles of the Australian standpoint.

Reid claimed that the issue at stake could not be veiled by questions of education, poverty and ignorance. It was nothing more or less than a white Australia. Before the discussion ended, he managed to extract a categorical statement from Chamberlain that the Imperial Government's objection was only with regard to British subjects. Reid did not think that the Natal provision would effectively restrict coloured immigration into Australia; but more than this he objected to the principle because "it would be beneath our intention, beneath our settled conviction altogether to evade the matter in this way". In view of all the difficulties facing the rulers of a multi-racial Empire, Reid was probably being unjust to Chamberlain when he said: "It would be a great disappointment to Australia if we found Her Majesty's Government as regards her coloured subjects less disposed to

I ibid., p.130.
2 ibid., p.138.
3 ibid., p.133. See also a comment in the S.M.H. 18 Nov., 1897, when Reid introduced a bill on the Natal principle. The S.M.H., in an editorial, condemned the bill's "evaniveness, crookedness of purpose, and general indirectness of character", and attributed these characteristics to the influence of the Colonial Office.
I meet our wishes than the Japanese Government."

With the exception of Nelson, the Queensland Premier, the others endorsed Reid's arguments. Yet the discussion had shown the justification for Reid's earlier fear that if he did not go to London to press the Australian viewpoint on Chamberlain the other Premiers, with the exception of Kingston, would be unlikely to speak strongly enough to overcome Chamberlain's objections. Chamberlain drew the Premiers' attention to their own lack of unanimity; and he pointed out that when he came to put their views before the Cabinet the pressure from a federated Australia would be greater than that "from different Colonies, and separately applied and applied in rather different directions". This observation marked the weak spot in the Australian front. Since March, 1896, Reid and Kingston had contended for united action against adherence to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty and for the adoption of uniform legislation against coloured immigration; but Nelson had acted unilaterally and agreed to Queensland's adherence to the treaty.

3 Reid, as reported in the Age, IO March, 1897.
5 See Chapter IO, p.444ff.
Neither Chamberlain, on the one side, nor Reid and Kingston, on the other, wanted to reach an impasse. The two Premiers avoided refusing altogether either to abandon the existing legislation or to introduce subsequent legislation on the Natal principle. As an alternative, they tried to seek an indication from Chamberlain that he would approve some other way of overcoming the difficulty without their adopting the Natal provision. Reid had a private discussion with Chamberlain after the conference closed. A compromise then seemed likely from Reid's assurance that "he would on his return consider whether some modifications could be introduced to meet the objections of Her Majesty's Government". Although Chamberlain had denied during the course of the conference that the Imperial Government was indisposed to meet Australian wishes, he had also made it plain that nothing short of the Natal provision was likely to be accepted.

The external interests of the Australian Colonies were most closely concerned with the islands of the Pacific. Prior to the conference, Chamberlain had suggested that they might take over the administration of the Solomon Islands Protectorate. The discussions which took place outside the main sessions of the conference failed to elicit any indication from those Premiers.

2 Chamberlain to Hampden, Secret, 31 August,1897. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. This despatch was based on a minute by Chamberlain concerning the main points of his interview with Reid. C.O.201/623.
3 Chamberlain to Hampden, N.S.W. No.30, 22 March,1897. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
who were present that the Australian Colonies had any desire to add the Solomon Islands to their responsibility for the administration of New Guinea. In some ways the issue concerning the New Hebrides at the conference was similar to that of the Solomons. It was basically concerned with whether or not the Australian Colonies were prepared to undertake responsibility for the cost of administering areas of significant interest to themselves but of little direct interest to Great Britain.

Since 1888 the Australian Colonies, and Victoria in particular, had continued to protest at French land acquisitions in the New Hebrides; but they had been equally concerned with the operation of the Anglo-French Naval Commission and the disabilities under which British settlers laboured because British restrictions on the sale of arms, ammunition and liquor to natives applied only to them. All British efforts, made at the insistence of the Australian Governments, towards the application of these restrictions to French settlers had been rebuffed by the French Government.

The discussion at the 1897 Colonial Conference arose from

1 Chamberlain to Hampden, N.S.W. No.97, 31 August,1897. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. The future of the administration of New Guinea was discussed at the 1898 Premiers' Conference; but no steps were taken then or later to assume responsibility for the Solomon Islands Protectorate.
2 The Pacific Islands were not discussed until the end of the last session of the conference. Turner, the representative of Victoria, the colony which had always been the most closely interested in the New Hebrides was not present. Procs., C.O. Confid. Print, Misc. No.III, pp.148-9,158-160.
a very recent French suggestion that Britain and France should negotiate a definite settlement of all matters connected with the New Hebrides. Chamberlain sought some guidance on the terms of settlement favoured by the Australian Colonies. In particular, he wanted to find out if they would provide for the cost of administering the British part should the islands be partitioned between Britain and France. Chamberlain gained no certain indication of the likely Australian reaction to partition. Despite the Anglo-French agreements of 1878 and 1888, they might still insist that all the islands in the New Hebrides group should be acquired by Great Britain. Chamberlain made no subsequent attempt to ascertain the Australian attitude, and the French did not press for a decision on the future of the islands.

IV

After the conference had closed, one question remained. What had it achieved? In Great Britain and in the Australian

3 Kingston, Nelson, Forrest and Seddon were still present when the New Hebrides were discussed. The trading interests of N.S.W. and the mission interests of Victoria were unrepresented. Nelson favoured the handing over of full control to the French because the Joint Naval Commission was unsatisfactory; and he did not think the islands were very valuable for their natural resources or for their strategic position. Federal Council of Australasia, 1897 Session, Official Record of Debates, pp.60-I.
4 The discussion at the conference closed with a remark from Chamberlain that he would discuss the Pacific Islands question with them again. C.O.Confidi. Print, Misc. No.III, p.I60.
Colonies its negative results seemed most immediately obvious. No progress had been made towards a political union or a commercial union of the Empire; and the colonies had not agreed to undertake any commitments in imperial defence.

The first positive achievement was the denunciation of the Belgian and German treaties. This move was welcomed in the Australian Colonies as a practical expression of the Imperial Government's desire to take colonial wishes into account in its dealings with foreign Powers; and as "a recognition of the equal rights and claims of the colonies for consideration in shaping the foreign, commercial and... political policy of the Empire". The denunciation of the treaties would not have any immediate effect in the Australian Colonies; and none of them was led to follow the Canadian example and offer a preference to Great Britain. Turner went so far as to suggest that a Premiers' Conference should be held to discuss the commercial relations of the Australian Colonies with Great Britain in the light of the denun-

1 Some of the most outspoken criticism of the negative results of the conference was made during a debate in the S. Australian House of Assembly when Kingston gave a report on the conference. S.Aust. Parl. Deb. (1897), 19 Oct., 1897, e.g. J. Downer, pp. 615-6; W. Copley, p. 618; W. O. Archibald, p. 622. The S. Australian Register's comment on Kingston's account of the conference was that he had carried out "a policy of 'nothing whatever'"; and charged him with being a "little Australianer" on imperial preference. Editorial, 20 Oct., 1897.

2 For the official statement of the reasons for the denunciation of the treaties, see Salisbury to Sir F. Lascelles (Berlin), and to Sir F. Plunkett (Brussels), 28 July, 1897. Copies enclosed in Chamberlain's circular despatch of 20 August, 1897. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

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iciation of the two treaties. When this conference met, the imminence of Australian federation prevented immediate unilateral action by any individual colony on the lines of the Canadian preference. The Premiers agreed in principle that a federal tariff should include preferential rates on "the production or the manufacture of the United Kingdom"; and, failing an early federal tariff, the separate colonies should offer a preference to the United Kingdom and to each other. Kingston maintained his attitude that preferences should be on a reciprocal basis.

Another early and positive result of the Colonial Conference was the adoption by most of the Australian Colonies of the Natal principle as a means of restricting the entry of undesirable immigrants. In the months following the conference, Reid and Kingston continued to doubt its efficiency. However, having made the Australian position clear to Chamberlain, Reid adopted the attitude that wherever possible imperial interests must also be recognised and colonial interests secured in harmony with them. In this way, Reid showed a much truer appreciation of imperial commitments than Parkes had done in 1888 when dealing with Chinese immigration. In 1897 Reid went part of the way to-

1 Turner to Reid, telegram, 10 Dec., 1897. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 97/I2247. The main purpose of this conference was to discuss the future of the administration of New Guinea.
A.T. Yarwood's statement is unfounded that "the inspiration of this Conference and its decisions are obscure". op. cit., p.15.
3 ibid.
wards meeting Chamberlain's objections to the 1896 Bills. For his part, Chamberlain was willing for any Bill incorporating the Natal principle to be given the royal assent without its being reserved. Finally, the 1898 Premiers' Conference agreed to uniform legislation on the lines of the Natal Act.

During 1898 and 1899 some progress appeared likely on the interchange of imperial and colonial military units and the formation of a colonial naval reserve. In the long run, however, subjects which really required federal action could only be discussed by the Colonial Governments up to a certain point and then be left open until after the formation of the Australian Commonwealth. In addition to the need for federal action on the military and naval questions, a uniform Australian tariff was imperative before closer inter-imperial commercial relations could be discussed in practical terms on the lines of the Canadian preference. In the meantime, imperial preference, like political federation, remained a subject for occasional discussion in the colon-

I i.e. He introduced two Bills: one repeated the 1896 Act but excluded British subjects from its operation; and the other applied the Natal principle to British subjects.
4 The first small exchange of military units which had been arranged was curtailed and then interrupted by the outbreak of the South African War in October, 1899. The formation of a colonial naval reserve was discussed by a Conference of Naval Commandants in Melbourne in 1899. Report of Conference enclosed in Brassey to Chamberlain, Vict. No. 61, 23 August, 1899. C.O. 509/I48.
ies, and on the former in particular public opinion still had to be formed.

The Premiers themselves stressed that the most valuable part of the conference, and of their visit to England, had been the exchange of views and the opportunity for both imperial and colonial statesmen to appreciate the attitudes of each other and I understand what conditioned those attitudes. Reid thought that the harmony shown at a Colonial conference was due to the colonies' lack of executive power in the Empire. Because of this, the conferences were gatherings of representatives of the Cabinets of the Empire for "deliberation without decision". The 1897 Colonial Conference had also given further proof, if such proof was still needed, of the Imperial Government's readiness to meet colonial wishes wherever possible. Australian statesmen had been accepted on their own merits in England. In general, the Colonial Parliaments and the press judged that the colonies had been well served by their representatives. They had retained a due regard


These attitudes showed a better appreciation of the Australian viewpoint than did J.F. Hogan, the Secretary of the Colonial Party in the H. of Commons, and himself an Irish-Australian. Hogan was reported to have said that Seddon's imperialist views were more in accordance with Australian thought and sentiment than "the crude, narrow and parochial ideas of Mr. Reid". (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, 11 Sept., 1897.
for Australian opinion and had worked for Australian interests.

The importance of Chamberlain's personality must not be under-estimated. Personal contact with him reinforced the favourable views which had been expressed in the Australian Colonies when he entered office. Then it had been felt that his interest in the colonies and his desire to promote their welfare would lead him to listen to the colonial point of view. Contemporary opinion in the colonies supports Garvin's view that the human effect of Chamberlain's personality on the Premiers and public opinion far surpassed in political value the private proceedings of the conference. Reid emphasised the blending of "statesmanlike views with business capacity" in Chamberlain. Yet the Australian Premiers had not been led away by the force of Chamberlain's personality from what they knew would alone be acceptable to their colleagues and to the Parliaments. As for Chamberlain himself, the conference revealed something of the patience and persistence with which he could work towards certain objectives, in this case the eventual formation of a Council of the Empire. He avoided forcing the issue in advance of knowing the extent of colonial support. The conference also showed something of the gradual process of change in Chamberlain's ideas towards his adoption of tariff reform in Great Britain and support for imper-

2 G.H. Reid, op. cit., pp. 149-150.
From a long-term view, the Jubilee fervour, the increasing realisation in the colonies that Great Britain was interested in colonial aspirations and an appreciation in Great Britain and in the colonies of the importance of the imperial link, even though sentiment was one of the chief elements in its composition, did much to help the Empire stand the strain of the South African War without disruption. The 1897 Colonial Conference cannot be summed up as an isolated event. On each of the larger questions which were discussed, it cannot stand apart from the continued upsurge of imperial feeling and aspirations during the South African War, or from the 1902 Colonial Conference and Chamberlain's declaration for Tariff Reform in 1903. The 1897 Colonial Conference was an episode in a very long development; but it was an episode which seemed to indicate beyond much doubt that hopes for political or commercial union, or for binding colonial commitments in imperial defence, were going to remain unfulfilled.

This is seen most clearly in Chamberlain's willingness for the conference to discuss closer commercial relations on the basis of preferential trade instead of insisting that the discussion should be confined to his proposal for inter-imperial free trade. Neither did Chamberlain state categorically that the mother country would not consider the means of granting preferences to the colonies.

CHAPTER 13

During the later 1880s some Australian colonists had insisted with increasing vehemence that a growing Australian national feeling was incompatible with a continuing sentiment for Great Britain and the Empire. The immediate or the eventual separation of the Australian Colonies from Great Britain was an outcome that some would have welcomed and a much larger number would have accepted reluctantly as being inevitable with the passage of time. During the 1890s a number of factors contributed to a growing compatibility between an emergent Australian nationhood and the retention of the imperial tie. The attitude adopted by the Bulletin, which always claimed that it alone held truly national views, reflected the growth of a more balanced view of the imperial connection. No longer did the Bulletin insist on independence and republicanism as the destiny of the Australian Colonies. Australian federation and "alliance" with Great Britain became its policy.

As the 1890s passed, there was a better appreciation in the Australian Colonies that Great Britain was not unmindful of interests which were important to the colonies; and there was also a fuller realisation that the Imperial Government would not
force any closer ties on the self-governing colonies. The Imperial Government showed increasing readiness to meet the views of the Australian Colonies; and, for their part, provided they could safeguard essential Australian interests, the colonial Premiers were prepared to meet certain British susceptibilities. A more willing acceptance of the imperial ties in the Australian Colonies went side by side with a greater awareness that the material advantages offered by the link with Great Britain, such as a ready market for colonial products, outweighed the possible disadvantages of being attacked by Britain's enemies or being involved in her wars.

From 1895 onwards, the Governments of the Australian Colonies made determined efforts by means of the Premiers' Conferences to deal federally with certain matters affecting all or several of the colonies. Sometimes very little resulted from the conferences or a problem was shelved until after the federation of the Australian Colonies. There were occasions also when one or more of the colonies refused to adhere to the decision of the majority.

I These changes in attitude provide a significant link between such otherwise disparate subjects as changes in the Instructions to the Governors, the failure of the Imperial Federation League's schemes for an imperial federation in 1892-3, the immigration policies of the Australian Colonies, and the non-adherence of a colony to an imperial treaty. See Chapters 8 to 10.

2 This applied particularly to the colonial policy of restricting coloured immigration. In 1897 Reid and Kingston were willing to meet Chamberlain's point of view on the method of immigration restriction. See Chapter 12 and Note F.

3 E.g. Queensland's own interests determined her decision in 1896 to adhere to the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty (see Chapter 10); and South Australia attempted to conclude a separate reciprocity treaty with New Zealand in 1895 (see Chapter II).
Some of the matters dealt with by the Premiers' Conferences affected imperial relations; and among these were matters which involved common action as well as consultation with the Imperial Government. Practical working partnerships of this kind made the retention of the imperial link more acceptable, and lessened the possibility of the immediate or the eventual independence of the Australian Colonies. Above all, once the federation of the Australian Colonies had been accomplished, an Australian Commonwealth would be likely to carry more weight in imperial affairs than six separate colonies not always pulling in the same direction. By means of a federated Australia, something nearer equality and less of dependence would be brought into the imperial relationship.

By the late 1890s all these factors had contributed towards a growing Australian national feeling and a continuing imperial sentiment. The two had become complementary and not mutually exclusive of each other. At the same time, there were other factors which suggested that some limitations might be imposed on the creation of closer ties between the mother country and the self-governing colonies.

Among the former were the colonies' decisions whether or not to adhere to the Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894, the restrictions imposed on coloured immigration between 1886 and 1898 and schemes for Australian military and naval defence rather than the improvement of the separate defences of the individual colonies. Among the latter were the Auxiliary Naval Squadron, the Pacific Cable, and advice on local military matters, such as the improvement of fortifications and the equipment and training of colonial forces.
In view of the widespread opposition to imperial federation in the Australian Colonies between 1884 and 1893, it might seem paradoxical that in 1897 and 1902, when Joseph Chamberlain drew the attention of the Premiers at the Colonial Conferences to the political relations of the Empire, the criticism he aroused in the Australian Colonies bore no comparison with that called forth by earlier schemes. Chamberlain's practical policy towards the self-governing colonies since 1895 decidedly outweighed and counteracted the visionary proposals which first the separate colonies and then the Commonwealth rejected.

Between 1897 and 1902 Chamberlain simultaneously emphasised the setting up of better machinery for consultation between the mother country and the self-governing colonies, colonial participation in the defence of the Empire and the establishment of an imperial customs union. By means of a Council of the Empire, the existing loose ties would be replaced by a "true partnership". Chamberlain implied that the obligations and responsibilities of this partnership would include some form of contribution towards the expenses of objects common to Great Britain and other parts of the Empire. This was the point where any proposals to secure a partnership on these lines would come into conflict with the Australian Colonies' determination to assert to the full their autonomy and their newly acquired nationhood. The colonies did not accept that the existing relationship was unsatisfactory;

and any premature moves towards closer imperial ties were likely to result in the opposite of what was desired. In order to continue to safeguard colonial autonomy, some definite limitations might still have to be imposed on the formation of closer links of Empire.

In 1897 the Australian premiers rejected political federation, inter-imperial free trade and participation in the defence of the Empire. On the other hand, they supported in principle a policy of tariff preferences in Great Britain's and in each other's favour. Although in 1897 and 1898 the principle of tariff preferences was discussed in terms of unilateral preferences offered by the colonies to Great Britain, there were signs that the Australian Colonies might become far more insistent in demanding some reciprocity from Great Britain. In so far as Australian colonial or national interests were bound up with a protectionist tariff policy, a major limitation was likely to arise on the formation of closer ties by means of imperial preference unless Great Britain showed any willingness to abandon her strict free trade policy.

Suggestions were made with increasing frequency in the Aus-

I e.g. Kingston at the 1897 Colonial Conference, ibid., pp. 23, 85,154; and at the Premiers' Conference, Melbourne, 1898, Minutes of Procs. printed in S.Aust. Procs. of Parl. and Papers, 1898-9 Session, vol.II, Paper No.24. The Bulletin insisted that any preference offered by the Australian Colonies should follow the adoption of protection by Great Britain so that there could be some reciprocity. e.g. 15 May, 1897.
tralian Colonies from 1895 onwards that a more local or Australian use should be made of the contributions to the Auxiliary Naval Squadron. The training of an Australian naval reserve was particularly favoured as being best suited to Australian circumstances. After the establishment of the Commonwealth, demands for the creation of a fleet owned and manned by Australians became more insistent and more numerous. Although the Australian Colonies were reluctant to enter into a comprehensive partnership with Great Britain for the defence of the Empire, some limited agreements were not ruled out. The Auxiliary Naval Squadron Agreement bore witness to this. Nor did the rejection of advance and binding commitments in a kriegsverein mean that the Australian Colonies would hesitate to support Great Britain with men and money should she be forced to defend herself in war. The New South Wales Sudan contingent, the offers of contingents from several other colonies in 1885 and the New South Wales volunteers who offered to serve in India during an emergency on the North West Frontier in 1897 showed that voluntary and spontaneous colonial co-operation in war was not unlikely and, indeed, might almost be taken for granted. After the colonies supported Great


Britain in South Africa between 1899 and 1902, they would have no choice but to face an insistent question. Would this voluntary support open the way to more binding and formal colonial commitments in imperial defence?

On each of the three broad areas of imperial relations - political organisation, commercial policy and defence - no advances were made in 1897. The inaction of the Australian Premiers might have been due to the over-riding importance they placed on Australian federation. Decisions on matters which really required federal action were best left open until after the formation of the Australian Commonwealth; but such an argument provides no more than a partial explanation of the Premiers' attitudes.

The Premiers recognised the existence of separate Australian interests and common imperial interests; and they knew that in practical matters the former would have to be put first if the two were not identical. At the same time, an imponderable element of British sentiment still remained despite the emphasis on Australia's separate identity and interests. Indeed, the elasticity of the imperial link in making room for this balance had been proved over the previous decade.

The importance of sentiment in the imperial relationship was shown unmistakably by the despatch of the contingents to South Africa at the same time as the Australian federation move-
ment reached its fulfilment. Once more the actions of the colonies in supporting British policy were open to misinterpretation. British enthusiasts for imperial unity thought that the colonies had shown their readiness to take steps towards closer ties with the mother country in the defence of the Empire and in political relations. Of far greater importance was the effect of the outburst of imperial sentiment in Canada, the Australian Colonies and New Zealand on Chamberlain's hopes for the closer association of those colonies with Great Britain in sharing the responsibilities of Empire. In addition, the formation of the Commonwealth of Australia in 1901 fulfilled one of Chamberlain's prerequisites for strengthening political relations within the Empire.

II

As the possibility of war with the two Boer Republics in South Africa increased during 1899, the Imperial Government had sufficient reason to believe that colonial offers of military assistance would be forthcoming. The Australian Colonies had offered contingents for service in the Sudan in 1885; and in 1897 volunteers from New South Wales had been willing to serve in India during an emergency on the north-west frontier. Against the expectation of colonial assistance in South Africa had to be

set the Australian Colonies' dislike of anything in the nature of a prior commitment. The Colonial Governments had responded with a marked lack of enthusiasm to official British suggestions for the interchange of British and colonial military units; and they showed even less inclination to respond to proposals for raising an Australian Regiment for general service with British forces in times of war. They were unfavourable to these schemes because co-operation along such lines might lead ultimately to binding commitments in imperial defence.

The unmistakable outburst of imperial sentiment in the Australian Colonies during the South African War led to the despatch of seven contingents in which all of those colonies were represented. Altogether 16,175 Australian troops served in South Africa. However, this enthusiastic response at a time of crisis in the Empire did not in itself solve the problem of specific colonial commitments in imperial defence in peace and war.

I See the correspondence between the Colonial Office, the War Office, the Colonial Defence Committee and the Governors in C.O. Series I3,201,234 and 309. On account of various difficulties, the only positive action was the despatch of a unit of 100 men each of the N.S.W. Lancers and the Victorian Mounted Rifles to England. The Lancers were still in England at the outbreak of the South African War in October 1899. The Colonial Defence Committee was the most active of those officially interested in raising colonial forces for general imperial service. Of these, the Imperial Government met the cost of 6,068. In addition to the official contingents, raised by the Colonial Governments and then by the Commonwealth Government, a number of privately raised forces of scouts and bushmen went to South Africa.
During the months immediately preceding the outbreak of war in South Africa, Chamberlain, supported by Lansdowne at the War Office, was not quite willing to leave sentiment to be the sole motivating force behind colonial offers of military assistance. He felt compelled to seek assurance of colonial support for two reasons. Colonial support for the rightness of the British cause in South Africa would have a moral effect on the world at large; and colonial contingents, although small in number, would indicate something of the reserve power on which the Empire could draw. Chamberlain believed that a closely-knit British Empire would be a more powerful force in the world than Great Britain alone. During a period of increasing world-wide competition with Germany, Russia and the United States, the population, territory and resources of Great Britain and the Empire could ensure that Britain's predominant position was maintained.

Chamberlain's first move to ensure colonial support came at the beginning of July, 1899, when a critical stage had been reached in South Africa. The Bloemfontein Conference had collapsed.

I See, for example, the terms of Chamberlain's telegram to the Governor of New South Wales, 4 June, 1900, that the colonial action in South Africa had shown the world that the whole force of the Empire was available to maintain British interests. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

2 This concept was stated most clearly in Chamberlain's speech at the annual dinner of the Royal Colonial Institute on 31 March, 1897. Procs. R.C.I. (1896-7), vol.28, p.238. It was also implicit in several statements, made during the South African War, in which he showed his appreciation of colonial support.
on 5 June, and Chamberlain was not sure that the British public would wholeheartedly support a war against the Boer Republics. He also felt that some assurance of colonial support was needed. In these circumstances, Chamberlain sought to know whether colonial contingents would be offered to assist Great Britain in South Africa should a military demonstration be undertaken to force the Transvaal Government to accept an ultimatum concerning the rights of British subjects.

The Premiers of New South Wales and Victoria responded somewhat reluctantly by indicating the likelihood of volunteers; but they made no explicit statements that the Governments would offer or despatch contingents. Evidently they saw no emergency in July, 1899, where colonial freedom should be tied in advance; and, at a more mundane level, they were not prepared for the colonies to bear the cost of the contingents. G.H. Reid, the Premier of New South Wales, was even reluctant to make a statement


Admittedly, this request was couched in terms asking if the small detachments of the N.S.W. Lancers and the Victorian Mounted Rifles, then in England, would accompany British forces to South Africa; but the Governors and their Premiers rightly interpreted Chamberlain's remark, that such an exhibition of the solidarity of the Empire would have a great effect in South Africa, as meaning that the colonial offers of support need not be restricted to the units specifically mentioned by Chamberlain. From this it seemed to follow that Queensland and South Australia should also make some response.


4 The Victorian Government in particular wanted to know whether the Imperial Government would pay all the costs before making an official offer of a contingent.
with regard to volunteers. Despite the efforts of Earl Beauchamp, the Governor, to secure a more encouraging reply, Reid's final response was a disappointment to Chamberlain because colonial volunteers would not have the same moral effect as an official offer of a contingent. Chamberlain was somewhat heartened, therefore, to receive an offer of 250 mounted infantry from the Queensland Government and no mention of volunteers. With this offer, and the likelihood of volunteers from New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, the matter rested more or less while events in South Africa ran their course. On 3 October, Chamberlain indicated how colonial units might be organised. This was a more positive way of encouraging the Colonial Governments to offer

Also minutes by E. Marsh and Chamberlain on Beauchamp's telegrams of 9 and 14 July, I899. C.0.201/625.

2 Lsington to Chamberlain, telegram, II July, I899. C.0.234/68. The official correspondence does not provide any explanation of the Queensland Government's offer when Chamberlain had communicated only with New South Wales and Victoria. The most likely explanation is that there was some private correspondence between the Governors and some confidential consultation among the Premiers.

3 Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegram, 4 Sept., I899. C.0.I3/I53. The South Australian offer was rather half-hearted on Kingston's part, and was a result of pressure from Tennyson. S. Aust. Chief Sec. records, in-letters 99/972, minutes by Kingston, 4 Sept. and a note by Wallington, Private Secretary to the Governor, I9 August, I899. At the end of Sept, the Military Commandants of the Australian Colonies met in Melbourne to discuss military assistance to Great Britain in South Africa.

4 Draft of telegrams to Canada, the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, 3 Oct., I899, based on a letter from the War Office, 2 Oct., I899, which detailed rates of pay, length of service, organisation of units, etc. C.0.418/6. In July, the War Office had been prepared to offer colonial rates of pay; but after the Treasury had asked for this to be reconsidered, imperial rates of pay and transport back to the colonies from South Africa were offered. Correspondence between the Colonial Office and the War Office in C.0.418/6.
contingents rather than numbers of volunteers. It was also a way of suggesting that the colonial offers might be publicly known in both Great Britain and the colonies before hostilities began in South Africa.

In the end, none of this behind-the-scenes action detracts from the enthusiasm of the colonial response in October at the time of the Boer ultimatum and again after the "Black Week" in December. Neither Chamberlain nor the Colonial Governments made any public admission that the first initiative for colonial troops to be sent to South Africa had come from the Imperial Government. Indeed, all took pains to deny that there had been anything approximating to a British request for colonial assistance.

The moral effect of the colonial action on the world in general depended on the spontaneousness of colonial support; and their

1 The Boer ultimatum was delivered on 11 October. Criticism arose in Canada in particular that as a result of Chamberlain's telegram of 3 October the Government was forced to offer a contingent instead of encouraging volunteers.

2 There was never any difficulty about filling the numbers required for the contingents; but other factors could operate here, such as gaining experience of active service for those already in the colonial forces either permanently or part-time, unemployment and an opportunity for adventure. In south Australia, Tennyson said that all classes of the community were represented in the second contingent - squatters, bushmen, farmers, labourers and city men. Tennyson to Beauchamp, 14 Jan., 1900, Letters to Lord Beauchamp (Mitchell Library A3012).

3 Chamberlain's telegram of 3 July did not become publicly known in the colonies; but the colonial offers of volunteers and the Queensland offer of a contingent were published in London, and certain members of the Legislatures voiced their suspicions that there had been an request from the Imperial Government. The strongest denial in the Australian Colonies came from B.R. Wise, a member of the Lyne Government, which was in office in N.S.W. in succession to the Reid Government, when Chamberlain's telegram of 3 October was received. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., Legis. Assembly, 17 Oct., 1899, vol. 100, p. 1594-5; and vol. 104, 25 July, 1900, p. 1282.
self-respect, as well as their regard for colonial autonomy, required of the colonies that assistance should be given of their own free will and that it should not be automatic. From March, 1900, onwards, the colonies responded without hesitation to British requests for further contingents, and these requests were made public. The reasons for this apparent change in attitude between 1899 and 1900 may be found in the arguments put forward by the supporters and opponents of the contingents, and in the methods by which contingents subsequent to the first two were raised.

Among the supporters of the contingents many accepted unquestioningly that if Great Britain was at war, Australia was therefore at war. Others did not see the issues as simply as this. Among these, G.H. Reid upheld one of the most significant and deeply-rooted of colonial attitudes. He contended that the colonies had the right to make their own judgment whether the causes of the war were valid and just, and to decide whether Great Britain was the defender and not the aggressor. Although some colonists easily decided that Britain's cause was just, this...

1 e.g. in the N.S.W. Legis. Assembly, by Government and Opposition members who supported the despatch of the contingents, including W.J. Lyne, H. Copeland and J. Cook. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.100, I7 and I8 Oct.,1899, pp.1379, 1437, 1456.
Similar statements were made in the Queensland Legis. Assembly, Q'd. Parl. Deb., vol.82, I8 Oct.,1899, pp.449,457,472.
question caused serious heart-searching. Reid argued that the colonies did not have sufficient information on which to decide the rightness of Britain's cause in South Africa and that she was not the aggressor. By supporting the immediate despatch of a contingent in October, 1899, Reid himself did not carry his argument to what appeared to be its logical conclusion: that the colonies should suspend judgment and not rush to offer contingents. Very different from the posing of this question were the declarations by Barton and others that rightly or wrongly Britain's and the Empire's cause must be supported. Apart from the stress in the colonies on moral support for Great Britain as a factor in world opinion, there was also a somewhat specific Australian interest in assisting fellow colonists, that is, those who had gone to South Africa from Australia and were numbered among the Outlanders.

1 The Blue Books (1899) on South Africa had only just reached the Australian Colonies at the time of the debates on the despatch of the contingents. Only a few supporters and opponents made some reference to the published correspondence on the negotiations with the Transvaal Government. Barton was one who was well acquainted with the contents of the Blue Books.

2 On this issue, as with regard to Australian federation, Reid's ability to state issues clearly and then to reject the decision to which his argument seemed most likely to lead greatly weakened the leadership which he might otherwise have retained.


5 This was a very popular argument during the debates in the Colonial Parliaments on the despatch of the contingents; and
The majority of the opponents of the contingents were members of the Labour Parties. Several of them, with other opponents, faced the same question as Reid had posed; but, unlike him, they drew the conclusion that Britain's cause was not just. In an atmosphere of imperial enthusiasm, declarations to that effect caused charges of disloyalty to be made against the opponents of the contingents.

The basis of this opposition had strong affinities with the anti-imperialism and anti-militarism of some of the Liberals and radicals in England. These were its roots rather than anything specifically Australian. Both these causes were dear to the hearts of Australian radicals and Labour supporters. Their praise was for Gladstone's "finest deed" in 1881 in withdrawing from the Transvaal, and for the Liberal and anti-militarist opposition in Britain to the South African War. The opposition

the motion before the Queensland Parliament included an expression of sympathy for British subjects in the Transvaal on account of the disabilities and injustices they suffered. Q'ld. Parl. Deb., vol.82, II Oct.,1899, p.339. At the beginning of August, Brassey, the Governor of Victoria, had stated that there was public sympathy for the Uitlanders; but not to the extent of supporting a war on the narrow issue of the franchise. Brassey to Chamberlain, Secret, 2 August, 1899. C.O.309/148.

Many letters from Australians in Johannesburg etc. were published in the Australian press from 1895 onwards. Much of the little first hand information in the Australian Colonies on the South African situation came from this source.

1 I See Note G, The Opposition to the Despatch of the First and Second Contingents to South Africa in October and December, 1899.
2 In N.S.W., for example, Hughes, Holman and Griffith held this view. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.100, Legis. Assembly, 18 Oct.,1899, pp.1428, 1466; and 19 Oct.,1899, p.1639.
to colonial participation in the South African War cannot, therefore, be interpreted as giving further support to the left-wing orientation of Australian nationalism. Its closest affinities were with that stream of British humanitarianism and pacifism which was apparent in Great Britain in opponents to the South African War. This is as applicable to W.A. Holman, the staunchest of the Labour Party opponents to the war in New South Wales, as it is to G.A. Wood and to members of the Anti-War League.

Did Australian or British birth have any influence on colonists in their decisions to support or oppose the offer of the contingents? If most of the opponents of the contingents were Australian born, some proof would be provided for the long-held radical contention that loyalty to the mother country must decrease as the native element in the population increased. The Bulletin in the late 1890s and in the early 1900s continued to claim that the spirit of loyalty was wearing out through the steady increase in the numbers of the native born. At the time

3 e.g. by such a responsible man as James Brunker, who had been Colonial Secretary in Reid’s Government. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.102, Legis. Assembly, 19 Dec., 1899, pp. 3527-3.

4 Those who spoke against a growing militarism in Australia included such leading Labour Party figures as Hughes and Holman in N.S.W., Murray in Victoria, Batchelor in S.Australia and Dawson in Queensland.

5 e.g. from Haynes in N.S.W., Murray in Victoria and Glynn and Archibald in S.Australia.

6 Statements were made in appreciation of the attitudes adopted by John Morley, Campbell-Bannerman and Frederick Harrison.

1 e.g. R. Gollan, Radical and Working Class Politics, 1850-1910. Melbourne, 1960. Part II, Chap. 3.

2 See, for example, the arguments used by Hughes and Holman. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.100, Legis. Assembly, 18 Oct., 1899, pp. 1431, 1470.

3 e.g. R. Thomson, Australian Nationalism (Burwood, 1888).

4 Bulletin, 10 Oct., 1896, 19 June, 1897, 10 August, 1901.
of the despatch of the first two contingents to South Africa, the Bulletin's tone appeared more than previously to suggest that it was trying to convince itself that the facts fitted its opinion. Although it is difficult to trace all their origins, the larger number of the more vocal and intransigent opponents of the first contingents in the colonial Parliaments appear to have been immigrants and not Australian born; but there is no reason to doubt their continued declaration of loyalty because their opposition was not based on separation.

In October, 1899, several opponents claimed that it would be a different matter should the Empire be in danger. In December, 1899, when Britain was facing serious reverses in South Africa, the opposition in the Australian Colonies to the despatch of the second contingents was slight; but the old arguments were heard again in July, 1900, when colonial support in the form of naval contingents from New South Wales and Victoria and the colonial vessel "Protector" from South Australia were offered for use in China to help in quelling the Boxer Rebellion. Once more

1 The Bulletin's miscalculation of Australian feeling on this issue suggests that Jebb and later writers have over-estimated that paper's role as the true national Australian paper.

2 See Note 6.

3 e.g. statements by Hughes, Holman and Ashton in the N.S.W. Legis. Assembly in October, 1899, and by Grainger in S. Australia; and Givens' denial in Queensland that the Irish were disloyal. Q'ld. Parl. Deb., vol. 82, 2 Nov., 1899, p. 777.

4 e.g. statements by Griffith in N.S.W., and by McKenzie and Roberts in S. Australia. In Queensland, Dawson, the Labour Party leader, seconded the motion for the despatch of the second Queensland contingent.

5 i.e. Holman and Thomas in N.S.W.; and Murray and Maloney, the
the opposition concentrated on criticising a growing militarist spirit in Australia; and the insistent question was again posed whether or not the colonies must be drawn into every war in which Britain became engaged.

The offers of the first and second contingents showed the strength of sentiment in the imperial tie. Their despatch raised fears in those who opposed the contingents that this feeling for Great Britain and the Empire might weaken a sense of Australian identity. Moreover, they feared that Australian autonomy would be lessened if the colonies were drawn into all Britain's imperial wars. Before the end of 1899 an idea gained increasing support that a distinctive Australian contribution might be made in South Africa. One of the most interesting episodes in the despatch of the Australian contingents to South Africa is the raising of the Bushmen's Contingent. The interest lies in its link with the significance of the "bush image" in the development of a sense of Australian nationality.

Latter rather uncertainly, in Victoria. H.B.Higgins still opposed the war, but he did not speak in this debate in the Victorian Legislative Assembly.


2 ibid., Carruthers, p.I278; Ashton, p.I228; Meagher, p.I300; Haynes, p.I33I. Reid posed the same question, but supported the motion to despatch the contingent because it had already been offered to the Imperial Government. ibid., pp.I206-8.
The origin of the Bushmen's Contingent lay in the awareness of certain individuals in the colonies and among Australians in London that infantry was not the type of force which the colonies could most usefully send to South Africa. The Australian Colonies could supply a mounted force to equal the Boer commandos in mobility, and be more versatile than British cavalry to deal with the irregular Boer forces. Moreover, such a force would be distinctively Australian. Unlike the Canadian contingents, the units making up the first and second contingents from the Australian Colonies did not retain any separate identity as Australian forces. In September, the Military Commandants of the Australian Colonies had discussed plans for a joint Australian force to be offered for service in South Africa; but under the quick spur of action in October, 1899, the Colonial Governments reverted to "colonialism" in vying with each other to offer colonial forces.

I See the correspondence between the Colonial Governments and individuals who were interested in raising a Bushmen's Contingent, Dec., 1899, to Jan., 1900, in the N.S.W. Treas. Papers, the records in the Vict. Premier's Dept., and the S.Aust. Chief Secretary's Office. In October the colonies had been asked to send infantry. To some extent the War Office rectified its mistake by asking for mounted infantry in the second contingent.


3 The conference of Commandants was held in Melbourne from 29 Sept. to 5 Oct. N.S.W. V. and P. (1901 Session), Legis. Assembly, vol. III, p. 1030ff. First and Other Contingents to South Africa. Brassey, the Governor of Victoria, also inquired from Chamberlain what form a united Australian force should take. Brassey to Chamberlain, telegram, 27 Sept., 1899. Records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria, Letterbooks of Governor's Despatches, vol. 12.

4 The Queensland Govt. had repeated its independent offer towards the end of Sept. Dickson to Lamington, 21 Sept., 1899, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Official Letters to the Governor, vol. 29. The Victorian Govt. was about to offer a contingent when Chamberlain's telegram of 3 Oct. was received. Draft of telegram from Turner in reply to Lyne's telegram of 2 Oct., 1899. Vict. Premier's Dept. records, 99/3415.
Neither in the Australian Colonies nor by the British authorities were the units from each colony regarded as forming part of a united Australian contingent which must retain its identity as such. In December, 1899, Lyne, the Premier of New South Wales, did not press the Imperial Government to recognise that the colonies had offered a united Australian contingent of mounted infantry.

The first Bushmen's Contingent of 1000 men was offered, accepted and raised primarily as a citizens' and not as a government force. Each of the colonies was more or less represented proportionally in the total numbers of the contingent. It is beside the point whether the contingent was really composed of bushmen or not. What mattered was the name itself and the work to which the force was assigned. By the end of February, 1900, the Imperial Government was fully aware of the contribution which this more irregular type of mounted force could make in South Africa once the Boers had been forced on to the defensive. Chamberlain then sent an unmistakable request for an additional contingent of 2000 men to be raised at the Imperial Government's expense; but the request was not published until after the colon-

1 Minute by Lyne, 22 Dec., 1899, filed with Salomons (Agent-General) to Lyne, 2 Jan., 1900. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Agent-General 00/I2.
2 The contingent was supported by contributions raised in the colonies and in London. It left for South Africa towards the end of February, 1900. The offer of the force was accepted by Chamberlain in his telegram of 2 Jan., 1900. The official records in N.S.W., Victoria, Queensland and South Australia include correspondence concerning the proportion of the force which those and the other colonies were to supply.
ies had agreed to raise the force. The colonial response seemed to bear out Brassey's assurance to Chamberlain that the Imperial Government need not hesitate to ask for whatever assistance that Victoria, and by implication the other colonies, could give.

This force, the fourth to be raised in the colonies, was given the title "Imperial Bushmen".

The raising of the Imperial Bushmen provoked little or no comment in the Australian Colonies. This attitude seemed contrary to the opposition of the Colonial Governments between 1897 and 1899 to schemes for raising an Australian regiment for general service with British troops. Moreover, by raising troops at the Imperial Government's request, the Australian Colonies seemed to be rejecting their long-standing dislike of anything that emphasised their dependent status. The outburst of imperial sentiment occasioned by the war provides only a partial explanation of the apparent change in attitude. The Imperial Government had request-

1 Chamberlain to Beauchamp, telegram (Secret), 27 Feb., 1900. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers, Lyne's minute for Beauchamp, 28 Feb., and Beauchamp to Chamberlain, telegram, 28 Feb., 1900. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 00/3032, and N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. In a telegram of 2 March, Chamberlain repeated his request in a form for publication. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

The Imperial Bushmen were to form part of the Rhodesian Field Force under Gen. Carrington at a higher rate of pay than the ordinary British rates. They were enrolled by the colonies more or less proportionally to population.


3 Those who opposed colonial participation in the war frequently referred to the strength of imperial feeling in the colonies; and the press was undoubtedly in favour of active colonial support, with the exceptions of the Bulletin, Holman's Grenfell Vedette and the Worker. In N.S.W. in 1901-2, only 1,206 signatures were obtained to the Anti-War League's petition to end the war and grant self-government to the Orange Free State and the Transvaal.
ed the type of troops which the colonies felt themselves superior in producing. The mounted bushmen's forces were linked with the romantic identification of Australia with the bush. In this way, the "bush image" could be projected into the imperial relation-
ship.

At the same time, signs of possible limitations to the extent of colonial co-operation were not wanting. As the war went on into its second and third years, the voices of the opponents to colonial participation did not increase in numbers; but the despatch of the later contingents more and more expressed a feeling that the colonies must stand by the decision they had taken in October, 1899. Having entered into the struggle, they had no alternative but to go on responding to British requests for further colonial forces, and remain in the war until peace and British supremacy were assured in South Africa. Such a feeling makes Barton's attitude intelligible in 1901-2. He wanted open requests from the Imperial Government for further contingents so that he could ask the Commonwealth Parliament to respond to them. When the despatch of the first Commonwealth contingent was

1 In this respect the "bush image" was not solely radical and left-wing as it was generally pictured in late nineteenth century literature and politics in Australia.
2 See the second part of the motion introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament on 14 Jan., 1902. This affirmed Australian readiness to give all aid as requested by the mother country in order to bring the war to an end. C'wealth Parl. Deb. (1901-1902 Session), vol.7, p.8745.
3 Hopetoun to Chamberlain, telegram, 29 Oct., 1901. Letterbooks of Despatches from Governor-General, vol.I. C'wealth National Library Archives, C.P.78, Set 8. Hopetoun stated that the Commonwealth Govt. would not undertake to send any more troops to South Africa unless requested by the Imperial Government to do so. The necessity for an explicit request was repeated by Hopetoun in a confidential tele-
discussed in the Federal Parliament on 14 January, 1902, many members felt that a ready response to the Imperial Government's request was the best way of refuting the recent hostile attacks on Great Britain and the colonies in the German press. This attitude helped to some extent to lessen the effect of the opposition some months earlier to the clauses in the Defence Bill which provided for the permanent military forces of the Commonwealth to serve outside the continent. Almost at the same time as the Commonwealth Parliament agreed to the despatch of further forces to South Africa, the Anti-War League, which had been formed in New South Wales in the latter part of 1901, was seeking the support of the Labour Parties in that State and in Victoria for its aims of an immediate end to the war and the grant of self-government to the Orange Free State and the Transvaal. Foremost in supporting the aims of the Anti-War League were those who had opposed the despatch of the contingents since October, 3rd 1899.

I The motion to continue aiding Great Britain in South Africa was carried by 45 to 5 votes in the House of Representatives on 14 Jan. and by the Senate on 22 Jan., 1902. The Imperial Govt. was then notified that the first and second Commonwealth contingents of about 1000 men would be provided as requested. Hopetoun to Chamberlain, telegram, 22 Jan., 1902. Letterbooks of Despatches from Governor-General, C.N.L. Archives, C.P. 78, Set 8. In response to another request, the Commonwealth Government agreed to send a further 2000 men. Hopetoun to Chamberlain, telegram, 20 March, 1902, in response to Chamberlain's request of 18 March. C.N.L. Archives, C.P. 78, Set 8.
The offers of troops by the colonies and their ready response to the Imperial Government's requests for further forces left open two important and significant questions. First, had the colonies taken the preliminary steps towards bearing a full share in the responsibilities of the Empire; and, secondly, had they committed themselves to assist Great Britain in all wars in which she might become engaged? In Great Britain the enthusiasts for a kriegsverein were confident that before long the colonies would undertake such responsibilities and commitments. Chamberlain also felt that the colonies' actions were encouraging for the future. He saw the colonial response to support Great Britain in South Africa as the beginning of a new era in relations between the mother country and the colonies. In their eagerness, both Chamberlain and the imperial federationists overlooked not only the opposition in the Colonial Parliaments to the despatch of the contingents but also the rooted objections among some members of the Commonwealth Parliament to military service outside the continent.

On each of those occasions, critics attacked the supposi-

2 During the second reading of the Defence Bill in July and August, 1901, Clauses 48, 50 and III, concerning service outside the Australian Continent, were strongly attacked by H.B.Higgins and by some Labour Party members. C'wealth Parl. Deb. (1901-2 Session), vol.3, G.B.Edwards, p.2979; H.B.Higgins, p.2991-2; Salmon, p.3419; C.McDonald, p.3522; Paterson, p.3545. The committee stage was postponed at the end of August; and on 26 March,1902, Barton announced that the Bill would not be proceeded with that session. Ibid., vol.9, p.II238.

3 Especially W.A.Holman and J.Thomas in N.S.W., and H.B.Higgins and J.Murray in Victoria; also Professor G.A.Wood in particular among those who were not members of the legislatures.

I Chamberlain to Beauchamp, telegram, 4 June,1900. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
tion that the colonies should aid Great Britain in all wars. They argued that the colonies had no part in Great Britain's quarrels because they had no voice in imperial policy. If they were bound to support the mother country in war, they must be given a voice in foreign policy and especially in determining peace and war. When the proposal for an Australian regiment liable for general service with British troops in times of war was revived at the Colonial Conference in 1902, Barton refused to pledge Australia. Although he believed that Australian support would be given again as readily as it had been in 1889, he insisted that support for Great Britain in an emergency must be decided when that emergency arose. The most outspoken opposition to militarism and to commitments outside Australia during the second reading of the Defence Bill in 1901 came from the Labour Party; but in 1902, when Barton refused to commit Australia to participation in the military defence of the Empire, he interpreted the opposition as coming from all shades of political opinion. He was undoubtedly justified in so doing. To do otherwise is to overemphasise the Labour Party's contribution to the long-standing

1 In general, these arguments came from those who opposed the sending of the first or all the contingents. Others, among them G.H. Reid, who had not opposed the contingents, insisted that support for Great Britain in time of war must be voluntary and that Australia's first duty to the Empire lay in developing her own resources.


3 Ibid., p. 92.
arguments against advance Australian military commitments in the Empire and the consequent financial contributions to imperial defence. In the long run, the effect of Barton's attitude was more significant than either the relative weight of the various factors which contributed to it or the possibility that his own opinion had changed since his declaration in 1899 that the colonies should support Great Britain "right or wrong". His stand in 1902, with a similar one by Sir Wilfrid Laurier, was effective in countering the arguments of those in Great Britain who saw the readiness of colonial support in 1899 as proof that the colonies would undertake clear-cut military commitments in the Empire.

It was not that these enthusiasts wanted Great Britain to reap all the advantages from clearly defined colonial commitment in imperial defence. They recognised that the corollary was a colonial voice in framing imperial policy. At a much later date, Milner came to regret that the self-governing colonies played no part in determining post-war policy in South Africa. Because the efforts of the colonies, side by side with those of Great Britain, had helped to ensure that South Africa was kept within the Empire, Milner was led to believe that the policy to be followed subsequently in South Africa was also a clear case for imperial co-operation.

Chamberlain made a tentative step towards acting in accord with such views. In March, 1901, he inquired whether the colonies would like to be consulted in connection with the post-war settlement in South Africa. Although no public statement had so far been made, the Imperial Government intended to annex the two Boer Republics, and then, over a period of years, allow them to pass from crown colony government to self-government. Chamberlain seemed to assume that Canada and the Australian Colonies would support such a policy; and he left the Governments of those colonies in no doubt that most weight would be given to opinion in South Africa and in Great Britain.

Laurier's first reaction was to welcome an opportunity for Canada to take part in a peace conference. After further reflection, he wanted to avoid sending a reply that might be misconstrued. Because he had no intention of shouldering part of the burden of Empire, he did not want to appear in any way to be seeking a voice in imperial policy. For this reason, he replied to Minto, Governor-General of Canada, 2 March, 1900. Quoted in R.H. Wilde, "Joseph Chamberlain's Proposal for an Imperial Council in March, 1900", Canadian Historical Review, vol. xxxvii, No. 3, Sept., 1956, p. 237.

The questions raised in this letter were repeated in private letters to the Governors of the Australian Colonies. The originals of these letters are not included in the C.O. series in the P.R.O., the various collections of Government House Papers in Australia or in the Beauchamp and Tennyson Papers in the Mitchell and Commonwealth National Libraries.

In his biography of Chamberlain, Garvin does not print the full text of Chamberlain's letter to Beauchamp, dated 5 March, 1900; and he omits any reference to the peace settlement. op. cit., vol. III, pp. 629-630.

Tennyson, in his reply to Chamberlain's letter dated 7 March, makes it obvious that Chamberlain had raised the question of the South African peace settlement with the Australian Colonies. Tennyson to Chamberlain, private, 17 April, 1900, draft in Tennyson's Diary for 1900, Commonwealth National Library, 479/2/15.
that an unsolicited invitation for Canada to participate in a peace conference "would be cordially received and accepted".

By 1900 the Australian Colonies had not reached the point of facing the same issue squarely. Although only the replies from two Governors can be cited to show the attitudes of the Colonial Governments, there is no reason to suppose that the other Governors would have reported greater eagerness to participate in a peace conference. The Victorian and South Australian Governments adopted a Janus-like attitude. On the one side, the opportunity to be consulted on a matter of imperial policy appealed to them. On the other, they shrank from interfering with Great Britain's sole responsibility for the terms of peace. Moreover, they wanted to avoid the possibility that differences of opinion might arise and cause a break in the solidarity between the mother country and the colonies over South Africa. The Victorian Government, therefore, gave Chamberlain to understand that it would be satisfied with a peace treaty that included the annexation of the two Boer Republics. Holder, the Premier of South Australia, thought that colonial delegates might confer

Selborne and Anderson in the Colonial Office did not seem to share Chamberlain's opinion about consulting the colonies on the peace settlement. Selborne to Wyndham, 7 Dec., 1899; and minute by Anderson, 29 Nov., 1899, filed with W.O. to C.O., 29 Nov., 1899. C.O. 418/6.

2 Memo. by Laurier, 2 April, 1900, quoted in R.H. Wilde, op. cit., p. 233.

I Minto to Chamberlain, 14 April, 1900, enclosing Memo. by Laurier, 9 April, 1900, quoted in ibid., p. 230.

2 Madden to Chamberlain, telegram, 17 April, 1900. C.O. 309/I49.
with the Imperial Government before agreement was reached on the details of the peace settlement. Because a considerable German element in South Australia would be likely to press for Boer independence, Holder did not want the terms of peace to be submitted to the Australian Governments.

It was probably just as well that the Australian Colonies were not very eager to take part in a peace conference. They could, in any case, have played only a very minor role. At the same time as he had asked the colonies whether they would like to be consulted, Chamberlain had clearly stated the policy which the Imperial Government intended to pursue. By the time he received the replies from the Governors, he already knew that he had not miscalculated in believing that the Imperial Government's future policy towards the Boer Republics would be supported by the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Colonial participation

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Fennyson to Chamberlain, private, 17 April, 1900, draft in Diary for 1900. C'wealth National Library 479/2/13.

2 What motivated an independent indication of the views of the Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand is not clear. The most likely explanation seems to be that they were apprehensive that Great Britain would be intimidated by threats of foreign intervention and would not annex the two Boer Republics.

In March, 1900, Seddon, the Premier of New Zealand, telegraphed to Chamberlain to urge the annexation of the two republics in order to secure future peace in South Africa. Philp, the Premier of Queensland, suggested to Lyne, the Premier of New South Wales, that a similar message should be sent on behalf of all the Australian Colonies. (Philp to Lyne, 23 March, 1900. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters 00/3943) Beauchamp telegraphed to Chamberlain on behalf of the Australian Colonies on 27 March, 1900. (N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters 00/4199)

In reply to a statement that the Australian Colonies favoured the annexation of the two republics in order to secure British supremacy in South Africa, Chamberlain remarked that colonial opinion was in accord with that in Great Britain. (Telegram, dated 30 March, 1900, N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters 00/4610)

These telegrams from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand
in a peace conference would have been little more than a polite formality unless the colonial delegates showed any determination to make it more than that. When the Colonial Governments were anxious to avoid all danger of conflicting imperial and colonial views and they believed that the Imperial Government could safely be left to decide on the terms of a peace settlement, there was little likelihood that the Australian Colonies would have played an assertive role at a peace conference. In the end, Seddon, the Premier of New Zealand, was probably the one colonial Premier to exercise some very slight influence on the peace settlement.

During the debates in the Colonial Parliaments in 1899, some of those who opposed the despatch of the contingents maintained that Australia had had no voice in the policy that had caused the war; and they contended that support in war and a voice in foreign policy went together. They did not go on to declare that if the colonies participated in policy making they would be bound to act in defence of it. To both the supporters were sent before they received a request from Sprigg, the Premier of Cape Colony, that they should support a policy of annexation. Sprigg to Lyne, telegram, 31 March, 1900. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters 00/4619.

I Seddon visited South Africa on his way to England in 1902. His visit coincided with the negotiations at Vereeniging. Publicly, as well as privately to Milner and Kitchener, he expressed his opposition to the conclusion of a peace settlement in which the Boers were treated over-generously. Seddon claimed that the course he took in South Africa helped the negotiations considerably and strengthened the hands of Milner and Kitchener. Seddon to J.G. Ward, Acting-Premier, 28 May and 26 June, 1902; and to H. Beauchamp (Wellington), 21 June, 1902. Seddon Papers, vol. 4. National Archives of New Zealand.
and the opponents of the despatch of the contingents to South Africa, this was a question for the future.

Between 1899 and 1900 no Australian Premier declared with Laurier: "If you want our help call us to your councils". In making this declaration, Laurier was clearly aware that a share in imperial defence and a voice in imperial policy went together. Despite the delight with which enthusiasts for imperial unity greeted his words and the use Chamberlain made of them in 1902, their context made it plain that Laurier was not inferring that Canada was prepared to undertake a share in imperial defence in order to gain a voice in imperial policy. Nor was he willing to declare in 1900 that Canada would automatically support Great Britain in time of war. Barton told a London audience in 1900 that Australia would one day have to face the issues involved in the twin responsibilities of imperial defence and imperial policy. Two years later, he rejected on Australia's behalf the assumption of a share in the burden of imperial defence as a means of securing a voice in imperial policy.

1 Speech in the Canadian House of Commons, 13 March, 1900.
2 Speech at the British Empire League banquet, 30 April, 1900, reported in The Times, 1 May, 1900, p. 6d.

One Australian politician who gave some thought to this question was Joseph Cook, a member of Reid's Government in N.S.W. from 1894 to 1899. During the debate on the Defence Bill in the Commonwealth Parliament, Cook contended that if the Federal Government was to be given discretionary powers to send Australian forces outside the Commonwealth, it must also be given a voice in the determination of peace and war. Cook believed that at some time in the future, Australians would require "to have some say in the determination of all these larger matters of policy.

Colonial participation in bearing the burden of imperial defence, in shaping the foreign policy of the Empire and in making changes in the political relationship between Great Britain and the colonies were matters for future consideration after the war ended. The immediate problem in relations between the Australian Colonies and Great Britain in 1900 was the passage of the Commonwealth of Australia Bill through the Imperial Parliament. Because this Bill included clauses which would remove the few remaining limitations on colonial self-government, it took on the appearance of being the final stage in the long struggle with the Colonial Office for absolute autonomy in internal affairs.

In his account of the Australian federal movement, Alfred Deakin used the terms "patriotic" to describe those who were staunch federalists and "national" to describe the federal cause itself. Because he believed that federation would maintain and perhaps strengthen the imperial link, Deakin claimed that both Australian patriotism and imperialism formed the basis of the federal movement. Kingston, another federalist, also said that Australian federation was a "national" movement; and Richard Jebb attributed the main impetus in the federal movement to Australian which affect the destiny of the Empire". C'wealth parl. Deb. (1901-1902 Session), vol.3, H. of Representatives, 7 August, 1901, p. 3527.

2 ibid., p. 166.
3 Interview with Kingston, published in the Pall Mall Gazette, 16 June, 1897.
nationalism. As these statements stand, two leading participants and a contemporary observer appear to be claiming that Australian federation was a mass or popular movement. Such an interpretation would exaggerate greatly both the degree of conscious nationalism in the Australian Colonies in the 1890s and the role of the populace in the federal movement. Despite the use of a referendum, Australian federation owed little or nothing to the developing sense of an Australian nationality among the colonists in general. Admittedly, this expression of the popular voice in support of the Commonwealth Bill proved to be a very useful argument for Deakin and Barton when they urged Chamberlain to ensure that the Bill was passed by the Imperial Parliament without amendment.

Deakin's use of the term "national" to describe the federal movement had a restricted meaning. He used it to distinguish between the federalists and those who were "colonial" or anti-federalist, and between those who staunchly supported the Commonwealth Bill as it was accepted by the Australian electorate and those who were prepared to accept Chamberlain's amendments in 1900. In this sense, the Australian "nationalists" by and large were part of the liberal and conservative middle class, and they included those who were members of the Australian Natives' Association; but, even so, their motivation was mainly political and economic and not "nationalist" in the ordinary sense of that term.

Jebb also regarded these federalists as Australian nationalists. His designation of nationalism as the main motive force in the federal movement must be denied unless, in line with his general definition of colonial nationalism, one of the main objects of the federal cause was the removal of any remaining limitations on colonial self-government and the end of Australian dependence on the mother country.

Such an interpretation almost presupposes that the Imperial Government would insist on retaining colonial dependence on the mother country in some respects and uphold the existing limitations on colonial autonomy. During the preceding half century, the Colonial office had acquiesced in the whittling away of both the limitations on the autonomy of the self-governing colonies and their dependence on Great Britain. In view of this, there appeared to be little or no reason for Chamberlain to make a stand in 1900. Yet Deakin has characterised the weeks before the introduction of the Commonwealth Bill into the Imperial Parliament as "the last scene of the last act which closed the contests of ten years with a last wrestle against no less antagonists than the British Government in general and its most capable negotiator, Mr. Chamberlain, in particular". In other words, the struggle was between Australia and imperial supremacy; and Deakin's account of the Australian delegation to England in 1900 is

1 Jebb's definition of colonial nationalism is in *ibid.*, p.103.
exaggeratedly couched in such terms. Clause 74 assumed an importance which otherwise it would not of itself have merited. It became the symbol of full Australian autonomy, as supported by the Australian people themselves, set against an assertion of imperial supremacy. The more closely this interpretation is examined the less valid it becomes.

When a new stage in the Australian federation movement began in 1889, the Colonial Office had not expected that the colonies would federate on their own terms. At some time, as Bramston had remarked, it would be necessary "to bring the Imperial factor into play". Contrary to the Colonial Office's expectations, the need had not arisen. Whereas the Dominion of Canada was created by the British North America Act after Canadian representatives had negotiated with the Colonial Office in London, the Commonwealth of Australia Bill was drawn up and debated in the Australian Colonies and then adopted by the electorates. Apart from one occasion, the Imperial Government played no part until the Bill was ready for submission to the Imperial Parliament; but the one occasion held some significance for the future.

The draft bill, drawn up by the National Convention in Sydney in 1891, did not retain a final appeal to the Judicial

I Minute dated I Jan., 1890, on Carrington to Knutsford, Confidential, 21 Nov., 1889. C.O.201/610.
Committee of the Privy Council. The subsequent draft bill, drawn up by the National Convention in Adelaide in 1897, adopted a new Commonwealth High Court as the final court of appeal. At the time of the Colonial Conference in 1897, Chamberlain asked that this decision might be reconsidered. Legal arguments could be put forward in defence of retaining a final appeal to the Privy Council, but Chamberlain argued in terms of imperial unity. If the Queen was a symbol of imperial unity, no citizen of the Empire should be curtailed in his right to appeal to the Queen in Council.

Like nearly all the other clauses in the Australian Commonwealth Bill, the form of the appeal clause was the result of compromise among the delegates to the National Convention. When stripped of any "national" or other overtones, the provision had a practical purpose behind it. The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had had no experience of a federal constitution. The Commonwealth High Court would be in a far better position than the Privy Council to decide any question involving either

1 An extract from Chamberlain's memorandum of 17 July, 1897, is printed in G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, lv (1900), Cd.188.
2 The Judicial Committee of the Privy Council had been enlarged by the appointment of a Judge each from Canada, the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, Cape Colony and India. The invitation to the colonies to recommend appointments had been extended by Ripon; but the Australian Colonies and New Zealand did not finally agree until the latter part of 1896 to recommend the appointment of Sir Samuel Way, the Chief Justice of South Australia. Although there was criticism in the Australian Colonies of the inadequacy of such appointments, a practical step had been taken towards associating the colonies more closely with a court of appeal open to the whole Empire.
an interpretation of the federal Commonwealth Constitution or relations between the federating States and the Commonwealth.

In response to Chamberlain's request for reconsideration in 1897, and despite much opposition in the Sydney Convention, Clause 74 was altered during the Melbourne Federal Convention in 1898 to permit appeal to the Privy Council in cases which did not involve a constitutional issue concerning the Commonwealth itself or the Commonwealth and the States.

Certain other clauses in the Commonwealth Bill appeared in themselves to provide better grounds than Clause 74 for asserting imperial supremacy or imperial interests. Among these were the inclusion of external affairs as one of the powers relinquished by the States to the Commonwealth; the relations of the Commonwealth with the Pacific Islands; and the application of Australian laws to vessels engaged in the Australian coasting trade. The States had never acted in external affairs except as dependencies of Great Britain; and, although relations with the Pacific Islands had been included among the subjects with which the Federal Council could deal, any action would have been subject to the Imperial Government's consent. The clause dealing with the coasting trade was probably the most potentially dangerous. The Commonwealth Parliament was quite likely to favour the prohibition of any but white crews. Why then did Chamberlain seek to amend Clause 74, and not one or more of these other clauses?

If Deakin's over-simplified and exaggerated explanation of a
deliberate contest is rejected, what was Chamberlain's motive in seeking any amendment at all?

In January, 1900, Clause 74 was not the only clause in danger of amendment in order to secure the prerogatives of the Crown, safeguard imperial interests or avoid difficulties with foreign Powers. In the Colonial Office, Herbert and Anderson were in general agreement with the Law Officers of the Crown on the particular clauses that needed amendment or clarification. In addition to Clause 74, these included the clauses dealing with the Australian coasting trade (Clause 5), the power of the Commonwealth in external affairs (Clause 51) and the position of Commonwealth legislation with regard to the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865.

Herbert and Anderson tried to avoid interpreting the clauses of the Act in a strictly legal sense. They attempted to consider them in conjunction with the explanations given by their authors in the Convention debates. The most intractable problem was to find a method of making the alterations acceptable to the federating colonies. The two Colonial Office officials worked on

I "Apart from the merits of the amendment he [Chamberlain] was resolved to demonstrate the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament and his own too by insisting upon some alteration however small". A. Deakin, op. cit., p.137.


Herbert returned to the Colonial Office temporarily during the latter part of 1899 and during part of 1900.
the premise that for all its faults the Act itself should not be amended. On the other hand, the clauses in the covering Bill might be amended because they were only in the nature of suggestions to the Imperial Government. In one respect, Clause 74 was differentiated from the other clauses about which Herbert, Anderson and the Law Officers had doubts. The stipulations in Clause 74 were questioned. In the other clauses some additional safeguards were needed to cover their operation.

The Law Officers and the two Colonial Office officials held different opinions concerning the amendment of Clause 74 in its reference to constitutional questions. The Law Officers suggested that appeal to the Queen in Council might be permitted on the recommendation of the High Court. Anderson showed more perspicacity than Herbert on this issue. He felt that any attempt

I Clause 5 laid down that Australian law should apply to ships engaged in coastal and New Guinea trade. Apart from extending Australian autonomous powers, the ultimate intention was undoubtedly to exclude ocean-going ships from the coastal trade or to make a white labour policy applicable. In order to avoid the complications which were likely to arise from the operation of this clause, Herbert agreed with the Law Officers that a statement should be added to restrict its operation to colonial waters, and to exempt ships under contract to the governments of Great Britain, other British colonies and foreign Powers from its operation.

A statement should be added to Clause 5I that the powers conferred on the Commonwealth did not in any way diminish or impair the prerogatives of the Crown in the direction and control of external affairs. In addition, the paramountcy of imperial legislation should be recognised by a stipulation that Acts of the Imperial Parliament at present binding on the colonies should remain so.

2 Herbert and Anderson thought that on non-constitutional issues the clause would work little differently from the provision in the 1867 British North America Act.

3 A few weeks previously Sir Courtney Ilbert had been inclined to agree to Clause 74 as it stood because it was evidently the result of a compromise. L.O. to C.O., 17 Nov., 1899, C.O. 418/6.
to remove the prohibition against appeals to the Queen in Council on constitutional questions would wreck the Bill. Herbert suggested that the Australian Colonies should be urged to agree to a new clause in the covering Bill. This would stipulate that issues between the Commonwealth and the States might be referred to the Queen in Council on the request of both parties without having to come before the High Court. In January, 1900, Chamberlain and Selborne, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, were in agreement with the policy outlined by Herbert and Anderson. There were no signs at the beginning of the year that Chamberlain had chosen Clause 74 as the ground for a struggle to assert imperial supremacy.

The Colonial Governments responded during January, 1900, to Chamberlain's suggestion that delegates might come to England to explain the provisions of the Bill and so aid its passage through the Imperial Parliament. When Chamberlain had first mentioned the appointment of a delegate to Sir Samuel Griffith in mid-December, 1899, Griffith, who was then administering the Government of Queensland, thought that the colonies would be unlikely to agree among themselves to send a delegate but they would respond to an invitation from the Imperial Government. Without delay, Chamberlain had communicated to Beauchamp, the

2 Griffith to Chamberlain, telegram, 14 Dec., 1899. C.O. 254/68. Griffith was Chief Justice and Lieutenant-Governor of Queensland.
Governor of New South Wales, his hopes that delegates intended
to come to England to confer with the Law Officers on legal and
constitutional questions and assist him in explaining the pro-
visions of the Bill. The terms of this invitation in no way sup-
port Deakin's charge: "No explanation whatever was offered as to
the purpose of the mission. It was an invitation in the nature
of a command". There was no reason for Chamberlain to mention
the possibility of amendment at that stage. The Law Officers
had only just reported on the Bill, and the Colonial Office
officials had not considered what amendments might have to be
made.

Griffith had told Chamberlain in December, 1899, that he
thought the Colonial Parliaments would accept any amendments
agreed to by the delegates. Although Griffith had not specifi-
cally mentioned the appeals question, his dissatisfaction with
the provisions of Clause 74 was known. In the Colonial Office,
Selborne saw most danger in following Griffith's advice; and
Chamberlain agreed with him that all action likely to postpone
federation indefinitely must be avoided. They thought that a
refusal by one Parliament to assent to any amendments to the

1 Chamberlain to Beauchamp, draft telegram, 22 Dec.,1899, filed
with Griffith's telegram of 14 Dec. C.O.234/68.
Griffith had refused to act as an intermediary because his
critical attitude towards some of the provisions in the Bill
was known. Griffith to Chamberlain, telegram, 20 Dec.,1899.
C.O.234/68.
2 A. Deakin, op.cit., p.104.
3 Griffith to Chamberlain, telegrams, 14 and 20 Dec.,1899. C.O.
234/68. Griffith added that some individuals in Australia
would welcome a reconsideration of the Bill, but he did not
think the Colonial Governments would give the delegates power
to alter the Bill.
4 Minutes on Griffith to Chamberlain, telegram, 14 Dec.,1899.
C.O.234/68.
Bill might easily have such an effect.

Deakin's appointment as a federal delegate was the first to be notified to the Colonial Office. This unilateral action by the Victorian Government, as well as the difficulties and jealousies among the colonies which prevented their choosing one delegate to represent all the federating colonies, led to the appointment of a delegate by each colony. As far as Barton, Deakin and Kingston were concerned, their own inclinations were unmistakably against any amendments to the Bill. Dickson's attitude was less strongly formed by conviction, and Queensland had also been a latecomer to the federal movement. Because of changes of government in the latter months of 1899, none of the Premiers who had taken an active part in the Federal Conventions and the referendum campaigns were still in office. Partly in order to strengthen the hands of the delegates and partly as an attempt by the delegates to ensure that the Premiers would support their uncompromising stand, the delegates were given instructions by the Premiers to ensure that the Bill was passed.

1 Madden to Chamberlain, telegram, 10 Jan., 1900, C.O. 309/149.

2 The delegates were Barton (N.S.W.), Deakin (Victoria), Kingston (S. Australia), Dickson (Queensland) and Fysh (Tasmania). S.H. Parker was appointed later as federal delegate for W. Australia. When the other delegates were appointed, it was still an open question whether or not Western Australia would join the federation as an original state. This question, and the attempt by the New Zealand Government, through the Agent-General, W. Pember Reeves, to secure terms for subsequent admission, will not be discussed here because they lie outside the scope of the imperial interests which were involved in the Commonwealth Bill.

3 In N.S.W. Reid had been replaced by Lyne (previously an anti-federalist); in Victoria Turner had been succeeded by A. McLean (also previously an anti-federalist); in Queensland Dickson had been succeeded by R. Philp; in S. Australia Kingston had been replaced by Holder (a federalist, but not entirely in
by the Imperial Parliament without any amendments. The delegates saw themselves as the guardians of a Constitution Bill which had been accepted by the people of Australia. In this limited sense, the Australian Commonwealth Constitution was "national".

Behind the determination that the Constitution Bill must be enacted by the Imperial Parliament without amendment, there was a clear idea in the minds of some of the federalists that as the Bill stood it eliminated Great Britain as the predominant partner. Moreover, they believed that there were no British interests in Australia of which the Imperial Government was the guardian. The establishment of a new High Court also assumed "national" overtones because it would be the equal of the Privy Council as a final court of appeal. Above all, those who held such views would regard any attempt by the Imperial Government to amend the Bill itself as interference in Australian internal affairs.

I Madden to Chamberlain, telegram, 22 April, 1900. C.O. 309/I49.

A conference of the Premiers of the five federating States was held in Melbourne, 19-21 April, 1900, to discuss the amendments suggested by Chamberlain in his telegrams of 5, 16 and 17 April. The delegates communicated directly with the Premiers on the progress of their negotiations with Chamberlain.

See the correspondence included in the N.S.W. Treas. Papers (Public Offices), the records of the Premier's Dept., Victoria, and the Chief Secretary's Office, S. Australia; and the correspondence between the C.O. and the Governors in the Govt. House Papers in the States concerned. Some of the correspondence was printed in G.B. and I. Parl. Papers, lv (1900), Cdd. 184, 185, 188; Vict. V. and P. (1900), Legis. Assembly, vol. III; and S. Aust. Proc. of Parl. and Papers (1900), vol. III, Papers 58 and 68.

2 e.g. J.H. Symon, one of the leading S. Australian federalists in the S. Aust. Register, 4 Jan., 1900. The Bulletin put forward a similar view, 14 April, 1900.
In the Colonial Office, Anderson was well aware how undesirable it was to give any provocation so as to arouse an outcry against imperial interference. This reluctance to alienate colonial feeling was probably enhanced by the support which the colonies had given and were still so readily giving in South Africa. Anderson's and Herbert's perplexities were increased by their awareness that the federal delegates' determination to secure the passage of the Bill without amendment did not have unanimous support in the colonies.

In February, an authoritative expression of opinion had been received from Sir Samuel Way, Chief Justice and Lieutenant-Governor of South Australia. According to Way, an important body of colonial opinion opposed Clause 74 as it stood. Moreover, Way plainly stated his hope that the Imperial Government would amend the clause so as to make it consistent with the existence of a permanent union between the mother country and Australia. Way's contentions focussed the Colonial Office's attention on Clause 74 and raised an issue which was bound to be of particular interest to Chamberlain.

At the beginning of March, 1900, Chamberlain had still not decided to throw down the gage of battle on Clause 74. He cer-

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1 Minute on Tennyson to Chamberlain, Confidential, 20 Jan., 1900. C.O.13/154.
tainly disliked the Commonwealth Bill as it stood; but he also
realised how great a responsibility it would be to amend the
Bill and so jeopardise federation. Anderson was still against
amending Clause 74. Perhaps with a sense of prescience regarding
the delegates who were then on their way to England, he believed
that the main opposition to any such amendment would come from
the "able and vigorous lawyers who had exercised too much influ-
ence in the Convention". Herbert was less sanguine than Anderson
about the effect of the clause. He was apprehensive that in prac-
tice the right of appeal to the Queen in Council would be almost
entirely abolished; but he tried to persuade himself that this
danger might be obviated by setting up a new Imperial Court of
Appeal. The establishment of such a court was not a matter of
wishful thinking. It was then being given serious consideration
by the Imperial Government.

Before the federal delegates reached England, two very
important developments occurred. One of them was in Great Bri-
tain and the other in the Australian Colonies. Together they
offer the most feasible explanation for Chamberlain's growing
determination to seek the delegates' and the colonial Premiers'
agreement for the alteration of Clause 74 in favour of full

1 Minute on Tennyson to Chamberlain, Confidential, 20 Jan., 1900.
C.O.13/154.
2 Minute on ibid.
3 Minute on ibid., dated 7 March, 1900.
retention of appeal to the Privy Council.

The upsurge of imperial sentiment in the colonies, and the support given to the mother country in South Africa, led Chamberlain to ask the Governors whether colonial opinion warranted a positive attempt to strengthen imperial unity. In particular, he asked the Governors to discuss with their ministers, and with opposition leaders and other influential citizens, the creation of an Imperial Council. According to Chamberlain's conception of its functions and membership, the Council would sit permanently in London and act in an advisory capacity to the Imperial Government. Its members, appointed for a term of years or for life, might be made Privy Councillors or created life peers. At first the Council would be concerned most with imperial defence, and might be consulted prior to a declaration of war. A conference of colonial Premiers could be called to draw up detailed proposals for the creation of such a council.

In March, 1900, when Chamberlain was concerned with setting up new imperial organisations, one of the most cherished of the existing links of Empire, the right of appeal to the Queen in Council, was seriously threatened by the Commonwealth Bill. At the same time also, Lord Halsbury, the Lord Chancellor, and

In the same letters Chamberlain suggested that the Colonial Governments might like to be represented in a peace conference.
other members of the Imperial Government, were examining proposals for strengthening that particular link of Empire through the creation of an Imperial Court of Appeal. Should such a court be set up, the judicial functions of the House of Lords and the Privy Council might eventually be merged and colonial life peerages be created in consequence. In his attempts to secure the retention of full appeal to the Queen in Council in the Commonwealth Bill, Chamberlain used the future establishment of a new Imperial Court as one of his major arguments.

The second, and perhaps the more important immediate influence on Chamberlain's conduct in the negotiations with the federal delegates was his awareness that they did not have the full support of the colonies they represented. He received information with increasing frequency during April and May that the Premiers, the Chief Justices and other influential elements of colonial opinion, as well as a strong section of the colonial press, either opposed or did not give very staunch support to the adamant attitude of the delegates against any amendment of the Bill. In particular, the legal arguments of the Chief Justices in favour of the retention of full appeal to the Privy Council were reinforced by those of commercial men; and part of the colonial press also favoured amendment of Clause 74.

There are references to Halsbury's interest in an Imperial Court of Appeal in a minute by Anderson on Tennyson to Chamberlain, Confidential, 20 Jan., 1900, C.O.13/154; and in Chamberlain's speech on the Commonwealth Bill in the House of Commons on 14 May, 1900.

Many of the cables, despatches and enclosure sent by Tennyson (S. Australia), Lamington (Queensland), and, to a lesser extent by Beauchamp (N.S.W.) are printed in G.B. and I. Parl. Papers, 1v (1900), Cd.158. Other communications are included in the C.O. series of despatches.
Governors personally favoured amendment, and they used every possible opportunity to show Chamberlain that the Premiers were not solidly behind the delegates. The Premiers followed a devious and an ambiguous course. During the negotiations with Chamberlain, the delegates sought and obtained public backing from them; but the contrary opinions Chamberlain received from the Premiers through the Governors were given confidentially. The Premiers' attitude of facing both ways and their refusal to take any responsibility was exemplified by Holder, the South Australian Premier. At the Premiers' Conference in Melbourne, he supported the delegates in their intention to remain firm against amendment; but he confidentially requested Chamberlain to take the initiative and amend the Bill without reference to the colonial Parliaments or to the people in another referendum. Provided they could have obtained a clear expression of opinion from the Premiers, and, moreover, one that could be made public, both Chamberlain and Herbert would have preferred to accept the opinion of the Premiers rather than that of the delegates. Their doubts about colonial backing for the delegates' uncompromising stand were increased when Dickson, the Queensland delegate, changed his mind and supported Chamberlain's first proposal to delete Clause 74.

1 Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegrams, 13 April and 11 May, 1900. C.O.I3/I54.
2 Minutes by Herbert and Chamberlain on Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegram, 11 June, 1900. C.O.I3/I54.
3 i.e. when Chamberlain introduced the Bill into the House of Commons on 14 May.
Early in April, Chamberlain dropped the other amendments suggested by Herbert and the Law Officers a few months before. He was convinced that it was his duty, as Secretary of State, to seek and uphold all means of maintaining imperial unity; and he had decided that the issue of future imperial unity in one of its aspects lay in Clause 74. He, no less that the delegates from their point of view, was making a stand in defence of an important principle. To these convictions were added his grave doubts whether he would be acting in accord with articulate Australian opinion, and particularly with the support of the Governments, if he allowed Clause 74 to remain in the Bill without amendment. The quandary in which Chamberlain was placed lasted throughout the negotiations with the federal delegates; and more than any other factor it explains the compromise which he finally

1 In their first memorandum, dated 23 March, 1900, the federal delegates put forward arguments to counter all the points raised by the Law Officers. G.B. and I. Parl. Paper, lv (1900), Cd.158, p.13ff. Chamberlain replied to the delegates on 29 March. He took into consideration all the amendments that were still likely; but he gave more attention to Clause 74 than to any of the other points, and stressed the judicial role of the Privy Council as a link of Empire and the existing sentiment in favour of imperial unity. In view of his interest at that time in establishing an Imperial Council, he significantly ended by remarking that the Bill as it stood was an advance with regard to Australian federation; but, as far as imperial federation was concerned, it was a retrograde measure. ibid., p.22ff.

2 Chamberlain to the Governors of the Australian Colonies, telegram, 5 April, 1900. ibid., p.47-8. The delegates' memorandum of 27 April and Chamberlain's reply were concerned with Clause 74. ibid., pp.65ff. and 76ff.

3 Chamberlain to the Governors of the Australian Colonies, telegram, 5 April, 1900. ibid., p.47-8. Also his speech introducing the Bill into the House of Commons, 14 May, 1900, Hansard, 4 Ser., vol. lxxxiii, cols. 46-75; and speech at the British Empire League banquet, 30 April, 1900, reported in The Times, 1 May, 1900, p.6d.
reached with Barton, Deakin and Kingston. There is, therefore, no reason to dispute Garvin’s judgment that at no time was it a case of Chamberlain against Australia. Furthermore, Chamberlain was not bent on asserting his personal will. Deakin’s charges against Chamberlain on both counts cannot be substantiated.

Chamberlain’s own explanation of his acceptance of a compromise is found in a minute written between the second reading of the Bill and the committee stage. The minute is indicative also of the depth of the quandary in which Chamberlain found himself between the Premiers and the delegates; and it in no way supports another of Deakin’s charges that Chamberlain deliberately fostered and followed a policy of "divide and conquer". "The Colonies sent delegates to represent them. We have never been able to get any opinion from the Governments which we could publish and it is difficult for the delegates.

"Accordingly we negotiated with the delegates and made an agreement with the majority.

"It seems to me that it would be a distinct breach of faith if we deviated in any way from this agreement without their consent or the authority of their Governments. These secret and confidential telegrams are useless... as far as I can see no

2 A.Deakin, op.cit., pp.I33,137. C.Grimshaw has accepted Deakin’s interpretation. Some Aspects of Australian Attitudes to the Imperial Connection, 1900-1910 (Unpublished M.A. thesis in the University of Queensland), pp.52-3,59-60. Grimshaw based his conclusion on Deakin’s account and the published correspondence in Parliamentary papers. The additional unpublished correspondence and minutes in the C.O. series, and in the series of Government House Papers will not bear out this contention.
Australian politician dares call his soul his own and the delegates are the only people who have summed up courage to have an opinion.

"If the Premiers and Parliaments were to give us a clear indication we could act upon it. But there seems no possibility of this..."

In its final form, Clause 74 provided that the High Court could permit an appeal to the Privy Council in cases involving a constitutional issue or relations between the Commonwealth and the States. By means of this compromise, Chamberlain secured something in defence of what he had considered was the most important principle at stake. So did Barton, Deakin and Kingston; but Dickson, Griffith and the Queensland Government were left dissatisfied. The Chief Justices and others in the colonies who had supported the retention of full appeal to the Privy Council were also dissatisfied.

Chamberlain, in the end, had secured a possible means for appeals on all issues to be brought before the Privy Council.

1 Minute dated 13 June, 1900, on Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegram, II June, 1900. C.O. 13/154.
2 When Chamberlain spoke on the motion to introduce the Bill into the House of Commons on 14 May, Clause 74 was omitted altogether and the covering Clause 5 upheld the rights of appeal to the Queen in Council. At the second reading of the Bill on 21 May, Clause 74 allowed appeals to the Privy Council with the consent of the Executive Government. This was the result of a compromise worked out with Barton, Deakin and Kingston. The delegates experienced some delay in getting the Colonial Governments to agree to this form of the clause. As a result of representations from the colonies, the High Court was inserted in Clause 74 instead of the Executive Government when the Bill reached the committee stage.
3 Herbert was not particularly satisfied with the compromise. It did not remove his doubts of what appeals would be possible. He would have preferred the omission of that part of Clause
The judicial unity of the Empire was left unimpaired. The three delegates had secured the passage of the Bill without any practical amendment. They were certain that the High Court would be preferred to the Privy Council in the settlement of questions which did not involve any State outside the Commonwealth.

IV

On 5 February, 1900, Chamberlain addressed the House of Commons on the South African War. During the course of his speech, he attributed colonial support for the mother country to the working of an "imperial instinct". Its vitality was such that the strength and unity of the Empire had been shown as never before: "A sense of common interest, of common duty, an assurance of mutual support and pride in the great edifice in which they are all members have helped to consolidate and establish the unity of the Empire..." Chamberlain's warm and sincere tribute to the colonies in appreciation of their support for Great Britain reflected the strength of his belief in the Empire and in imperial unity. At a distance of several thousand miles from the colonies, there was good reason for him to think that the colonies "for the first time claim their share in the duties and responsibilities of the Empire..."

74 which referred to constitutional questions and relations between the Commonwealth and the States. The extent to which appeals would be allowed could be determined by the Commonwealth Parliament. Minute on Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegram, II June, 1900. C.O.13/154.

1 A. Deakin, op. cit., p.155.
2 Hansard 4 Ser., vol.1xxviii, cols.622-3.
3 Ibid.
The South African War stimulated imperial sentiment in the Australian Colonies as nothing had done before. Its strength in 1900 might well appear to invalidate the Premiers' refusal at the Colonial Conference in 1897 to alter the existing political relations between Great Britain and the colonies. Chamberlain, and imperial federationists in Great Britain the more so, thought that a propitious time had been reached for taking practical steps towards establishing closer imperial ties. In March, 1900, Chamberlain's desire to seize a favourable opportunity overcame his preference for the colonies to take the initiative. Hence he prefaced his outline of the functions and membership of an Imperial Council with these words: "Knowing as I do the strong feeling of independence which exists in all the self-governing Colonies, I am almost afraid to make suggestions lest I should appear to presume, and I would greatly prefer that the initiative in any further movement towards closer union should be taken by the Colonies...."

While he was waiting for the colonies' response to his suggestion for an Imperial Council as a first step towards closer imperial relations, Chamberlain was bound to deprecate any attempt to take a hasty opinion in Great Britain on the form that closer relations should take. A motion in the House of Commons that "the colonies should be admitted to some direct representa-

tion in the Imperial Parliament", showed that at least one enthusiast still wanted to create an imperial federation in one bound. With colonial representatives in the Imperial Parliament, Great Britain could speak to the world with "the united voice of the whole Empire" and exercise far greater influence in the world in the interests of preserving peace. In his reply, Chamberlain deprecated any premature and unilateral discussion of a constitutional question which concerned the colonies as well as the mother country. In order to avoid any appearance of dictation or even of suggestion from the mother country, the initiative in proposing changes must be taken by the colonies. For the present, Chamberlain thought that special colonial delegations could serve a useful purpose in stating the colonies' case on questions in which they were particularly interested. The motion was withdrawn in response to Chamberlain's reasoning that it was premature, academic and possibly mischievous.

Salisbury remained sceptical that any formal moves towards imperial federation would secure lasting results. Chamberlain's caution about premature proposals was greater than his confidence that the colonies would respond favourably to his own suggestion of an Imperial Council. He realised that irreparable harm might

1 Motion by Hedderwick (Liberal) in the H. of Commons, 3 April, 1900. Hansard 4 Ser., vol.lxxxI, cols.II3I-53.
2 ibid., cols. II33,II39.
3 ibid., cols.II44-5.
4 ibid., col.II46.
5 ibid., col.II50. This was a point about which Hedderwick, the author of the motion, expressed some doubts. He thought that too much would depend on the will of the Secretary of State to meet the colonies fairly. ibid., cols.II52-3.
6 Speech at British Empire League banquet, 30 April,1900, reported in The Times, I May,1900, p.6c.
be done if the colonies suspected Great Britain of wanting to dictate to them or to raise taxation for imperial purposes. Both Salisbury's scepticism and Chamberlain's caution were justified. The response from the colonies to his suggestion of an advisory Imperial Council showed that their attitudes had not changed since 1897. Indeed, the Canadian Prime Minister's attitude had hardened against any immediate changes in political relations between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies. Although Laurier admitted that the existing relations could not always continue unchanged, he refused to discuss any possible changes. To do so prematurely would be more likely to retard than to promote imperial unity. Furthermore, Laurier held out no hope that Canada would undertake any definite commitments in imperial defence which involved financial contributions. No matter how favourable might be the response from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, the Canadian view was so discouraging and so plainly stated that Chamberlain was unlikely to take any positive steps towards summoning a conference to discuss setting up an Imperial Council.

In comparison with the Canadian attitude, the immediate response from the Australian Colonies was less forthright in its rejection of an Imperial Council; but Lord Tennyson's reply, the only one that can be cited, does not necessarily reflect the attitude of all the major Australian Colonies. New South Wales,

1 R.H.Wilde, op.cit. Laurier's memoranda are quoted on pp.232-6. 2 Tennyson to Chamberlain, draft of private letter, 17 April, 1900. Diary for 1900, C'wealth National Library 479/2/I3. Madden's telegram of 17 April,1900, to Chamberlain referred solely to that part of Chamberlain's letter which dealt with the Victorian Government's participation in a peace conference. C.0.309/I49.
Victoria and Queensland were likely to be much less favourably inclined towards an Imperial Council. In some ways, South Australia was the most English of the Australian Colonies. This characteristic, and his own enthusiasm for imperial unity, sometimes led Lord Tennyson to exaggerate the strength of imperial sentiment in the Australian Colonies and to disregard the growing Australian national feeling. He assumed too readily that a federated Australia would want a voice in the settlement of imperial questions; and he was over-confident that the degree of imperial sentiment aroused by the despatch of the contingents to South Africa would permit an immediate move towards the federation of the Empire. Holder, the South Australian Premier, encouraged Tennyson in these beliefs. Provided the opportunity was used while imperial sentiment was still strong, Holder told Tennyson, the colonies would welcome an invitation from the Imperial Government to participate in setting up an Imperial Council of Defence as the first step towards a Council of the Empire. Holder's attitude appeared to be very different from Kingston's in 1897; but, in the same way as he refused to take any responsibility for authorising amendments to the Commonwealth Bill, Holder's support for an Imperial Council was hedged about with a significant qualification. He told Tennyson that the new Common-

I The contrast with Kingston's radicalism was further marked by Holder's statement that his colleagues favoured the grant of life peerages to colonial representatives in an Imperial Council. Tennyson to Chamberlain, draft of private letter, 17 April, 1900. Diary for 1900, C'wealth National Library 479/2/I3.
wealth, and not the Australian States, must be consulted about the proposal to hold a Premiers' conference in London to discuss the establishment and the functions of an Imperial Council.

While the federal delegates were in London, Chamberlain might well have sought their opinions on the ripeness of the time for a move towards closer imperial unity; but in any case their public utterances made their attitude unmistakably clear. They insisted on the removal of any remaining curbs on colonial autonomy; and Barton, who was likely to be the first Commonwealth Prime Minister, told the British Empire League that "it would be dangerous to formulate proposals which acted too strongly as obligations and which left, perhaps, less play for a feeling of common patriotism". When the time came for Australians to ask themselves whether on all occasions and in all circumstances they would assist Great Britain and the Empire, they might answer that representation must go with sharing in the responsibilities of the Empire. For the present, Barton declared, "the general opinion in Australia was that the time had not yet come for anything of the sort to be formulated".

When the new Commonwealth of Australia was inaugurated on I January, 1901, Australians had not yet asked themselves whether their voluntary offers to support Great Britain in South Africa and their response to British requests for further forces meant

1 Speech at the British Empire League banquet, 30 April, 1900, reported in The Times, I May, 1900, p.6d.
2 Ibid.
that they were committed to sharing in the responsibilities of imperial defence. They had not yet determined whether they would always be obliged to make common cause with Great Britain in times of war. In Great Britain, the enthusiasts for imperial unity thought that the colonies had taken the first steps towards such commitments and obligations; and Chamberlain to some extent thought, or at least hoped, that they had done so. In February, 1900, he wrote to Barton in appreciation of his statement that Australian interests would suffer if there were any doubts abroad about the strength and unity of the British Empire. Moreover, Chamberlain thought that a federated Australia would "greatly facilitate the task of rendering the whole force of that 'complete Union of the British Empire' more readily available and more effective for the defence of its common interests".

During the first year of its existence, the new Commonwealth of Australia showed no signs of being any more willing than the separate States had been to commit itself to the defence of the Empire. Nor was the Commonwealth likely to be less insistent than the States on upholding colonial autonomy. At the same time as the Australian Colonies had supported Great Britain in South Africa, they, or rather the federal delegates, had insisted on the exercise of full colonial autonomy through the terms of

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1 Barton had expressed this view during the debate on the despatch of the first contingent in the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly on 19 October, 1899. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.100, p.1504.
2 Chamberlain to Barton, 8 Feb.,1900. Barton Papers, C'wealth National Library.
the Commonwealth Bill. Between 1899 and 1901, the compatibility of imperial sentiment and colonial nationalism had been demonstrated; but those years had shown that when the two conflicted on a specific issue, the defence of colonial interests was likely to come first.

Imperial defence and the formation of an Imperial Council were bound to be brought before the Colonial Conference in 1902. The two were clearly and closely connected in Chamberlain's mind by the time the conference was summoned. This had not been so in 1897. On account of colonial support in the South African War, there was a strong feeling in Great Britain that the time was much more propitious than in 1897 for putting the "partnership" between the mother country and the colonies on a more formal and systematic footing. Despite Chamberlain's use of terms such as "partnership", "independent sister nations" and "sister States able to treat with us from an equal position", the problem of determining the degree of equality between the mother country and the self-governing colonies was still evaded.

Although in 1900, and again in 1902, it appeared as though closer imperial ties would depend on commitments in imperial defence and on political institutions, the commercial question had not faded away during the war. The continuation of the war into 1902 led to the imposition of corn duty of a shilling per quarter in Great Britain. As a result, the mother country was

no longer without the means of offering a reciprocal preference to the major colonies. In 1900 the Governor-General of Canada reminded Chamberlain of Canadian interest in the commercial relations of the Empire; and he intimated that Laurier favoured tariff arrangements as the best means of establishing closer imperial relations. Although no hint of this reached Chamberlain in 1900, Laurier was already thinking that Great Britain would have to offer some reciprocity before any further progress in inter-imperial tariff arrangements could be made.

Chamberlain would have to face a vital question in 1902. Could the shilling corn duty be used as a first step towards meeting the colonies on their terms for a closer relationship with Great Britain? In Australia, preferences were tied up with the formulation of a Commonwealth tariff. Now that free trade within Australia had been achieved, a Commonwealth tariff would almost certainly involve protection against the rest of the world. The answers to these and other major questions would be found in whole or in part during the 1902 Colonial Conference. For the first time, Australia would speak in a Colonial Conference with one voice. This would be as much a "national" voice as that of Canada.

CHAPTER 14

COLONIAL AUTONOMY AND THE IMPERIAL IDEA: BARTON AND CHAMBERLAIN

AT THE COLONIAL CONFERENCE OF 1902

The wave of imperial sentiment in Great Britain and the self-governing colonies continued almost unabated until the conclusion of peace in South Africa and the coronation of Edward VII. Enthusiasts for closer ties between the mother country and the colonies were led to believe that their hopes were about to be realised. They disregarded warning signs that the colonies would not readily accept more formal political ties or undertake binding commitments in imperial defence. After the Colonial Conference of 1902, they could no longer fail to recognise that imperial sentiment in the self-governing colonies had clearly defined and practical limits. The attitude of the colonies towards closer imperial relations had its positive side; but the means favoured by the colonies put the onus of adopting a radical change of policy on the mother country and not on themselves. An alteration in Britain's free trade policy was a prerequisite for closer commercial relations based on reciprocal preferences.

Chamberlain's sincere belief in imperial unity had grown in strength during the South African War. More and more he became the protagonist of closer formal ties between the mother country and the self-governing colonies. By means of these ties, the colonies would share with Great Britain in the benefits and responsibilities of Empire. In 1897 and 1900 he had only sounded
the colonies to see if definite proposals would be welcomed by them. By 1902 he was convinced that the favourable opportunity presented by the imminent end of the war in South Africa must not be lost. The Imperial Government would have to take the initiative and invite the colonies to undertake specific commitments in imperial defence and discuss the means of entering into closer political relations. A combination of imperial faith, the opportune moment and the practical need for a united Empire led Chamberlain to this course of action. He seemed to be rejecting the two precepts which he had followed in the past. In answer to others who had wanted Great Britain to take the lead, he had always insisted that the initiative must come from the colonies and no attempt should be made to force the pace.

Selborne, the First Lord of the Admiralty, and St. John Brodrick, the Secretary of State for War, fully agreed with Chamberlain that the time had come for the colonies to share in strengthening the military and naval defence of the Empire. The South African War had revealed many serious shortcomings in the British Army. The Royal Navy had not been tested in the same way and its weaknesses revealed; but organisations such as the Navy League warned that greater preparedness in naval defence was also needed. In order to strengthen the defence of the Empire and make the forces available for this task more efficient, reforms and

I e.g. speech at Birmingham, 16 May,1902, reported in The Times, 17 May,1902, p.12a; and Chamberlain's opening address to the 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confidential Print, Misc.No.144, pp.2-3.
changes were inevitable. Colonial participation in imperial defence would help to reduce the financial burden which fell almost exclusively on the British taxpayer; and all or part of the colonial forces could be added to the numbers of trained men available in widely separated areas of the world to defend Britain's and the Empire's interests. Those in Great Britain who still hoped for a political federation of the Empire saw the active participation of the colonies in imperial defence as an essential prerequisite before a voice in policy making could be conceded to them.

The military assistance which the colonies had given in South Africa, and the existence of the 1887 agreement with the Australian Colonies and New Zealand for an auxiliary naval squadron, seemed good auguries for these hopes being fulfilled in part or in their entirety. Salisbury still uttered words of caution against too hasty attempts to force the pace; and voices from the Liberal side warned against expecting too much readiness from the colonies to accept far-reaching changes. The Liberal warning applied also to alterations in the commercial relations of the Empire. Free traders, both Conservative and Liberal, were not entirely reassured by the Government's denials that the

1 The British Empire League and the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee were particularly active in publicising arguments such as these.

2 e.g. Salisbury at the Primrose League Dinner, 7 May, 1902, reported in The Times, 8 May, 1902, p. 6a; Rosebery at Leeds, 30 May, 1902, reported in The Times, 31 May, 1902, p. 9a; and an editorial in the Liberal Daily News, 1 July, 1902.
small corn registration duty would be the means of granting a preference on colonial grain and the first step towards protection. Chamberlain still hoped that some progress might be made towards freer trade within the Empire by the lowering of colonial tariffs. Britain's position would thereby be strengthened in a world where commercial competition was ever becoming more serious, and the problem of reciprocity would be avoided.

Political relations, defence and commercial relations almost inevitably became the three subjects that the colonial Prime Ministers were invited to discuss with Chamberlain. In 1902 he intended to hold more than an "informal discussion". The more formal preparatory organisation of the 1902 Colonial Conference, in comparison with the 1897 Conference, showed that Chamberlain expected some advances to be made. He partly left the initiative to the colonies to propose ways of moving towards a

I Gerald Balfour, President of the Board of Trade, and Hicks Beach, Chancellor of the Exchequer, in the House of Commons, 15 May and 9 June, 1902, respectively. Hicks Beach stated that the corn duty had been imposed solely as a revenue duty; but he added that this did not prejudice the forthcoming discussions at the Colonial Conference.

A corn registration duty of 3d. per cwt. on imported grain and corn and 5d. per cwt. on imported flour and meal had been imposed in April, 1902. It was expected to yield about £2,650,000 annually.

2 Chamberlain to Hopetoun, telegram, 25 Jan., 1902. C.P. 217, Set I, vol. 32, Imperial Conference, C'wealth National Library Archives. Chamberlain also suggested that the conference might discuss the relations of Australia and New Zealand with the Pacific Islands. The invitation to attend the Coronation was sent in Chamberlain to Hopetoun, Aust. No. II7, 27 Dec., 1901. The term "Prime Ministers" is used collectively in this chapter with reference to all the self-governing colonies. This is in conformity with the title officially adopted in the resolutions of the 1902 Colonial Conference.
more closely-knit imperial structure. Richard Seddon's response offered some grounds for optimism that Chamberlain's hopes were not misplaced. The creation of an imperial reserve from colonial military forces, and the payment of larger colonial contributions to provide for an increase in the strength of the Australian and New Zealand naval squadron, would be two long steps in the direction of commitment to bear a proportionate share of the burden of imperial defence.

There were some further grounds for optimism in 1902. Australian federation was an accomplished fact; and the successful termination of the war in South Africa pointed to the establishment of a South African federation within a period of years. As far as Australia was concerned, one of the necessary prerequisites for adopting changes in political and commercial relations, as well as in imperial defence, had already been fulfilled. In addition, the ten-year term of the existing agreement for the Australasian Auxiliary Naval Squadron was about to expire. A new

I The Prime Ministers were invited to suggest further subjects for discussion and submit notice of resolutions.

2 See the subjects submitted by Seddon and listed in Chamberlain to Hopetoun, 26 February, 1902. C.P.217, Set I, vol.32, C.N.L. Archives. They also included a preferential tariff on British goods carried to the colonies in British ships; the reduction of duties on dutiable colonial products in Great Britain; and the institution of triennial conferences. Because Seddon suggested these subjects, it did not necessarily follow that he would adopt them himself as policies. He told W.P. Reeves, the Agent-General for New Zealand, that the draft resolutions were intended as a means of testing opinion in Great Britain and in New Zealand. Letter dated 3 April, 1902, W.P. Reeves Papers, Correspondence from Seddon, 1898-1902. National Archives, New Zealand.
agreement had to be concluded or the old, and by then inadequate, arrangement continued. On the military side, the Commonwealth Government had taken control of all military forces in Australia, but their reorganisation had not been completed. The adoption of a uniform federal tariff in 1901 provided the means for a preference to be granted to Great Britain should the Commonwealth Government and Parliament be so disposed.

In 1902 Chamberlain and his colleagues at the Admiralty and the War Office had some grounds for anticipating that the Commonwealth Government would be willing to accept closer formal ties with Great Britain; and, in particular, to undertake military and naval commitments in order to strengthen imperial unity. For its part, the Commonwealth Government had good reason to believe that Chamberlain would expect the Colonial Conference to make some progress in establishing closer relations with Great Britain in the areas of political relations, commercial relations and imperial defence.

The Commonwealth Government, like the six Colonial Governments in 1897, did not regard a Colonial Conference solely as an opportunity for the colonies to offer advantages to Great Britain or to meet her wishes. Some benefit to Australia was sought from Barton's meetings with Chamberlain, other members of the Imperial Government and his fellow colonial Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier.

Barton had agreed to hold a conference with Sir Wilfrid Laurier while he was in London. See Note N, Barton's Conference with the Canadian Representatives in 1902.
Since he had been Prime Minister, Barton had given careful thought to the defence and tariff policies Australia might most advantageously follow. He and Sir John Forrest, the Minister of Defence, were keenly aware of the need to make better provision for Australia's military and naval defence. In the Defence Bill of 1901, they had attempted to introduce uniformity into the Commonwealth military forces as well as greater efficiency. As far as naval defence was concerned, Barton had been seeking advice on what policy Australia should follow when the 1887 agreement expired; and proposals for an improved squadron in Australian waters were being discussed with the Admiral on the Station.

Over a period of several months, Barton had given serious attention to all aspects of a tariff preference in Great Britain's favour. Shortly after he became Prime Minister, he asked Chamberlain for information about the effect of the Canadian preference in increasing the volume of trade with Great Britain and whether Germany's withdrawal of most-favoured-nation treatment had affected Canada adversely. In June and July, 1901, before a uniform

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1 Because of the opposition to the clauses which provided for service outside the Commonwealth, the Government decided not to proceed with the Defence Bill during the 1901-2 Session of Parliament. Early in 1902, Major-General Edward Hutton took up duty as Commandant of the Commonwealth military forces. He had previously been Commandant in N.S.W. before going to Canada. Sir Hector Macdonald and Lord Dunonald had been considered for the appointment at one stage.

2 Barton had sought the views of Sir Lewis Beaumont (the Admiral Commanding the Australian Station), Lord Hopetown (the Governor-General), Sir John Forrest (Minister of Defence) and Capt. Cresswell (the Queensland Naval Commandant). The first three advised against the creation of an Australian navy. Cresswell favoured local naval defence, and especially the creation of a colonial naval reserve. See minute by Forrest for Barton, 15 March, 1902 (printed in C.O. Confid Print, Misc.No.144 as Appendix V(5), pp.253-7); Beaumont's letter to Hopetown, dat
Tariff Bill was introduced into the Commonwealth Parliament, Barton and two of his colleagues, George Turner, the Federal Treasurer, and C.C. Kingston, the Minister for Trade and Customs, looked into the possibility of according preferential treatment to British goods. Kingston, whose views had not changed since 1897, was in a good position to have some influence in pressing for reciprocity from Great Britain. When Barton subsequently inquired directly from Laurier about the workings of the Canadian preference, he was interested in finding out whether the Canadian Government was likely to seek any reciprocity from Great Britain.

During the latter months of 1901, the Commonwealth Government

16 August, 1901 (quoted by Forrest in ibid., pp.253-4); Hopetoun to Barton, 29 April, 1902 (Barton Papers, C.N.L.); and Cresswell's memo. is printed in C'wealth Parl. Papers, H. of Representatives, 1901-2 Session, vol. II, p.149.

3 Minute by Barton, 25 Feb., 1901, forwarded in Hopetoun to Chancellor, Aust. No.7, 28 Feb., 1901. C.0.418/9. On account of the preference to Great Britain, Canada was excluded by Germany from the interim arrangements to continue the operation of the concessions included in the 1865 treaty while a new treaty was being negotiated.

1 Barton to Turner, 27 June, 1901; and minutes by Turner (n.d.) and Kingston, 8 July, 1901. C.P.103, Set I2 B5 File A(3), Papers for the Colonial Conference, 1902, C.N.L. Archives.

2 Minute by Kingston, 8 July, 1901. Kingston saw no grounds for complaint if Germany retaliated against a British colony which gave a preference to Great Britain; but he thought that the possibility of such action by Germany should give Australia an additional claim to preferential treatment by Great Britain.

3 Barton to Laurier, 5 August, 1901. C.P.103, Set I2 B5 File A(3), C.N.L. Archives. There is no record that Barton received a reply directly from Canada; but the information he desired was presented to the 1902 Colonial Conference in memoranda by the Canadian Government. C.O.Conf.d. Print, Misc. No.144, Appendices XIV and XXI, p.430ff. and 482ff.

In practice Canada suffered no loss of trade with Germany as a result of the preference to Great Britain. This might have been due to the existing Canadian prosperity, and to the supply of a class of goods from Germany that were not obtainable from elsewhere. ibid., Procs., p.9, and Appendix XXI, p.482.
favoured in principle a policy of granting tariff preferences to Great Britain; but the prior necessity of determining the extent of the Commonwealth's revenue prevented the immediate adoption of such a policy. When the time came to do so, a policy of unilateral preferences to Great Britain might well be discarded and some reciprocal concessions be sought from Great Britain. In the meantime, Barton wanted to gather as much information as possible about the operation of a preferential tariff.

After Chamberlain had invited the Prime Ministers to attend a Colonial Conference, the Canadian Government plainly showed that its main interests would lie in preferential trade and whether or not Great Britain would grant some reciprocal concessions. Some of the broad subjects which Seddon was going to bring before the conference involved serious changes in imperial relations, and they concerned Australia as closely as New Zealand. The matters suggested by the Commonwealth Government for discussion by the conference or between Barton and Chamberlain were very closely connected with problems of immediate interest in relations between Australia and Great Britain.

1 Preferential trade also featured in the conference Barton had agreed to hold with the Canadians while he was in London. See Note G. By May and June, 1902, the Canadians had become more insistent that some reciprocity would be required should a further preference be granted to Great Britain. See statements by Laurier and R. Borden (the Opposition leader) in the Canadian House of Commons, 12 May, 1902; and resolutions of the Conference of Canadian Chambers of Commerce at Ottawa, reported in The Times, 5 and 6 June, 1902, p.5e.

2 The subjects put forward by the Commonwealth Government were drawn up by Barton in consultation with other ministers. Those for discussion by the conference included: contracts for supplies to the British army and navy; the purchase of ocean cables by the Imperial and Colonial Governments; the establish-
Some of them were new problems facing the Commonwealth and others had been inherited from the States. Each in itself was not a matter of outstanding importance. Taken as a whole, they involved principles which the Australian Colonies had long regarded as important; or they concerned certain Australian interests which appeared to be receiving insufficient attention from the Imperial Government. The choice of these matters also shows the serious purpose for which the Commonwealth Government thought Barton's visit to London could be used.

In the long run, much would depend upon Barton himself. He was at one and the same time the representative of a new political entity and the guardian of those specific Australian interests which had been worked out during the last decades of the nineteenth century. These interests had been clearly enunciated by the time Australian federation was accomplished. His approach to the Colonial Conference was a continuation of the attitudes of an Imperial Court of Appeal; the loss of most-favoured-nation treatment should a preference be granted on British goods; British stamp charges on colonial coins; and consultation with the colonies before the conclusion of imperial treaties which affected colonial interests.

See minute by Barton, 28 Jan., 1902, asking ministers for suggestions; Deakin's and Fysh's replies; and Barton's minute for Hoppetown, 11 April, 1902. C.P. 217, Set I, vol. 52, C.N.L. Archives. Among the subjects for Barton to discuss separately with Chamberlain were:—the administration of New Guinea by the Commonwealth; the state of affairs in the New Hebrides; the future of the British Solomon Islands Protectorate; and the difficult question of communications between the Governor-General, the State Governors and the Colonial Office.

The last mentioned question arose from the South Australian Government's objections to Chamberlain's ruling on the primacy of the Governor-General as the channel of communication with the Secretary of State. It had arisen in a particularly difficult form over the arrest of the crew of the Dutch vessel "Vondel" by the South Australian authorities.
adopted by Sir Samuel Griffith, and in some respects by Alfred Deakin, in 1887 and by G.H. Reid and C.C. Kingston in 1897. They all realised that the imperial relationship for the most part consisted in mutual adjustments on certain specific matters and not in the adoption of broad ideas that were very difficult to translate into practical policies. In particular, Barton, like Griffith, believed that there need be no conflict between loyalty to Australia and loyalty to the Empire.

As a result of his important contribution to the Australian federation movement and his leading role in the federal delegation to London in 1900, Barton's standing was high in Great Britain as well as in Australia in 1902. His political position in Australia was based on his prestige as a leading federalist rather than on his skill and experience in colonial politics. The qualities of his leadership showed to their best advantage when he was working for a cause. He was less successful in politics as a leader of men. The qualities which had been in his favour as a federalist stood for and against him as Prime Minister.

The first Commonwealth Government included a number of strong individualists who had come together from the federating States. Several of them, such as Alfred Deakin and C.C. Kingston, had been almost as eminent as Barton himself in the federation.
movement. Before they formed a government in 1901, the federal movement alone had brought them together. Some of them, such as Kingston, had recently held office in the State Governments and perforce had been concerned with separate State interests as well as with the federal movement. The federal Cabinet itself was based on a compromise. On the one hand, the Cabinet reflected the number of federating States so that lukewarm federalists, such as Sir John Forrest of Western Australia, were given office; and, on the other, it showed that protection was the one common political interest holding a number of individualists together. While he was in London, Barton had to weigh the likely degree of support that Cabinet as well as Parliament would give to any proposals brought before the Colonial Conference.

Among the subjects to be discussed by the Conference, the one in which Barton personally had most interest was preferential trade within the Empire. He did not question that Australia should remain loyal to the imperial connection. In 1899 he had declared that the colonies should support the Empire in South Africa no matter whether Britain's cause was "right or wrong".

I Conversely, this meant that G.H. Reid, one of the leaders of the federation movement despite his "yes-no" attitude on the referendum in 1898, was in opposition because he was a free trader.

2 Barton kept in close contact with Deakin during the course of the Conference. (London Telegrams, C.P.103, Set I2 B4, C.N.L. Archives) He had assured Parliament that he would not commit Australia. The final power of decision would be left to Parliament; but he refused to allow Parliament to give prior consideration to the subjects set down for discussion at the Conference. (Govt. statement in the Senate, II April, 1902, C'wealth Parl. Deb. 1901-2 Session, vol.9, p.11650)

Barton later stated that a series of hard and fast resolutions, adopted by Parliament before the Conference, would have caused him to go to London "not in the spirit of argument, but of
He also believed that the security of Australia's interests lay in the maintenance of the strength and unity of the Empire. If Barton was an imperialist in believing that Australia's destiny was tied to that of Great Britain and she could best be defended by her continued association with the British Empire, he was also an Australian. He fully accepted that well-established Australian interests must also be maintained. As Prime Minister, he was willing to meet imperial interests as far as was possible in the existing circumstances of the new Commonwealth and provided Australian autonomy was not infringed or Australian interests overlooked. For these reasons, Barton believed that preferential trade within the Empire would offer the best means of showing imperial sentiment and looking after Australian interests at one and the same time. Imperial preference would satisfy these conditions better than binding commitments in the military and naval defence of the Empire or the establishment of close and more formal political ties. Unlike commitments in imperial defence or new political institutions, preferential trade within the Empire would not raise the related questions of a colonial "estrangement". Speech at a banquet in his honour, Melbourne, 5 May, 1902, reported in the S.M.H., 6 May, 1902.

3 In the N.S.W. Legis. Assembly, 19 Oct., 1899. N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol. 100, p. 1495.

I ibid., p. 1504.

voice in imperial policy and participation in bearing the responsibilities of Empire.

In 1902 Barton was a newcomer to a Colonial Conference in comparison with Laurier and Seddon. The Commonwealth of Australia now ranked much nearer in importance to Canada than any of the six separate Australian Colonies had done; but Barton's status in the Conference was not solely dependent on this. His work in London as a federal delegate in 1900 had enabled him to establish good relations with Chamberlain and other members of the Imperial Government; and he was held in high regard by senior officials in the Colonial Office such as Sir John Anderson. Barton's experience in the National Conventions also stood him in good stead in London in 1902. On several occasions during the sessions of the Conference, it helped him to find some middle ground between conflicting viewpoints that might serve as a basis of agreement.

Julian Amery, in his account of the Conference, describes Barton as "dignified", "more prudent than forceful" and very conscious of the precarious position of the Commonwealth Government. This judgment is unwarranted if Barton's role in the Con-

After Barton returned to Australia in 1900, Anderson continued to correspond with him on matters connected with the Commonwealth. (Barton Papers, C.N.L.) In 1901 Anderson accompanied the Duke of York to Australia for the inauguration of the Commonwealth; and in 1902 he acted as secretary to the Colonial Conference.

2 J. Amery, Life of Joseph Chamberlain (London, 1951), p. 419. At the same time, Amery overrates Seddon's role in the Conference. In comparison with the exceedingly favourable public image that had been given to Seddon in 1897, the press in Britain was more critical of him in 1902. During the course of the 1902 Conference, the Liberal Daily News described Barton and Laurier as "two of the most capable statesmen that the colonies have yet produced"; and recognised that neither of them were sentimentalsists. Editorial 25 July, 1902.
ference is examined not so much from the standpoint of his contribution to projects with a large imperial content but more from the way in which he tried to find common ground between imperial interests and Australian autonomy. Barton recognised the importance of the subjects brought before the Conference, and, indeed, the importance of the Conference itself considering the time and the circumstances when it was held.

II

Chamberlain's address to the Conference on 30 June was an important and able statement of the principles on which he believed the imperial relationship rested. He also put forward practical propositions by which imperial unity could be further strengthened. As in 1897, he saw three areas in which progress might be made: in political relations, imperial defence and in commercial relations. The content of his ideas had been clarified since then, and there was no reason to suppose from his statements to the Prime Ministers in 1902 that he had reached a final position on these matters and other lines of policy would not be considered on their merits. The aspects of political relations and naval defence which Chamberlain invited the Prime Ministers to consider had obvious connections with the discussions at the

Amery's and Jebb's charges that the uncertain position of the new Commonwealth led Barton to press for the proceedings of the Conference to be confidential are discussed in Note I.
1897 Conference; but he presented ways of reaching his objectives more definitely in 1902.

In 1897 the Premiers had recommended that a Colonial Conference should be held periodically. Some of them had favoured a three-year interval. Chamberlain had supported those who did not want to lay down a specific interval, and the Premiers had agreed that the Imperial Government should call another Conference at an opportune time. The coronation offered a great imperial event as a background to the other auspicious circumstances for holding a Colonial Conference in 1902. In Chamberlain's mind there was a distinction between the Colonial Conferences and the future political organisation of the Empire. This did not mean that he under-estimated the importance of the Conferences. Even if no important decisions were reached, the Conferences gave the Colonial Governments a valuable opportunity to review the policy of the Empire. Chamberlain regarded a Colonial Conference as an authoritative and useful means of finding out at first hand what views the colonial Prime Ministers held on matters of vital importance to the Empire. He did not regard the Conference as a policy-making body such as a Council of Empire would ultimately become.

In 1902 Chamberlain urged the colonial Prime Ministers to

3 Ibid., p.4.
undertake more specific commitments in imperial defence. The corollary, a voice in policy-making, would only be conceded when the political relations of the Empire were reorganised in a Council of Empire or in a political federation. Laurier and Barton already saw the close connection between imperial defence and foreign policy. They at least among the colonial Prime Ministers were unlikely to claim an immediate voice for Canada and Australia in policy-making. Indeed, during the course of the Conference, Laurier stated that Canada was satisfied with the way in which she was consulted by the Imperial Government when her interests were involved in Anglo-American relations. Although Barton did not say so in the Conference, his current negotiations with the Colonial Office to make the joint Anglo-French Naval Commission more effective gave point to Laurier's contention.

When Chamberlain said that he believed the political federation of the Empire was within the limits of possibility, he was looking at political relations far too much from the imperial point of view; and he was disregarding the importance of what the colonies had already gained for themselves without any form of imperial federation. From Chamberlain's viewpoint, the colon-

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid., p.106.
3 See the correspondence between the Colonial Office, the Governor-General and Barton in 1901-2 in connection with Australian representations for the establishment of a jurisdiction over land claims in the New Hebrides. C.O.418/9,10 and 16; and also the papers taken to London by Barton in 1902 and filed in C.P.I03 Set 12 B3 File A(4), C.N.L. Archives.
ies' response during the South African War showed that imperial patriotism, the sentiment of unity, was strong enough to overcome the distances which separated the colonies from the mother country and from each other. However, a closer union by means of more formal ties was greatly to be preferred to a voluntary union without obligations. Chamberlain's attitude is understandable. It was not that he doubted the strength of imperial sentiment in the colonies, or that he thought they would fail to support Great Britain in another crisis. In terms of power, and in view of the existing situation in Europe and its ramifications outside Europe, a close political relationship between Great Britain and the colonies and a system of imperial defence in which the colonies had specific commitments were becoming more and more vitally necessary to maintain Great Britain's position as a world Power. Chamberlain was too much of a realist to attempt to impose any such obligations on the colonies or to press them to adopt closer political ties prematurely. Having stated the issues clearly and outlined ways of strengthening the unity of the Empire, he left the first moves in response to his invitation to the colonies.

No response was forthcoming. Indeed, the Prime Ministers made no attempt to discuss political relations along the lines Chamberlain had indicated. They emphasised instead the value of

1 ibid., p. 3.
2 ibid., pp. 3-4.
the Colonial Conferences by agreeing that a conference should be held at intervals of not less than four years. Their tacit rejection of a Council of Empire showed that the link between political relations and imperial defence was understood far better in 1902 than in 1897. Even Seddon had come a long way towards seeing what Laurier and Barton had already realised: that the colonies were expected to undertake commitments in imperial defence before they could hope for a voice in imperial policy.

Unlike Laurier and Barton, Seddon openly said that some representation in imperial policy was desirable; but he concluded that this would not come to pass for a long time if the colonies had first to exchange voluntary and unconditional assistance to the mother country in an emergency for direct contributions to imperial defence. Barton drove home his objections to closer

1 ibid., pp.I04-5. Seddon had suggested triennial conferences in his draft resolution. The four-year period was not adopted without some hesitation from Laurier. He was afraid that regular meetings would raise greater expectations each time that steps would be taken towards closer ties between Great Britain and the colonies. ibid., p.I03.


On the question of political relations, the distinction is invalid. Seddon, the most imperialist of the Prime Ministers, as well as Laurier and Barton emphasised that for several reasons the colonial Prime Ministers could not view matters from the same standpoint as Chamberlain. Procs. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc.No.I44, pp.9-II.

Jebb's distinction can be justified only if some of Seddon's remarks in support of his draft resolution for an imperial reserve and his readiness to send New Zealand contingents to South Africa are considered in isolation.
political ties when the Conference discussed imperial defence; and, outside the Conference, he made sure that his view reached those who expected changes in the relations between Great Britain and the colonies. His intimation that the time had not yet come for colonial representation in the Imperial Parliament and it would, therefore, be safer not to push that question to the fore was a plain warning that Australia would not tolerate any interference with or a limitation of the autonomous powers of the Commonwealth and State Parliaments.

In Great Britain's interests, Chamberlain was justified in impressing on the Prime Ministers the ever increasing burden of imperial defence. The cost of this burden was almost entirely thrown on the British taxpayer. This was inequitable when the colonies were no longer young and poor. They were now rich and powerful, and the greater proportion of the floating trade of the Empire was colonial rather than British. To persuade the colonies to share in the burden of imperial defence, Chamberlain appealed to their national instincts. Their dependence on the mother country for their defence was "inconsistent with their dignity as nations". When the incontrovertible fact that strength lay in unity was translated into terms of imperial defence, it

1 E.g. speeches at the British Empire League, 7 July, 1902; at Guildhall (London), II July, 1902; and Lloyds, 14 July, 1902; and at the Canada Club, 16 July, 1902.
3 Ibid., p. 5.
meant specific colonial commitments in comprehensive schemes of naval and military defence. The colonies would contribute towards the cost of the Royal Navy and its upkeep; and certain colonial military units, trained to British standards, would be available for service wherever they were needed. In these ways, Chamberlain thought that the colonies would "recognise more effectually than hitherto... the obligation of all to contribute to the commonweal".

The issue of colonial commitments in imperial defence had never before been put so bluntly by a member of the Imperial Government. To some extent, the optimism expressed by Chamberlain in the Conference and in public speeches contrasts with his private doubts that the colonies would undertake such commitments. Chamberlain's outspokenness in the Conference was supported by Selborne when he told the Prime Ministers of the Admiralty's strategic approach to naval defence. He presented both the doctrine of unity of command and the offensive strategy of the "blue water" school in much plainer terms than Goschen had attempted to do in 1897. Whereas Goschen had been reluctant, following

I ibid., p. 5.
2 Chamberlain to Selborne, private, 29 May, 1902; quoted in J. Amery, op. cit., p. 424. Chamberlain's doubts were mainly on account of Canada.
When imperial defence was discussed on 4 and 25 July, 8 and II August, the membership of the Conference was widened to include the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Secretary of State for War, the Canadian and Australian Ministers of Defence and advisers from the Admiralty and War Office. The two colonial Ministers could address the Conference, but they could not vote. This procedure was adopted in the sessions devoted to defence and commercial relations at Chamberlain's suggestion; but with
Reid's outspoken opposition, to turn the agreement with the Australian Colonies and New Zealand for an auxiliary squadron into a contribution to the navy in general, Selborne openly intended to do this in 1902. He also sought similar contributions from the other self-governing colonies.

The role of the Royal Navy in time of war was essentially an offensive one; that is, to seek out the fleets of the enemy and destroy them. Concentration of forces and mobility were the two essentials. From the Admiralty's viewpoint, the existing agreement with Australia and New Zealand did not help to secure this. The ships of the Auxiliary Squadron were confined to Australian and New Zealand waters unless the Colonial Governments consented to their removal. If the need arose, it was essential that all the ships could join the China, East Indies or Cape Squadrons in order to inflict a crushing defeat on any concentration of enemy ships. In some ways, the extent to which Selborne gave details of the Admiralty's policy and of possible fleet movements in an emergency foreshadowed Sir Edward Grey's address to the 1911 Imperial Conference on foreign policy, and contrasted greatly with Salisbury's reticence towards the 1887 Colonial

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Ibid., p.15-9.
2 Ibid., p.21.
Conference about the negotiations with France concerning the New Hebrides.

No overall scheme for colonial participation in imperial naval defence, by means of either a financial contribution or the establishment of naval reserves in the colonies, was presented by the Admiralty. Selborne hoped to conclude separate agreements with each of the colonies after the Prime Ministers in turn had discussed the circumstances of their colonies and the contributions they were prepared to make. Seddon had already submitted a draft resolution requesting an increase in the strength of the Australian Squadron. Despite this, there was a parallel with the 1887 Colonial Conference in that the presence of colonial representatives in London led to the working out, amendment and acceptance of proposals which had already been considered by the Admiralty and the Colonial Governments. By

I ibid., pp.19,21; and Memo. on Sea-Power and the Principles Involved in it (Admiralty, June, 1902), C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.I44, Papers laid before the Conference, Appendix IV, pp. 216-7. These statements in Selborne's address and in the Memo. were omitted in the published proceedings of the Conference. (Colonial Conference I902, G.B.and I. Parl.Paper, lxvi (1902), Cd.I299)

Partly on account of naval competition, Chamberlain and Lansdowne attempted to reach an agreement with Germany in 1901 and again in 1902. It is interesting to note, therefore, that the confidential information given to the Conference by Selborne, about possible enemy fleet concentrations and a comparison of the numbers and types of vessels in the fleets of the major naval Powers, mainly concerned France and recent French naval plans for a concentration of naval forces. Admittedly, France ranked next to Great Britain as a naval Power; but with regard to three Powers with fairly comparable fleets (Germany, Russia and the United States), Selborne gave attention to a possible threat from the United States.


3 The immediate origin of the 1902 proposals is to be found in discussions between Sir John Forrest and Sir Lewis Beaumont, the Admiral commanding the Australian Station. ibid., Appendix
the time of the early sessions of the Colonial Conference, the proposals had taken the form of a greatly increased contribution from Australia and New Zealand towards the upkeep of a certain number of improved types of ships which would form part of the squadron on the Australian Station (with no restrictions on their movements in peace or war); provision for colonial seamen to form part of the crew of one or more of these vessels; and the establishment of a colonial naval reserve. The last proposal was in keeping with Selborne's wish to make the Royal Navy truly imperial, in the sense that it was not manned solely by officers and seamen from the United Kingdom; and colonial desires to have a trained local naval force would also be satisfied.

Barton's objections to a large increase in the Australian contribution were strengthened by the knowledge that his colleagues felt that the present proposals went far beyond the existing means of the Commonwealth and would be unacceptable to Parliament. Indeed, some if not all of his colleagues favoured a

1 Detailed Proposals Relative to Australia and New Zealand, Admiralty, June, 1902, p.223.
2 Ibid., pp.223-9. The squadron would cost £467,000 p.a. with an addition of approximately £100,000 p.a. for the establishment of a naval reserve (Australia £387,490 p.a. and New Zealand £79,510 p.a.). The squadron would consist of five second-class cruisers, two of which would be kept in reserve; one cruiser in commission would be manned by an Australian and New Zealand crew; and a naval reserve of 1,500 men would be formed.
3 Deakin to Barton, telegram, 4 July, 1902. C.P.I03 Set I2 B4 (London Telegrams), C.N.L. Archives.
different basis of contribution to the naval defence of Australia. They preferred the establishment of a naval reserve in Australia at Australia's expense. They thought it would be easier to obtain money from Parliament for this; and they favoured seizing the opportunity offered by the expiry of the 1887 agreement to inaugurate a new policy worthy of the Australian Commonwealth.

Until he had had further opportunities to negotiate directly with the Admiralty for better terms, Barton was reluctant to see the Conference discuss anything more than the general principles of naval defence. The more closely his attitude is examined, the more constructive and the less negative it becomes. His attitude contrasts, on the one hand, with that of Laurier, who made no response to offer any form of Canadian contribution to the Royal Navy, and with that of Seddon, Sprigg and Hime, on the other. Barton had some sympathy with Deakin and others who saw an Australian navy as the ideal. He, therefore, differed from Forrest, the Minister of Defence, who wanted the Royal Navy

1 Deakin to Barton, telegram (n.d.), C.P.I03 Set I2 B4, London Telegrams, C.N.L. Archives. Deakin also warned that an increase in the naval contribution, which had always been unpopular in Australia, would have to be balanced by a reduction in military expenditure.

2 Procs. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.I44, p.28 (Laurier). Seddon fully supported the Admiralty's strategic doctrine and denied any intention of forming a New Zealand navy, ibid., pp.22-3; Sprigg held out hopes of increasing Cape Colony's unconditional contribution of £30,000 p.a. to the Royal Navy; and Hime offered a similar contribution not exceeding £35,000 p.a. from Natal, ibid., p.36.
to become the navy of the Empire, and be supported by the colonies as well as by Great Britain, because the existence of independent forces of colonial warships was not "a plan suited to the Empire".

In addition to the division of opinion among his Cabinet colleagues, Barton knew that some long-standing and firmly held attitudes in Australia towards naval defence could not be disregarded. He was not the only Prime Minister to point out that the proportionate claims on revenue in the colonies were far greater than in Great Britain. The State Premiers, and especially G.H. Reid, had used a similar argument in 1897. To view colonial commitments on public works as contributions to the development and strength of the Empire was as much an Australian as it was a Canadian inclination. In Barton's case, this contention was strengthened by the existing circumstances of the Commonwealth.

I Minute by Forrest for Barton, 15 March, 1902, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.144, Appendix V (5), pp.253-7. Although this was printed with the papers laid before the Conference, it represented Forrest's views and not those of the Commonwealth Government. Statement by Forrest in the H. of Representatives, 8 July 1902, C'wealth Parl. Deb., 1903 Session, p.1988. Forrest was the only Privy Councillor in Australia to respond to an invitation to attend the coronation. His acceptance might have been facilitated by his knowledge that defence was one of the major subjects to be discussed by the Conference. He did not contribute to the discussions on defence at the Conference; and it is very doubtful whether his presence in London was as useful to Barton as that of the other Canadian ministers was to Laurier. In comparison with Barton, Forrest was much less closely in touch or in sympathy with Australian attitudes towards defence. The ideas he expressed in his Minute were heartily endorsed by the Imperial Federation (Defence) Committee. (Pamphlet No.19, The Conference of 1902)

2 Procs. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.144, p.10 (Barton); pp.12,24 (Seddon); pp.27-8 (Laurier).

3 e.g. in 1867 and 1897, the Canadians used this argument with regard to the Canadian Pacific Railway.
The "Braddon" clause in the constitution had laid down that most of the revenue collected had to be returned to the States during the first ten years. For this reason, Barton contended that the Commonwealth was forced to make a distinction between what Australia would like to do and what she could do. Moreover, the existing financial position of the Commonwealth was the major obstacle in the way of adopting in principle a policy of establishing the nucleus of an Australian navy. Barton spoke of the financial limitations of the Commonwealth with dignity and a sense of responsibility. An injustice is done him if too much stress is laid on this particular circumstance; and it is made into the major reason for his refusal to accept a new draft naval agreement until the Australian contribution had been considerably reduced.

Barton, like Seddon, believed that the squadron proposed by the Admiralty would answer Australia's and New Zealand's existing needs. Unlike Seddon, Barton did not at that stage give strong support to the Admiralty's doctrine of defence through

1 Under Section 87 of the constitution at least three-quarters of the customs and excise revenue collected by the Commonwealth was to be returned to the States during the first ten years.
3 ibid., pp.30-1.
4 His attitude contrasts with the arguments used by Seddon, Sprigg and Hime in disputing Chamberlain's figures of the amounts spent per head of population on defence in the colonies in comparison with those for the United Kingdom. ibid., p.24 (Seddon); p.33 (Sprigg); p.35 (Hime).
5 As J.Amery does, op.cit.,p.419.
attack at a distance. He knew that another long-held Australian attitude could not be ignored. If Australia contributed towards the upkeep of the naval squadron, many in Australia would fight hard to retain the old restriction to keep the squadron tied to Australian waters. Barton could appreciate the practicality of the strategic arguments, and he was prepared to drop the restrictive clause in the old agreement on the movement of the ships in the auxiliary squadron. At the same time, he made sure of meeting to some extent the objections which were bound to be raised in Australia. Although the force stipulated in the draft agreement would replace the imperial squadron and the auxiliary squadron combined, the agreement provided that it would not be the only naval force based permanently or temporarily in Australian waters; and, if any of the ships were temporarily withdrawn from the Australian squadron, the force would receive replacements. On the other hand, the certainty of opposition in Australia, led Barton to object to the inclusion of a stipulation in the agreement that the ship manned by an Australian and

I Barton's lack of enthusiasm for the Admiralty's strategic doctrine at this stage stands in marked contrast to his masterly exposition of its principles in the Commonwealth Parliament in 1903 when he introduced the second reading of the Naval Agreement Bill. C'wealth Parl. Deb., 1903 Session, pp.1777-8. Admittedly, this exposition was based very closely on Selborne's arguments.

2 In response to Barton's request, the statement that the force laid down in the agreement would not be the only force in Australian waters was placed immediately after the stipulation that the ships of the Australian squadron might in time of emergency be withdrawn to other parts of the eastern seas. Procs., C.O.Conf. Print, Misc.No.I44, pp.175-6.
New Zealand crew would be liable to serve in any part of the eastern seas.

Barton and the Admiralty each made some concessions in order to reach an agreement acceptable to both sides. The naval force to be provided under the new agreement would be considerably stronger than the existing auxiliary squadron. The annual contribution would not exceed £200,000 for Australia and £40,000 for New Zealand; one ship in commission was to be manned by Australian and New Zealand seamen; and a colonial naval reserve of 725 officers and men was to be established. In order to reach agreement, Barton had agreed to the omission of the stipulation that the consent of the Colonial Governments was necessary before any of the ships could be moved beyond the limits of the Australian Station. The Admiralty had met Barton's objections by not making an Australian and New Zealand crew liable for service in any part of the eastern seas. With Barton's support, Seddon made a last attempt to limit the squadron's sphere of operations in

1 ibid., p.31.
2 The agreement did not reach its final form until the last two sessions of the Conference on 8 and 11 August. Some verbal alterations were made in the agreement after the last session of the Conference. Seddon to Selborne, 12 August; and Selborne's reply of 13 August, 1902. Seddon Papers, vols. 4 and 16, National Archives, New Zealand. On 15 August the Admiralty requested Barton's and Seddon's formal concurrence with the terms of the agreement. C.O.Confid. Print, Misc.No.144, Appendix VIII, p.268.
3 Draft agreement attached to Admiralty Memo. of 7 August, 1902, ibid., p.268ff. The force was to consist of one first class cruiser, two second class and four third class cruisers and four sloops. Australia was to pay 5/12 and New Zealand 1/12 of the annual cost of the maintenance of the squadron. This would include a sum equal to 5% of the prime cost of the vessels. A colonial naval reserve of 25 officers and 700 seamen was to be established. The agreement was to last for a period of ten years subject to two years' notice of termination.
4 ibid.
peacetime to Australian and New Zealand waters. In the end, they did not press the point. To have done so would probably have wrecked the agreement as far as the Admiralty was concerned.

Barton had done as much as was possible in the circumstances of 1902 to reach a fairly satisfactory compromise between imperial interests, Australia's place in the Empire and the new Commonwealth's needs and aspirations in naval defence. Even so, he did not want the provisions of the new agreement to become publicly known in Australia before he returned and could explain them himself. The Australian and New Zealand agreement showed that in 1902, as in 1887, the purpose of the colonial contribution was to secure improved naval defence for those two colonies. The contribution was not an unconditional one to imperial defence as such. On this point, Barton would certainly have endorsed the Canadian Ministers' statement that such a contribution "would entail an important departure from the principle of colonial self-government".

1 Procs., C.O.Confid. Print, Misc.No.144, p.174. In the long run, even Seddon had had to lay down certain conditions; and he had attempted to gain some concessions from the Admiralty to meet New Zealand susceptibilities. He tried to have two cruisers, instead of one as stated in the agreement, as well as one drill ship stationed in New Zealand waters. ibid.,p.174ff. On account of the cost, J.C.Ward, the Acting Premier, informed Seddon that his colleagues did not favour the use of one of the drill ships to train men rather than boys. Ward to Seddon, telegram, 24 July,1902, Seddon Papers, vol.5, National Archives, New Zealand.

2 Barton to Deakin, telegram, 14 August,1902, C.P.IO3 Set I2 B4, London Telegrams, C.N.L.Archives. Towards the end of September Deakin was still trying to adhere to Barton's injunction; but on 25 Sept., in reply to G.H.Reid, the Opposition leader, he gave the House of Representatives the main details of the information contained in Barton's telegram of 14 August. C'wealth Parl.Deb., 1901-2 Session, vol.XII, 23 Sept.,p.I5932, and 25 Sept.,1902, p.16105.

3 Seddon also found it necessary to make this clear. Procs.,
Chamberlain had hoped that the Conference would adopt a
general resolution on naval defence. Once the principle of con-
tributing towards the naval defence of the Empire had been accept-
ed by the colonies, he thought the colonies would find less diffi-
culty in adopting the same principle with regard to military
I
defence. A general resolution was out of the question because
the Canadian Ministers refused to accept the principle of a con-
tribution to the Royal Navy. Moreover, Barton would not have
agreed to a resolution which showed that the colonies had accept-
ed the principle of contributing to the navy in general and pro-
viding officers and men to serve wherever ships of the Royal
Navy were stationed. Naval defence, therefore, failed to be the
bridge which would make it easier for the colonies to accept
commitments in the military defence of the Empire.

III

Colonial participation in the military defence of the
Empire was a new subject for a Colonial Conference to discuss
fully. In 1897 Chamberlain had suggested nothing further than

C.G.Confid. Print, Misc.No.144,p.36.
4 ibid., Appendix VII, Memo. by the Canadian Ministers Concern-
ing Defence, II August,1902, p.26I.

I ibid., p.39.
2 ibid., Memo. by the Canadian Ministers, pp.26I-3. They stated
that the Canadian Government intended to establish and train
a naval reserve in the near future.
Cape Colony had offered an unconditional contribution of
£50,000 p.a., and Natal £35,000 p.a. Newfoundland had agreed
to pay £3,000 p.a. to establish a naval reserve of 600 men,
and an additional £1,800 towards the cost of equipping a drill
ship.
the exchange of British and colonial military units. This suggestion, and a subsequent one developed by the Colonial Defence Committee from 1898 onwards for colonial units to form imperial reserve forces, arose from the supposition that the colonies would make common cause with Great Britain in time of war. Their participation in the South African War seemed to prove that this supposition was correct. The Imperial Government's hopes were further confirmed when Seddon submitted a draft resolution to the 1902 Colonial Conference for the creation in the colonies of a force trained to British standards and available for service outside the colonies.

Seddon had already gained the consent of the New Zealand Parliament to the existence of such a body of men in that colony. His motives for proposing such a force were not exclusively concerned with imperial interests. Although he believed that the present imperial sentiment in New Zealand and in the other colonies would allow the formation of an imperial reserve and there were colonial forces with experience in South Africa available

1 From 1898 onwards the Colonial Defence Committee sent out memoranda on such schemes to the colonies. One of the most important was that dated 16 August, 1900. C.O.Confid. Print, 30 Aug., 1900, copy filed in C.P.I03 set I2 B3 File A, C.N.L.Archives. The scheme put before the 1902 Colonial Conference bore a close resemblance to the one outlined in this memorandum.


for it, he also saw a special reserve as a means of increasing
the number of better trained and partially paid forces in New
Zealand. In return for a body of colonial troops ready to serve
with imperial forces, Seddon expected the Imperial Government
to provide the equipment, especially field artillery, that would
be needed to bring the force up to British standards of training.
Provided the colonies were willing to assist Great Britain in
an emergency, the reserve forces would serve "in such parts of
the Empire as might be agreed upon between the Imperial authori-
ties and the colonial Governments". The significance of this im-
portant qualification was not perceived immediately by the Im-
perial Government. In the long run, it was one of the two major
obstacles which prevented Seddon from reaching an agreement with
the Imperial Government for the establishment of a reserve in
New Zealand for service outside the colony. Seddon regarded
imperial reserves in Australia and New Zealand as a means of pro-
viding efficient troops more quickly than Great Britain should
they be needed against a foreign Power in the Pacific, Canada,
South Africa and possibly in the Far East. This would be a form
of extended defence for Australia and New Zealand. Seddon spe-
cifically excluded India because he thought that men would be un-

2 ibid., p.22. No extra expense would then fall on the colony,
4 ibid., pp.93,171.
likely to volunteer to serve there; and another extremely important limitation was included when he laid down that a New Zealand reserve would not be liable for service in Europe.

Laurier refused to be drawn into any discussion of Seddon's proposals. The key position was therefore left to Barton. Unless he supported Seddon, there was no hope of any progress towards the adoption of the principle that colonial forces would be readily available for service outside the colonies. For financial and other more important reasons, Barton could not support the formation of an imperial reserve.

The root of his objection lay in service outside Australia. Strong opposition would be aroused in Australia against any proposal to commit Australian military forces to serve outside the Commonwealth. There had already been an unmistakable expression of hostility in the Commonwealth Parliament to such a commitment. As Barton took care to point out to the Conference, this opposition did not mean that when an emergency arose Australia would fail to respond and give all assistance possible to Great

I ibid., pp. 94, 171.
2 ibid., p. 28. The ostensible reason put forward by Laurier was Canada's inability to undertake any additional expenditure on defence.
3 See the debate on the second reading of the Military Defence Bill. C'wealth Parl. Deb. (1901-2 Session), vol. 3, H. of Representatives, 24 July, pp. 2958-2996, and subsequently on 25, 30 and 31 July, and 1 and 9 August, 1901. Although the Bill passed the second reading, clauses 48, 50 and III, concerning service outside the Commonwealth, were strongly attacked by some members and especially by some of the Labour Party members. On 26 March, 1902, Barton announced that the Bill would not be proceeded with during that session. ibid., vol. 9, p. 11235. In the 1903 Defence Bill only the permanent forces were to be liable for service outside Australia. Forrest in H. of Repre-
Britain. Such assistance was likely to be all the more generous if it was given spontaneously instead of its being a formal obligation. Although he realised that there might be some surprise in Great Britain that this feeling existed in the colonies, Barton contended that it was a natural and a normal one. The feeling in the colonies for the link of "relationship and affection" with the mother country welled up with overflowing strength whenever any part of the Empire was threatened. The force with which Barton put these contentions to the Conference showed not only the depth of his own conviction but also the prevalence and strength of the same attitude in Australia. In Barton's case, his advocacy of this point of view did not preclude him from realising that Australia might have to fight outside the Australian continent to defend herself.

When St John Brodrick subsequently addressed the Conference, he followed Selborne's example in giving detailed information about Britain's military commitments and the forces available to meet them. The War Office as well as the Admiralty seemed to be acting on the assumption that candour would be the most effective way of persuading the colonies to share proportionate-representatives, 16 July, 1903, C'wealth Parl. Deb. (1903 Session), p. 2272. There was much opposition from the Labour Party members before the second reading was carried on 23 July. On 5 August, during the committee stage, Clause 42 was negatived after very little discussion. ibid., p. 5126.

2 ibid.
3 At the fifth session of the Conference on 25 July, ibid., p. 83.
ly in the burden of imperial defence. Unlike Selborne, Brodrick also presented to the Conference a fully worked out scheme for all the self-governing colonies to participate in providing an imperial reserve. He admitted that promises of colonial assistance could not be given unconditionally before any emergency had arisen; but his attempt to make allowance for the colonies' rooted objections to advance commitments of assistance in time of war led him into somewhat inherently contradictory remarks. In the interests of quick and sure defence in an emergency when Great Britain had insufficient troops immediately available, Brodrick believed it was essential for the War Office to know that the colonies had men trained to meet a European enemy force.

This would not necessarily entail service in Europe. A force composed of one in four of the total colonial forces could be regarded as a form of reciprocity for the troops Great Britain would send to defend a colony rather than as a donation to imperial defence out of colonial loyalty to the mother country. Provided the Imperial Government had immediate call on the services of

1 A similar argument had been put forward in the C.D.C.Memo. of 16 August, 1900. The important point, in the Committee's view, was to know exactly what colonial forces would be available when the colonies offered assistance. C.O.Confid. Print, 30 August, 1900, copy filed in C.P.105 Set I2 B3 File A, C.N.L. Archives.

2 Procs. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.144, p.82. Brodrick wanted to emphasise that the colonial troops which had been sent to South Africa to fight against the Boers would not have been adequately trained to meet a European-trained force.

3 Ibid., p.84. This would mean that about 20,000 colonial troops would be at the disposal of the War Office.
these men in an emergency, Brodrick thought that the Imperial Government might agree in whole or in part to Seddon's proposal that the cost of the reserve forces should be a charge on British funds. The Imperial Government could not be expected to do this if the Colonial Governments were still to decide after an emergency arose whether their services could be used.

Instead of reiterating why Australia could not participate in the scheme Brodrick had put before the Conference, Barton tried to find some common ground on which the Prime Ministers could agree. Because the colonies would be likely to assist Great Britain in an emergency, he suggested that they should provide themselves with efficient permanent, militia and volunteer forces. There would then be no need to make any distinction between the training of an imperial reserve force and the rest of the colonial forces. Barton also suggested that as far as possible the colonies should equip their forces with the types of arms, ammunition and equipment used by the British Army, and establish factories to provide arms and equipment for their forces. These were practical ways of improving the training and

1 *ibid.*, pp. 84-5. The colonial reserve forces would probably receive a fee of £9 p.a. as part of the imperial reserve.
2 Barton endorsed Brodrick's remarks about the conclusions to be drawn from the South African War and the difference between the Boers and the forces of a European Power. *ibid.*, p. 88. The opposition in Australia to the expansion of the permanent and militia forces was partly based on the premise that the colonial volunteer forces had been a better match for the Boers than the more highly but traditionally trained British forces. To Barton, and to others in Great Britain and Australia, the lesson to be learned from the South African War was the great value of well-trained mounted infantry, the type of force the colonies were best able to supply. See Hopetoun to Barton, Confidential, 29 April, 1902 (Barton Papers, C.N.L.);
equipment of the colonial forces; and, at the same time, cooperation with British troops would be made easier and more useful, but advance commitments would be avoided. In support of this line of approach, Barton told the Conference that the Commonwealth Government was working hard to bring uniformity into the Australian forces; and he himself favoured improving the militia instead of increasing the numbers of volunteers and rifle clubs. Through the means suggested to the Conference, Barton thought that opposition in Australia to standing forces and to service outside the colony might be overcome.

Chamberlain's disappointment at the lack of response from the Prime Ministers increased as the Conference continued. Even more than Brodrick had done, he insisted that the Imperial Government was not attempting to force the colonies to assist Great Britain. In Chamberlain's remarks there was something of an attempt to retract a line of action which the colonies were


1 ibid., pp. 88-9. See also Minute on Defence by Major-General Hutton, Commandant of the Australian Military Forces, 7 April, 1902, printed in ibid., Appendix V(4), p. 244ff.
2 On this point, Chamberlain questioned Barton whether the opposi-
obviously not going to follow. He emphasised that the Imperial Government was quite satisfied with the results of voluntary and spontaneous action by the colonies; but he and his colleagues also believed that the creation of an imperial reserve was in the best interests of the colonies themselves. Moreover, the formation of an imperial reserve would add very little to the cost of military defence in the colonies or in Great Britain.

The colonial Prime Ministers had shown that the creation of such a force was impracticable in the existing state of public opinion in Canada and Australia. Chamberlain, therefore, thought such opinion in the colonies needed to be educated towards a realisation of the disproportion in the burden of defence between the United Kingdom and the colonies. The proportion of their revenue that the colonies had to spend on public works and old age pensions should be considered side by side with what they would have had to spend on defence had they been independent States. Chamberlain also thought that public opinion in the colonies was backward in appreciating the dangers of the existing world situation. His disappointment caused him to echo the beliefs of a number in Great Britain who contended that colonial issues were a major cause of Great Britain's unfriendly relation in Australia to service outside the continent. Was aware that the Commonwealth Government would still decide to send forces overseas when an emergency arose or retain them in Australia. In 1901 one of the criticisms made during the debates on the Military Defence Bill was that the power of decision would be in the hands of the Government and not with Parliament. 

I ibid., p.38.
tions with several major European Powers and the United States of America; and, following from this, they thought that Great Britain was more likely to become involved in war with a European Power on account of colonial issues than through any dispute originating in Europe. In using these arguments, Chamberlain overlooked his own recent experience. The failure of his and Lansdowne's efforts in 1901 and 1902 to reach an agreement was not due to colonial problems and rivalries. Moreover, the settlement of the Fashoda crisis in 1898-9 had shown that serious colonial issues could be solved without recourse to war; and the Anglo-French Entente of 1904 was concerned to a large extent with settling colonial problems at issue between Britain and France.

Chamberlain had previously understood and recognised the existence of a growing national feeling in the colonies; and he had praised them for the provision they had made for their own defence instead of relying on Great Britain. During the course of the Colonial Conference in 1902, his sole major misunderstanding of Canadian and Australian attitudes was a result of his disappointment that those colonies would not participate in improving the effectiveness of imperial defence. He was led to describe Seddon's proposals as showing a "wiser opinion". He failed to

1 ibid., pp.98-9. An extreme argument used in Great Britain in 1902 against the formation of an Australian navy was the use the Australians might make of it to embroil Great Britain with France or Germany in the Pacific.

2 ibid., p.99.
realise that it was not unawareness or a lack of appreciation of existing and possible dangers that motivated Australian opposition to the formation of an imperial reserve and commitments to military service outside the colony. By the late 1890s, an increasing number of Australians, whatever their political affiliations, were becoming aware that danger to Australia might arise in the Pacific and the Far East. Anti-militarism did not blind the Labour Party and others to the need for better defences.

Under W. M. Hughes' advocacy, the Labour Party became the champion of national defence in which most Australians were to participate.

When the Conference began to discuss military defence, Seddon appeared to be ranged against Laurier and Barton. As it closed, the primacy of colonial interests over imperial interests caused him to move to the same side. He withdrew his proposals for the formation of an imperial reserve in New Zealand because he failed to remove Brodrick's objections to the use of British funds to maintain forces which could only be used at the discretion of the Colonial Government. Moreover, Seddon's exclusion of India and Europe from the areas where colonial troops might serve, eliminated the two areas in which immediately available

1 The Labour Party favoured an expansion of the volunteers and the rifle clubs. In 1903 a citizen defence force was laid down in the Labour Party programme. From 1910 onwards, the Fisher Ministry achieved this through universal and compulsory military training.
and additional forces might be of most use to Great Britain.

Seddon's awareness of what would be acceptable in New Zealand brought him in the end to the standpoint which Laurier and Barton had adopted from the outset. This was based on reluctance to undertake measures which would increase colonial expenditure on defence and lead to a loss of their colonial identity by the forces earmarked for imperial service; and, in addition, there was a strong dislike for possible commitments in areas where no colonial interests were at stake. As far as Australia was concerned, the reluctance was at bottom a variation on the long-standing dislike of becoming involved in Britain's "imperial" wars as distinct from defending Britain and the Empire.

The sessions of the Conference which had been devoted to an examination of imperial defence had established that to Laurier and to Barton political relations and defence went together.

In private discussions with Brodrick, Seddon was at issue with the War Office on three points; whether New Zealand would have to pay the whole cost of forming the reserve; how to define the areas in which the New Zealand force would be liable to serve; and whether it would form part of the imperial or the New Zealand military forces. Brodrick, who was less sympathetic towards colonial feeling than Selborne had been over the formation of colonial naval reserves, was inclined to put colonial reservists on the same footing as British reservists. Seddon refused to accept that all or part of the New Zealand force of 4,500 men might be called upon to serve on the north-west frontier of India or in Europe.


Chamberlain seems to have put forward a compromise scheme in an attempt to resolve the deadlock. Apparently he suggested that certain areas should be placed under the defence of British and colonial troops responsible to one of the Colonial Governments; but the War Office, Canada and Australia rejected the proposal. J.Amery, op.cit., p.427.
and not defence and tariff preferences. In their view, a further extension of the existing methods of consultation between the mother country and the colonies would give them a sufficient voice in imperial policy. They would thereby avoid any necessity of adopting closer political ties or specific commitments in imperial defence as a preliminary requirement to their being given a role in the determination of imperial policy. The discussions had also clearly established that the colonies, and Australia in particular, were alive to their responsibilities to provide for their own defence and to the best of their ability they would do so. Brodrick was reluctant to take the Prime Ministers' rejection of an imperial reserve as final. Later in 1902 he and the Colonial Defence Committee raised the matter again in criticisms of the planned reorganisation of the Australian military forces. Despite his own belief in closer imperial ties, Lord

On this point there was a wide divergence between the ideas of the Canadian British Empire League and those of Laurier. In April, 1902, the British Empire League in Canada revived Hofmeyr's 1887 proposal for the imposition of a special duty to provide a fund for imperial defence. G.T. Denison, op. cit., p. 289. At one end the same time, preferential trade would be extended and the colonies associated with imperial defence in a form more palatable to them than a cash contribution. Whatever might have been the hopes of the Canadian branch of the British Empire League, Amery is mistaken in thinking that the proposal might have proved acceptable to the colonies, and the more so because it implied preferential trade between the different parts of the Empire. J. Amery, op. cit., p. 424.

Certainly, Seddon at one stage remarked that the 10% preference that New Zealand would give to Great Britain was an indirect contribution to defence; but without any doubt a version of the Hofmeyr proposal would have found no favour in Australia in 1902 or in any previous or succeeding year.

2 This was in the Colonial Defence Committee's Memo. of 22 Oct., 1902.
Tennyson, by then Governor-General, was reluctant to open the subject with his Ministers; and on more than one occasion he warned Chamberlain of the mischief that such proposals might do in view of Australian opposition to any attempt to "make Australia a recruiting ground for the Reserve". The years he had spent in Australia had led Tennyson to realise what Brodrick and other enthusiasts for colonial participation in imperial defence found so hard to understand: "Australia looks upon herself as an independent nation in alliance with England but she would not promise to do more than protect herself... Great Britain must be content to trust in her loyalty and her commonsense in organising a suitable local Defence Force... and thousands of volunteers would anyhow always be forthcoming in any grave, national crisis to help the mother country".

IV

In bringing the political relations of the colonies with Great Britain and the defence of the Empire before the Conference, the Imperial Government took the initiative and placed proposals before the Prime Ministers. The third major subject brought before the Conference was the commercial relations of the Empire; but in this case the Imperial Government had no proposals to make. Chamberlain wanted to stimulate discussion on two aspects of

I Tennyson to Chamberlain, Secret, II March, 1903, draft in Tennyson Papers, 279/2/281, C.N.L.
2 Loccit., and Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegram, 25 February, 1903, draft in Tennyson Papers, 479/2/265, C.N.L.
of inter-imperial trade: first, on the ways by which a larger volume of inter-imperial trade might be secured; and, secondly, on ways of encouraging freer trade within the Empire. He thought that the volume of inter-imperial trade was unsatisfactory. The Empire could be self-supporting; but Great Britain obtained the greater part of her necessities from foreign countries and exported the largest part of her surplus products to them. No other country in addition to Canada had as yet given Great Britain a unilateral preference. Although the Canadian preference of $33\frac{1}{3}$% had arrested the decline in trade with Great Britain, it had not turned Canadian trade away from foreign countries. Great Britain could not greatly increase her proportion of colonial exports unless British products could enter colonial markets on more favourable terms. As long as colonial duties remained prohibitive or protective, and tariff preferences granted to Great Britain did not to any great extent aid British manufactures to enter colonial markets, reciprocal advantages in favour of the colonies were out of the question.

1 Procs. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.144, pp.5-6. As Chamberlain defined "freer trade" in 1902, it did not mean the entire abolition of customs duties between the different parts of the Empire. Because customs revenue was so essential to the colonies, British imports would remain at a disadvantage in comparison with colonial products unless customs duties were balanced by excise duties or were imposed only on articles not produced at home. ibid.,p.6.

2 ibid.,p.7. The main reasons for this were, first, by far the greatest proportion of imports into Canada from Britain were manufactured goods, and, secondly, most foreign imports were raw materials which Great Britain could not supply.

3 ibid.,p.8.

4 ibid.,p.42.
The effect of the existing Canadian preference was a vital point at issue between the experts at the Board of Trade and the Canadian Government. By June, 1902, the Canadians were becoming more insistent that some reciprocity would be required should a further preference be granted to Great Britain. Seddon had offered a 10% preference on British goods carried in British ships; but the wording of his draft resolution suggested that he too might require some reciprocal advantages. In some respects, the attitude of the Australian Government was an unknown quantity; and the amount of interest in Australia in a tariff preference does not bear out Amery's conclusion that all the colonies were strongly in favour of such preferences. There were some indications that a form of reciprocity, not necessarily a tariff preference, would be sought if Australia decided in favour of granting a preference to Great Britain.

1 Before the Conference met, Chamberlain had had discussions with Laurier and Fielding (the Canadian Minister of Finance), and also with Col. G. T. Denison of the Canadian British Empire League, on the possibility of offering a preference to the colonies by means of the corn registration duty. J. Amery, op. cit., pp. 454-6; and G. T. Denison, op. cit., pp. 298, 231-2.

2 Procs. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O. Confid. Print, Misc. No. 144, p. 41. When the Conference opened, the New Zealand Government had not determined whether the 10% would be a general preference, or its equivalent on certain classes of goods where a preference would be most valuable to Great Britain and contribute towards freer inter-imperial trade. Ibid., pp. 47-8. Seddon asked for a list of manufactured articles on which a preferential tariff rate would be of most help to British manufacturers. Ibid., p. II.

3 J. Amery, op. cit., p. 432. Apart from other evidence, the debates on the Tariff Bill in the Commonwealth Parliament in 1901 are a useful indication of the unformed state of opinion in Australia. Very few speakers mentioned the subject of preferential tariff rates.

4 Such as a reduction of British stamp duty charges on colonial bonds; the award of army and navy supply contracts to colonial firms; and a reduction of the existing duties on colonial wines and spirits.
Seddon's draft resolution was not discussed in the Conference until 18 July. Gerald Balfour, the President of the Board of Trade, at no time supported Chamberlain as strongly asSelborne and Brodrick had done on defence. Laurier obviously wanted the Imperial Government to offer a reciprocal concession. Barton was reluctant to see Australia standing out as the only colony unlikely to offer a preference to Great Britain. He therefore attempted to direct the Conference away from specific offers and towards the adoption of a general resolution affirming the principle of preferential trade. Barton personally regarded preferential tariff rates in Great Britain's favour as a most important line of future policy; but in the Conference he pointed out the two major difficulties confronting Australia. One was the Commonwealth's revenue difficulties, and the other was the existence of a free trade opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament. The permanence of any resolution adopted by the Conference

1 On account of Chamberlain's cab accident, there was a break in the sessions of the Conference between 4 and 18 July. In the meantime, Salisbury had resigned as Prime Minister, and Sir Gordon Sprigg, the Premier of Cape Colony, had returned to South Africa on account of the crisis over the suspension of the Cape Constitution.

Others who attended the sessions on commercial relations were the Earl of Dudley, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Trade; Sir Francis Hopwood, the Permanent Under-Secretary to the Board of Trade; Sir Alfred Bateman and Sir Robert Giffen; and the Canadian Ministers of Finance and Customs.

2 The Premiers of Cape Colony and Natal had already said that they were prepared to recommend a preference of 33 1/3% to Great Britain by raising duties against the foreigner. Procs. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O. Confid. Print, Misc. No. 144, pp. 44-5.

3 Ibid., p. 46. Barton suggested the terms of a resolution on these lines, but he did not formally move it.
on tariff policy would depend on its being acceptable to a protectiveist or to a free trade government. Because the control of tariff policy had always been a jealously guarded autonomous power, Barton insisted that the Colonial Governments and Parliaments should be left to make definite proposals for a tariff preference. They should also be left to determine whether the means adopted should be a rebate on existing duties in favour of Great Britain or an increase in duties against the foreigner. Barton thought that Australia would be unlikely to offer Great Britain a rebate of duties. Nor was she likely to insist on reciprocity from Great Britain in the form of a reduction in existing duties or a lower rate in new impositions. Because the mother country had always been ready to meet the colonies, he thought that the form of any reciprocal action could be left to the Imperial Parliament.

By suggesting that the Conference might endorse the principle of tariff preferences between the colonies and Great Britain, Barton attempted to satisfy his own desire to adopt such a policy. His plea that action should be left to the colonial Parliaments showed that he knew only too well that no immediate

1 *ibid.*, p.10. The free traders, led by G.H. Reid, were in opposition to the Barton Government in the first Commonwealth Parliament. In 1902 it was within the bounds of possibility that Reid might at some time form a government and perhaps reverse the 1901 protective tariff.

2 Subsequently in 1902-3 Barton was more openly in favour of increasing existing duties against the foreigner and seeking some reciprocity from Great Britain.

3 *ibid.*, p.46. At that time, Barton thought that a welcome form of reciprocal action would be for the Imperial Government to favour the colonies when awarding army and navy supply contracts.
steps could be taken in Australia to grant a preference. In contrast, Seddon wanted the Conference to work out an arrangement which all the colonies would then accept. He also pointed out the main difference between 1897 and 1902: Great Britain was no longer without the means of giving preferential treatment to the colonies. This gave Laurier an opportunity to focus the attention of the Conference on Great Britain's fiscal policy and in particular on the existing import duties on colonial wines and the new corn registration duty.

Chamberlain, and not Gerald Balfour, replied to Laurier. Because he was convinced that imperial unity in the future would depend on the extension and improvement of inter-imperial commercial relations, Chamberlain had come to believe that the ultimate end in view was far more important than the exact benefits accruing to Great Britain from any existing tariff preferences in her favour. If some progress could be made in compiling a list of articles on which the colonies would offer Great Britain terms approximating as closely as possible to free trade, he thought that Great Britain should do something for the colonies in return. A rebate on articles already taxable might be a way of doing so.

1 ibid., pp. 47, 49.
2 ibid., p. 50.
3 This meant that Chamberlain no longer accepted the Board of Trade's view that the Canadian preference had done little in Great Britain's favour because it had not transferred trade from the foreigner to Great Britain. He now accepted the Canadian view that the preference was effective because it had arrested the decline in British imports, and to that extent imports of British manufactures to Canada had increased. ibid., pp. 52-8.
Any proposals in favour of the imposition of a tariff in Great Britain would have to face a severe ordeal, but would not necessarily meet insuperable obstacles.

Chamberlain's unheeded response formed the pinnacle of discussions in the Conference on commercial relations. It also marks one of the most significant stages in his progress towards tariff reform. He faced the question of reciprocity through a reduction of the grain duty in favour of the colonies, and he had not completely cast out the future possibility of a change in British tariff policy.

When in response to Chamberlain's suggestion, the Conference moved towards examining the general principles of a list of articles on which the colonies could give further preference to Great Britain in return for a rebate on the grain duty, Barton realised that the Conference was going too fast for him in a direction he could not follow. Although he personally favoured most the principle of a general preference by way of raising duties against the foreigner, he could not accept a resolution recommending a preference on a selected list of articles.

These two methods of granting a preference to Great Britain had to discuss a general rebate or a rebate on a list of articles.
been discussed much less in Australia than a rebate on existing duties. Moreover, a policy which suited New Zealand's circumstances might not suit Australia where there was a much greater proportion of foreign trade. Barton also wanted to exclude intercolonial trade from any resolution adopted by the Conference.

During subsequent sessions of the Conference, Chamberlain and the Prime Ministers tried to reach agreement on a resolution which would be more definite than that of 1897, and, at the same time, make allowances for the differences in viewpoint among the colonies as well as between them and Great Britain. This was no easy task. Agreement was not reached until there had been more plain speaking on all sides. The main impression of these sessions of the Conference, however, is not of the differences among the Prime Ministers themselves or with Chamberlain, but of their sincere determination to reach a compromise acceptable to all. Chamberlain probably did most to secure agreement by going a

1 When it came to discussing a list of articles with the Board of Trade, Seddon began to draw back. There was a great difference between the principle of a 10% preference, already adopted in New Zealand, and a list of items, mainly of British manufactures, which he was expected to accept without any prior consideration in New Zealand. ibid., pp.63-4.

2 ibid., pp.58-60. There were two reasons for this. He did not think that too much should be attempted all at once; and, in view of the discussions he was to hold with the Canadian Ministers, he did not want to be pressed to support tariff arrangements for which Australia was no more ready than she was for an arrangement with Great Britain.

3 At the sessions of the Conference held on 23 July, I, 8 and II August.

4 Four different drafts came before the Conference. These were Seddon's original draft, a draft submitted by Chamberlain which did not go far enough for the Canadians, a Canadian draft which was unacceptable to Chamberlain, and finally an amended version of the Canadian draft. The Canadian draft was the outcome of Barton's suggestion that Laurier should call a private meeting of the Prime Ministers in the hope of reaching agreement on a
long way to meet the views of the Prime Ministers in comparison with his advocacy of inter-imperial free trade when the Conference opened. Yet he still had to look after the interests of the Imperial Government and bear the attitudes of his colleagues in mind. As a matter of policy and because of his own beliefs, he thought that a recommendation from the Conference in favour of tariff preferences would have much greater force in Great Britain if the Prime Ministers could show that preferential trade would tend towards freer trade between the mother country and the colonies.

The crux of the problem facing the Conference was whether a general resolution should be adopted or one that stated as precisely as possible what the colonies and Great Britain were willing to do. Chamberlain and Laurier, for different reasons, wanted a definite advance on the terms of the general resolution adopted in 1897. During the course of the Conference, Seddon shifted nearer to Barton's position and favoured a general resolution advocating that preferential treatment should be offered to Great Britain but leaving the details to be settled by the Colonial Government.

5 At one stage the Canadians threatened to withdraw the existing tariff preference unless Great Britain offered a return concession. Ibid., p.132.

2 e.g. the Canadian Ministers were willing to see how the existing preference could be increased on certain classes of goods; but this would depend upon some reciprocity from Great Britain.
ments and Parliaments. Gerald Balfour also favoured a general resolution in case the Prime Ministers sought some *quid pro quo* when they negotiated with the Board of Trade to determine lists of articles on which preferences might be granted.

Chamberlain subsequently came to have less objection to a resolution in general terms. He still could not accept one which included a statement that in return for preferential treatment by the colonies Great Britain should exempt them from or reduce existing or future duties in their favour. Finally, he and the Prime Ministers accepted a resolution urging the principle of preferential trade on Great Britain. Laurier had won his point in so far as reciprocal concessions in favour of the colonies were not entirely overlooked; and Barton was satisfied because the offer of a preference by a colony was not made dependent upon reciprocity from Great Britain. By agreeing to submit the principle of preferential trade to their colleagues at an early opportunity, both the timing of any action and the method of

1 *ibid.* , p.67. Such a contingency probably explains Balfour's increasing reluctance as the Conference proceeded to take any immediate action to discuss the compilation of lists with the Prime Ministers.

2 This was after Balfour told the Conference that New Zealand, Cape Colony and Natal had offered unilateral preferences to Great Britain. *ibid.* , p.127.

3 *ibid.* , p.178. This was partly because the resolution did not state the means by which a preference would be granted to Great Britain over and above what had been offered unilaterally in 1897. *ibid.* , p.179.

4 *ibid.* , pp.182-3. This was at the last session of the Conference on 11 August.

5 *ibid.* , p.183.
granting a preference was left to the Colonial Governments and Parliaments. Barton had no reason to feel that the Conference had gone too far.

In the end, the Conference had made some advance on the position reached in 1897. Canada was no longer the only colony to grant a unilateral preference to Great Britain. New Zealand, Cape Colony and Natal had declared their intentions, although the details had still to be worked out. Australia was left in a minority of one. To some extent this was counteracted by Barton’s interest in the matter itself. His scruples about pledging Australia in any way or raising party strife in Australia showed that he recognised the importance of the question; and, when the circumstances of the Commonwealth were such as to provide a suitable opportunity, preferential trade would become a matter of settled policy acceptable to free traders and protectionists alike.

1 This part of the resolution was included at Hime’s suggestion. He felt that some pledge of action by the Prime Ministers was necessary. ibid., p.187.

2 Canada was prepared to give further concessions to Great Britain on a selected list of articles in one or more of three possible ways: a reduction of duties in favour of Great Britain; by raising duties against the foreigner; or by making free articles dutiable if they were of foreign origin. New Zealand had offered a preference of 10% or its equivalent by a reduction of duty on British manufactured goods; Cape Colony and Natal had offered a preference of 25% by means of an increase in duties against the foreigner. ibid., p.127.

3 At Seddon’s request, Balfour altered the statement with regard to New Zealand so as to include a preference by means of raising duties against the foreigner in cases of certain colonial industries. Seddon subsequently adopted the three Canadian methods. ibid., pp.127,130-1. Seddon defined the 10% preference as 10% of the amount received as customs duty, i.e. on a duty of 20% or 25%, the British preference would be 2% or 2½. ibid., p.131.

3 i.e. excluding Newfoundland, where conditions were such that
Chamberlain's change in attitude during the course of the 1902 Conference had its antecedent in the 1897 Conference. He had then followed the lead given by the Premiers and allowed the Conference to discuss preferential trade instead of inter-imperial free trade. In 1902 he did not bar a discussion of the forms which reciprocity by the mother country could take. He recognised that the exemption of the colonies from the corn registration duty was a form of reciprocity that could be examined, and he accepted a resolution in which the Prime Ministers urged the principle of reciprocal preferences on Great Britain. Moreover, he objected as a member of the Imperial Government and not personally to a resolution laying down that reciprocity should be by way of exemption from or a reduction of existing or subsequently imposed duties. After the Conference, he accepted colonial exemption from the corn registration duty as reciprocity for further tariff concessions by the colonies. In November, 1902, Chamberlain attempted to gain the Cabinet's acceptance of this in principle.

4 e.g. in the ways in which he had obtained information from the Canadian Government about the operation of a preferential tariff, and from the Board of Trade about the classes of manufactures on which a preferential rate would best aid British manufacturers.

1 *ibid.*, p.186. Chamberlain subsequently stated that he objected because his colleagues were not in London and so could not be consulted on the statement respecting the United Kingdom.

2 J. Amery, *op.cit.*, pp.516-7, concerning Chamberlain's negotiations with W.S. Fielding, the Canadian Minister of Finance.

3 *ibid.*, pp.513-4, 517-9. The degree to which Cabinet's acceptance in principle had been obtained became a matter of dispute later.
Political relations, defence and commercial relations were the three major issues Chamberlain had put before the Conference. Of these, defence and commercial relations received by far the most exhaustive treatment. Chamberlain had also suggested that relations with the Pacific Islands might be brought before the Conference. The discussions in 1902 were in no way comparable in importance or in result with those in 1887. They were confined to an exchange of views outside the formal sessions of the Conference between Onslow, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Barton and Seddon.

Another attempt was made to obtain Australia's agreement to administer British protectorates in the South Pacific before the territories were annexed to the Crown. Barton agreed in principle because of Australian interests in the islands; but in its

I The subjects suggested by the Commonwealth Government came before the Conference, but none of them was discussed at length. Colonial adherence to imperial treaties appeared to offer a basis for detailed treatment; but the result of a short discussion was a formal reaffirmation of the colonies' option of adherence and withdrawal, and a resolution requesting the Imperial Government to consult with the colonies when their interests were involved in a treaty in process of negotiation with a foreign Power. Procs. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.144, pp.105-6.

The Imperial Government was already following this practice in keeping the colonies informed of the progress of negotiations with Germany and Belgium for new commercial treaties.

The Prime Ministers reaffirmed the attitudes expressed by the colonial delegates in 1901 with regard to the establishment of an Imperial Court of Appeal. Consequently no further progress was made. ibid., pp.141-2.

Barton's and Seddon's representations for the colonies to be given preference in the allotment of army and navy supply contracts were given a sympathetic hearing by the British authorities. ibid., pp.146-157.

2 A Memo by Onslow on his interview with Barton and Seddon is included in the Conference papers. C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.144, Appendix XXIX, p.515.
present circumstances the Commonwealth could not undertake to administer any territory other than New Guinea. Seddon seized the opportunity to renew New Zealand's claims to taking over the administration of Fiji. Here he met opposition from both Barton and Chamberlain. Although Seddon managed to introduce a draft resolution, Chamberlain had no intention of allowing a discussion on Fiji to form part of the proceedings of the Conference. He regarded Seddon's criticisms of British policy and Crown Colony rule as interference from a colonial Prime Minister who would vehemently resent the introduction of any internal matter in New Zealand for discussion by the Conference. Barton's main interest was in the progress of negotiations with France to establish a joint jurisdiction over claims and titles to land in the New Hebrides, and to ensure that the interests of Australian settlers and missions would not be forgotten. The information he was given confirmed long standing and repeated assurances that the Imperial Government would consult Australia and safeguard her interests.

The place of colonial interests in British foreign policy was


2 Barton's opposition was mainly on account of the Australian capital invested in the Fijian sugar industry. He supported Seddon in his draft motion for an inquiry into the conditions of the natives and the existing mode of government. Proc. of 1902 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc. No.144, pp.192, 615.

3 ibid., p.193; and correspondence between Seddon, Onslow and Anderson from 8 to 16 August, 1902. Seddon Papers, vol.45, National Archives, New Zealand.

4 C.O.Confid. Print, Misc.No.144, Appendix XXVIII, p.514; Anderson to Barton, 26 July, 1902, C.P.103 Set 12 B3 File A(4), C.N.L. Archives; and representations to the Colonial Office during 1901 from the Governor-General. C.P.73 Set 8, Letterbooks of Despatches to the Secretary of State, C.N.L. Archives.
not a major issue in imperial relations in 1902 as it had been in 1887. In the circumstances of 1902, colonial interests could hardly have become a major issue once Canada and Australia had refused to assume a share in the burden of imperial defence.

V

The Colonial Conference of 1902 was the setting for the final rejection by the colonies of a kriegsverein and a new political structure for the Empire. The only possible line of advance towards a more closely-knit Empire was through commercial relations; but the onus of action was placed by the colonies on Great Britain rather than on themselves. In this way, the Conference forms the prelude to the tariff reform movement which began towards the end of the following year. The deliberations of the Conference also showed the two-fold basis of that movement. On the one hand, a system of reciprocal preferences would increase inter-imperial trade and imperial unity. On the other, Great Britain's own interests would be enhanced by an expansion in colonial markets for British manufactures and a reduction in foreign imports, especially of food, into Great Britain. Although Chamberlain's sincerity in the imperial aim of tariff reform is undoubted, the primacy of one or the other in the tariff reformers is as much a matter of speculation as it was when they or their predecessors were vocal and active in the United Empire Trade League. Some of them, with other enthusiasts for imperial unity, still hankered for an organic political structure to
evolve from a system of imperial preferences. Richard Jebb, L.S. Amery and W.S. Hewins were among the most prominent of these. Later there was the Round Table group.

The Colonial Conference secured very little in the way of commitment by the colonies. Chamberlain, and especially Selborne and Brodrick, regretted this where defence was concerned. The positive contribution of the Conference to imperial unity came from the first-hand exchange of views between members of the Imperial Government and the colonial Prime Ministers. The colonies and their representatives saw this as a reciprocal benefit and not, as Chamberlain did, as an opportunity for the Imperial Government to learn the views of the colonies. On account of the protracted nature of the proceedings of the Conference, because of Chamberlain's cab accident and the postponement of the coronation from June to August, the Prime Ministers were in London for at least two months. Apart from social demands on their time during the coronation festivities and the number of public speeches they had to make, they had a long enough period of time at their disposal to achieve as much outside the Conference in discussions with the permanent heads of the various government departments and members of the Imperial Government as they

I The two-fold colonial attitude is shown in the S.M.H.'s comments: "The Imperial Conference binds nobody, though its results are of service as a guide to the wishes of the Imperial authorities". But the "best educational and Imperial result of the Conference" was "when the real mind of Greater Britain [i.e. the colonies] was made clear". Editorials 18 and 19 Sept., 1902.
did during the sessions of the Conference. In this way, personal contacts between the colonial Prime Ministers and the Imperial Government reinforced the role of the Canadian High Commissioner and the Agents-General in presenting the views of the colonies on a wide number of issues, and in urging action on the Imperial Government in matters where colonial issues were believed to be at stake. The holding of Conferences at regular intervals, and not solely in conjunction with a great imperial event when expectations were high that far-reaching decisions and changes would be made, seemed the best way of recognising the inestimable value of this mutual exchange of views.

After Barton's return to Australia, acceptance or rejection of the new naval agreement was of far more immediate importance than any action towards offering a preference to Great Britain. Barton still recognised the importance of a tariff preference in future policy, and he accepted more definitely that a preference to Great Britain would have to take the form of increased duties against the foreigner. During the rest of the time he was Prime Minister a favourable opportunity did not occur either to decide definitely on the form a preference would take or to introduce such an alteration into the Commonwealth's tariff policy. There

I Barton was far less reticent about his views on tariff preferences during his three weeks' visit to Canada in 1902. See reports of his speeches at Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver in the S.M.H., 6, II and 23 Sept., 1902.

2 In Sept., 1903, he seemed to think that the time would not be opportune until the next succeeding Parliament after the one to be elected late in 1903. Barton to B.R.Wise, 14 Sept., 1903. Correspondence of B.R.Wise, Mitchell Library, A 2646. Tennyson told Chamberlain that Barton favoured some reciprocity
was no widespread interest in imperial preference in Australia until after the opening of Chamberlain's tariff reform campaign in October, 1903.

The Naval Agreement Bill had a lengthy and none too easy passage after it was introduced by Barton into the House of Representatives in July, 1903. As a means of ensuring its adoption, Barton and Forrest, with the support of Lord Tennyson, the Governor-General, attempted to secure the Admiralty's agreement to some changes. They hoped to provide more adequately for local naval defence; but their representations were unsuccessful. The Labour Party members in the House of Representatives, and others who had long regarded themselves as "nationalists", were strongly in favour of an Australian navy. Even among those who supported the Bill, there were some who regarded the Agreement as a temporary measure until Australia was in a financial position to create from Great Britain, such as the reduction of a new corn duty by half in favour of colonial-grown corn and a 50% reduction in the existing duties on colonial wines and spirits. Tennyson to Chamberlain, private, II August, 1903, Tennyson Papers, 479/2/299, C.N.L. Tennyson also told Chamberlain that Australia was looking for a lead from Great Britain before she offered a preference herself. Tennyson to Chamberlain, telegrams, 20 May and 20 June, 1903, Tennyson Papers, Letterbook of Private Despatches to the Secretary of State, 479/3, C.N.L.

Among those who strongly supported imperial preference was B.R. Wise. He believed that it would provide one of the best means of securing imperial unity and of lessening free trade opposition to the Commonwealth's protectionist policy. Wise to Deakin, 30 Jan., 1903, Correspondence of B.R. Wise, Mitchell Library, A 2646.


3 See the correspondence included in the Tennyson Papers, and entries in Tennyson's Diary, March to August, 1903. C.N.L., 479/2 and 3. The suggested change was for three or six torpedo-boat destroyers in addition to the ships laid down in the
a navy of her own or, alternatively, until she could make better provision for local naval defence in addition to the ships of the Australian Squadron. In 1902, in comparison with 1887, there was a much more widespread feeling that an Australian navy alone was compatible with Australian nationhood. As Barton had foreseen, there was strong criticism of the removal of the stipulation confining the ships to Australian and New Zealand waters unless the Colonial Governments consented to their withdrawal. Its removal looked too much like the thin end of the wedge towards securing an unconditional contribution to imperial defence. In the Commonwealth Parliament in 1903 there was also greater awareness than ever before of the connection between defence and foreign policy.

Some of the uncertainty in Australia about the new Agreement was not unfounded. In the old Agreement, the Auxiliary Squadron was additional to the imperial squadron on the Australian Station. The new squadron, to which Australia in future would contribute £200,000 per annum, was to be the only force. Barton trusted the Admiralty to honour the stipulation in the Agreement that this, not necessarily be the only force on the

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1 e.g. during the debate on the Naval Agreement Bill in the H. of Representatives, C'wealth Parl. Deb. (1903 Session), J. Crouch, pp. 1603-4; P. M. Glynn, p. 2067; H. B. Higgins, p. 2006.
2 e.g. J. Quick, ibid., pp. 1968-9; G. H. Reid, p. 1979.
3 e.g. Chermside told Chamberlain that in theory there was most support for an Australian navy, but its cost was as yet beyond Australia. Chermside to Chamberlain, Secret, 30 Sept., 1902, Q'ld. Govt. House Papers, Secret Despatches to Secretary of State, vol. II.
Australian Station. Others were not so sure; and they also
contended that in effect Australia would now be contributing to the
Royal Navy in general and not to an Australian Auxiliary Squad-
ron as hitherto. G.H.Reid was led, therefore, to claim that by
eliminating the Commonwealth Government from any control over
the ships, an attempt had been made to alter the existing rela-
tionship between the mother country and the colonies. This was
where Reid and many others in Australia differed from Chamber-
lain. To Chamberlain, the principle of a contribution was what
really mattered and not the actual amount. For this reason, he
was anxious that the Commonwealth Parliament should not reject
the Agreement. Reid had long stood firm against any change in
the existing relations between the mother country and the colon-
ies. Should he decide to oppose the Bill, its fate would be in
doubt. Barton was not at all certain about what Reid intended to
do; but he showed his own political courage in defence of an
Agreement which he had made in the belief that it would provide
the best means then obtainable to improve Australia's naval
defences. He staked the life of his Government on a free vote to

1 C'wealth Parli. Deb. (1903 Session), H. of Representatives,
2 ibid., p.1979.
3 Chamberlain to Barton, 21 March,1903. Barton Papers, C.N.L.
4 Tennyson's Diary, entry for 6 April,1903. C.N.L.
Tennyson helped to secure Reid's support for the Bill. Tenny-
son to Chamberlain, Secret, 24 April,1903, Letterbooks of Pri-
vate Despatches to the Secretary of State, 479/3, C.N.L.
In view of other occasions when Reid had argued in opposition
and had then voted in favour of a resolution or a Bill, he
might not in any case have carried his opposition as far as
voting against the Bill.
pass the Bill without any amendments, and made strenuous efforts in Committee to avoid alterations which he knew from his own experience in London and from more recent communications that the Admiralty would not accept.

Barton's speech in the Commonwealth Parliament on 7 July was one of his most important and masterly speeches in its exposition and in its portrayal of the content of his ideas and beliefs. He expounded the Admiralty's principles of offensive strategy and unity of command; he compared the old and new Agreements and showed the advantages and improvements in the latter; he examined the possible alternatives to the Agreement, including the creation of the nucleus of an Australian navy, and rejected them in the present circumstances of the Commonwealth. Over and above this, he showed the essential nature of his attitude to Australia and to the Empire. His loyalty to Australia as an Australian native was not diminished in any way by an equal loyalty to the Empire.

As long as Australia remained a part of the Empire an obligation, and not a formal commitment, was attached to her. Native born or British born, they were "Britons in Australia" and "Britons of the Empire". When they became Australians they did not give up any of the rights of Britishness or renounce

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1 The second reading was carried by 43 to 29 votes, and the Bill was adopted without amendment on 23 July, 1903.
their share in the British heritage. To retain these and a place in the material prosperity of the Empire, some responsibilities devolved on Australia. This was one side of an Australian's loyalty. His "local aspirations" and his patriotism formed the other side. In the Constitution and in the legislation of the new Commonwealth, Barton had tried "to give fuller scope for the national aspirations of Australians". They could only escape from their dual loyalty by cutting the painter; but they had recently fought in South Africa to prevent a disintegration of the Empire. When these beliefs were applied to the naval defence of Australia, Australians had to meet their obligations as "citizens of the Empire" at the same time as they looked after Australia's own interests. Barton could not see that the 1902 naval Agreement involved any want of loyalty to Australia because there could be "no want of loyalty in giving Australia adequate defences".

Barton's testament of his dual loyalty ended with a declaration which was valid for many Australians, native or British born, far beyond the immediate time when it was made: "While we remain part of the Empire, there will arise questions of Imperial rather than of local interest, and they will arise even if we turn away and shut our eyes. But it is our duty to have regard to these questions so long as we remain in the Empire, and to recognise what our position requires of us... to

1 ibid., p.1797.
2 ibid., p.1798.
the extent of realising that with participation in the advantages of the Empire comes reciprocal obligation."

An obligation and not a formal commitment. In this distinction lay the key to the continuation of the imperial link. In 1897 G.H. Reid and his fellow premiers rejected changes in the political relations of the Empire and a free trade zollverein. In 1902 Barton rejected the institution of new political ties between Australia and Great Britain and the formation of an imperial military reserve in Australia. The imperial idea of the imperial federationists in the 1880s and of Chamberlain between 1897 and 1902 was thereby cast aside, first by the colonies and then by a federated Australia. On the other hand, through that "freedom and voluntaryism" of which Gladstone had often spoken, the Australian Colonies and the new Commonwealth had shown by their actions in peace and war that colonial autonomy and Empire membership were complementary.

I ibid., p.1799.
CONCLUSION

TOWARDS A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM OF EMPIRE

In 1885 imperial federationists in Great Britain firmly believed that sooner or later the self-governing colonies would have to form closer ties with Great Britain or become independent. In the Australian Colonies, the majority of colonists took the continuance of the imperial tie for granted. Because they rejected the imposition of any closer ties, some of them reluctantly concluded that Australia must eventually become independent. A minority looked forward to independence with eagerness. Another minority wanted to see closer and more formal links of Empire; but their support was indicative of a sentiment for imperial unity and not of their desire for any particular form of imperial federation.

The years between 1885 and 1902 saw the practical working out of ways which would enable the Australian Colonies and the other self-governing colonies to retain their ties with Great Britain and, at the same time, avoid facing the alternatives of imperial federation or independence. In 1902 the Prime Ministers of Australia and Canada took the lead in showing unmistakably that any form of imperial federation - political, defensive or commercial - was unacceptable to the growing nations they represented.

Imperial federationists drew up a multitude of schemes for a federal structure. They gave due weight to the proportionate
representation of Great Britain and the colonies in terms of population and financial resources. They either evaded or were chary of raising the issues involved in the balance of powers between the central authority and the federating states. Without giving any real thought to the problem, they declared that an imperial federation would not lessen the autonomous powers enjoyed by the colonies. Although Rosebery appreciated the importance of colonial autonomy, he did not face the problem of the balance of powers in an imperial structure any better than the more irresponsible members of the Imperial Federation League. They never questioned Great Britain's supremacy in directing the affairs of the Empire. Chamberlain thought that a more closely knit Empire would increase Great Britain's power in world politics; but he had no deliberate intention of lessening colonial autonomy. Chamberlain, Rosebery and others who were interested in imperial unity spoke often and easily of the colonies' equality with the mother country and of their partnership with Great Britain in the Empire. Equality and partnership meant the representation of Great Britain and the colonies in an Imperial Council or some other body. Neither equal representation nor equality in the power of policy making were to be conceded.

The problem of imperial unity and the colonies' assumption of a share in the responsibilities of the Empire wore different aspects in Great Britain and in the Australian Colonies. The colonies readily showed the strength of their ties with Great
Britain when they assisted her in the Sudan and in South Africa. In British eyes, there seemed little reason for their reluctance to turn voluntary assistance and co-operation into formal obligations. By their interest and participation in improving inter-imperial cable and steamship communications and in expanding their trade with other self-governing colonies as well as with Great Britain, the Australian Colonies also showed their voluntary acceptance of the obligations and the responsibilities arising from the ties which bound them to the Empire. When obligations and responsibilities were voluntarily and readily accepted, the Colonial Governments could see no reason for, and, indeed, they saw dangers in the colonies' assumption of formal and binding commitments. When G.H. Reid and Sir Edmund Barton argued that the loose tie between Australia and Great Britain should not be tempered with because it had produced a satisfactory relationship, they were not motivated by conservatism and dislike of change. A growing nation found its self-respect enhanced by being able to decide for itself in what measure it would honour its obligations to the Empire. Colonial liberties were infringed when obligations were imposed and not assumed voluntarily. The imperial tie might then become irksome.

Once the likelihood had passed that Liberals of the school of John Bright would set the colonies loose, there was a much greater appreciation in the Australian Colonies of the Liberals' I Sir William Harcourt was probably the last representative of this school in the 1890s.
contribution to imperial unity. By their adherence to the principles of self-government, they had helped to perpetuate the link between the mother country and the colonies. At the end of the nineteenth century, imperialists could no longer charge them with favouring the disintegration of the Empire; but it did not follow that Liberals, such as Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith, sought to uphold imperial unity by imposing closer ties between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies. They continued to uphold the tradition stemming from those Whigs and Liberals who had first granted self-government to the colonies. Their criticism of Unionist policy in South Africa arose in a large measure from their adherence to this tradition. They also disliked Chamberlain's attempts at the 1897 and 1902 Colonial Conferences to draw the self-governing colonies towards adopting closer ties with the mother country. Liberal journals commended the colonial Prime Ministers for stressing colonial self-government as one of the pillars of imperial unity and for the check they administered to imperialism by refusing to take part in schemes for closer union. Amidst the imperialist fervour surrounding the coronation, the end of the war and the Colonial Conference of 1902, the old Liberal belief in self-government still led to a conviction that "the Imperialist spirit always in the end... tends to an infringement of colonial liberties".

I e.g. Rosebery at the National Liberal Club, 3 July,1897, reported in The Times, 5 July,1897, p.I3c; and at Manchester, 1 Nov.,1897, in opposition to a commercial league, reported in The Times, 2 Nov.,1897, p.9a; and Campbell-Bannerman at Stirling, 25 Oct.,1897, reported in The Times, 26 Oct.,1897, p.I1f. 2 Daily News, editorial, 15 August,1902.
Although the Liberals differed from the Conservatives and the Liberal Unionists in their attitude towards the means of ensuring imperial unity, Liberal and Conservative Governments from the late 1880s onwards followed broadly similar policies in colonial as well as in foreign affairs. Colonial policy, like foreign policy, was bi-partisan; but the self-governing colonies, like some foreign Powers, did not always fully realise this. Australian colonists had little apprehension after 1885 that a Liberal Government would adopt a policy of setting the colonies adrift. Yet they had more confidence that a Conservative or a Unionist Government, because of its declared policy of preserving the integrity of the Empire, would make greater efforts than a Liberal Government to defend colonial interests against foreign Powers. The Gladstone Government's failure in 1883-4 to secure New Guinea from German annexation coloured Australian attitudes towards Liberal statesmen for a long time to come. Rosebery was an individual exception.

Lord Knutsford's quiet contribution towards establishing confidence in Great Britain's policy towards the Australian Colonies was greatly overshadowed by Chamberlain's. Far more than any other Secretary of State for the Colonies had done, Chamberlain inspired confidence in the colonies that their representations would be heard and their interests would be safeguarded. In 1897 and 1902, the colonial Premiers' confidence in Cham-

I During the course of the 1902 Colonial Conference, the colonial Prime Ministers supported Seddon's tribute to Chamberlain that the colonies had no fear that their interests would be over-
berlain contributed in part to their unwillingness to countenance changes in the political relations of the Empire. Shortly after he succeeded Salisbury as Prime Minister, A.J. Balfour spoke for many in the colonies, as well as in Great Britain, when he attributed the satisfactory relations between the mother country and the colonies to both Chamberlain's policy and his personality. The increasing urgency in Chamberlain's attempts between 1897 and 1902 to persuade the colonies to adopt more formal ties with Great Britain was an outcome of the success of his policy towards the self-governing colonies. The colonial Premiers recognised this, and they did not allow their objections to closer ties to affect their appreciation of Chamberlain's policy towards the colonies.

In the years between 1885 and 1902, the machinery of Empire had been extended by the appointment of colonial representatives in Great Britain and by the summoning of Colonial Conferences. These developments satisfied the need for additional means of consultation between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments.

The Governors remained the primary channel of communication between their ministers and the Imperial Government. Their status was enhanced in the Australian Colonies in the 1880s and 1890s by the appointment of noblemen and others who had had distinguished careers in other capacities. They replaced the "professional"


I Speech at Fulham, 19 July, 1902, reported in The Times, 21 July, 1902.
Governors who had usually been promoted from governorships in Crown colonies to the first-class governorships in the self-governing colonies. On the whole, the Governors established good personal relations with the Colonial Governments and with the colonists. From 1888 onwards, one or more of the Australian Governments asked to be consulted before a new appointment was made; but it was not until 1901-2 that Chamberlain instituted the practice of informing a Colonial Government confidentially before an appointment was announced. Both the appointment of a Governor and his position in the colonies were conditioned by his duties as an imperial officer as well as by his duties in administering responsible government. By the end of the nineteenth century, the powers he exercised by virtue of the royal prerogative were in most cases no longer exercised independently but on ministerial advice. His duties as an imperial officer had correspondingly diminished; but he still safeguarded imperial interests by such means as the reservation of colonial Bills which might affect imperial policy.

Unless a Governor visited England on leave during his term of office, he was dependent on cable and despatch for presenting the views of his ministers and urging the Imperial Government to accede to colonial legislation or to safeguard colonial interests. By 1885 the Colonial Governments had unobtrusively found a ready means of presenting their views at first-hand and, if need be, more forcefully to the Colonial Office. In this way, the Agents-
General of the Australian Colonies acquired "ambassadorial" functions in addition to other duties which had been laid down since the late 1860s. From the early 1880s onwards, the Colonial Office officially recognised the Agents-General as spokesmen for their Governments. In correspondence with the Colonial Office and in interviews with the permanent officials and the Secretary of State, they drew attention to Australian interests and the effects of imperial policy on those interests. The high point of such activities came between 1883 and 1887 with regard to New Guinea and the New Hebrides. During those years, the Agents-General appeared as if they might replace the Governors as the main channel of communication between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments. Despite such indications, and the subsequent inclinations of one or more of the Colonial Governments, they did not do so. The Colonial Office recognised the importance of the Agents-General in presenting the views of their Governments; but steps were taken to ensure that the primary position of the Governors was maintained. This position was upheld until the Commonwealth of Australia was formed in 1901. The Governor-General then took precedence over the State Governors as the channel of communication on any matter concerning Australia as a whole or the foreign relations of the Empire. By the time the Australian Commonwealth was formed, the Agents-General had proved the usefulness and the value of their work in London. Not only did they provide an additional channel of communication with the Imperial Govern-
ment. They also performed the important task of presenting a clearer image of their colonies to political and business circles in Great Britain as well as to the general public. The Australian Commonwealth Government's delay in appointing a High Commissioner is not easy to explain.

The Colonial Conference was another addition to the machinery of Empire. It provided a means of consultation between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments and among the Colonial Governments themselves. The 1894 Conference, called by the Canadian Government, was the only Colonial Conference before 1907 that was not associated with a great imperial event. Between 1887 and 1902, the colonial representatives met formally with the British Prime Minister on one occasion. This was when Salisbury addressed the opening session of the 1887 Conference. At the 1887 and 1894 Conferences, the colonial representatives spoke for themselves as well as for their colonies. In 1897 and 1902, when membership was confined to the heads of the Colonial Governments, the deliberations of the Conferences became more

I G.H. Reid was appointed as the first Australian High Commissioner in 1910. On several occasions before then, the Commonwealth Parliament had discussed the creation of a High Commissionership and the purchase of a site in London for offices for the High Commissioner and the Agents-General of the States. In 1901, and subsequently, there were rumours that G.H. Reid, Sir John Forrest or B.R. Wise would be appointed as High Commissioner; and an approach of some kind was made to the Earl of Hopetoun in 1902 when he resigned as Governor-General. In 1904 Wise was very active in pressing his claims for appointment. 2 During the discussions on the New Hebrides at the 1887 Conference, Salisbury attended in his capacity as Foreign Secretary.
authoritative and the Premiers spoke only in the names of their colonies.

The benefits arising from the exchange of views in the Conferences were mutual. They were not to be found solely in the Imperial Government's better understanding of the views held by the colonies on matters of imperial concern. The Colonial Conferences also offered a useful means whereby the colonies could show how their interests were involved in imperial policy and insist that those interests should be safeguarded. The representatives of the Australian Colonies more than those of the other colonies used the Conferences for this purpose. In 1887 the Victorian representatives insisted that Australian interests in the New Hebrides should not be thrown away so that Great Britain might reach agreement more easily with France. In 1897 G.H. Reid defended the restrictions imposed by the colonies on coloured immigration into Australia.

Suggestions were made from time to time for a permanent organisation to act as a link between the Conferences or for a Conference to be held regularly every three or four years. Such suggestions were indicative of the importance attached by the Colonial Governments to the Conference as a useful form of contact between themselves and the Imperial Government. The value of the Colonial Conference for this purpose arose in part from the pattern of organisation adopted in 1887 and followed in subsequent Conferences: the Colonial Governments as well as the Imperial Government suggested the matters to be brought before
a Conference. Moreover, a Colonial Conference was not purely consultative. The 1887 Conference was used by the Imperial Government to complete an agreement with the Australian Colonies and New Zealand for the creation of an Auxiliary Naval Squadron, and to determine the colonies' contribution towards the maintenance of this force. In 1902 this pattern repeated itself. Although Sir Henry Holland had deprecated the adoption of resolutions by the Conference in 1887, the colonial representatives regarded resolutions as a means of showing the area of agreement between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments and among the Colonial Governments themselves. From 1894 onwards, the adoption of resolutions became an essential part of the purpose of a Conference. In 1897 and 1902, resolutions also served another very necessary purpose. They dampened down the unfounded hopes of many enthusiasts outside the Conferences that major steps would be taken to create a closely-knit system of military and naval defence in which the colonies would undertake binding commitments.

The Colonial Conferences were not the scene of the colonies' real decision to reject any form of imperial federation. They only recorded a rejection that had been decided quietly over a long period of time. In 1897 and 1902 a political federation of the Empire and a free trade zollverein were rejected. In 1902 a kriegsverein was rejected once and for all. Two other important questions were left open in 1902. The challenge in both cases came from the colonies - one over a long period of time.
and the other more recently. The response lay in the hands of the Imperial Government. How could the colonies ensure that their interests would be safeguarded in imperial policy without their seeking at the same time to share in the responsibility for that policy? What concessions could the colonies expect from Great Britain in return for tariff preferences? To concede to the colonies a voice in policy-making would breach the last bastion of imperial supremacy. To offer the colonies reciprocal concessions in return for tariff preferences would mean a revision of Great Britain's free trade policy.

In 1902 the colonies declared themselves in favour of continuing the practice of voluntary co-operation with Great Britain in peace and war. To Chamberlain, and to imperial federationists, a colonial voice in foreign policy was consequent upon the colonies' agreement to assume commitments in imperial defence and establish a new advisory or a policy-making institution. In 1902, once the colonies had rejected what were necessary prerequisites from the British point of view, the question of their sharing in the decisions of imperial policy could not be directly raised.

Those in Great Britain who interested themselves in this question more or less took it for granted that the colonies would welcome having a voice in imperial policy. In the colonies an important distinction was made between sharing in policy-making, and in the responsibilities of defending that policy in war if need be, and ensuring that the Imperial Government did
not overlook colonial interests in its policies towards foreign Powers. There was plenty of evidence that the colonies had long been interested in the latter. The assumption was groundless that they sought to share in policy-making. Australian attitudes support this contention as readily as Canadian.

In 1902 the Commonwealth of Australia was unlikely to seek a direct voice in policy-making because Sir Edmund Barton had already realised that a voice in imperial policy and Australian commitments in imperial defence would have to go together. Between 1897 and 1902, others in Australia also came to see dangers in the siren's song that offered to the colonies the allurements of an enhanced status and an imperial partnership with Great Britain. One of these was G.H. Reid. To him, a colonial share in imperial policy meant participation in the management of the Empire as well as influence in foreign policy. Australia would have to share in the responsibility for the policies followed in Africa and India without having any real power to influence those policies. No doubt Reid remembered Chamberlain's declaration to the colonial Premiers in 1897 that absolute equality could not be recognised between Great Britain and the self-governing colonies. Moreover, Chamberlain's later statements about a "true partnership" and the "weary Titan" needing support in his

G.H. Reid denied the validity of this assumption more bluntly than Barton: "While it is fashionable, in the language of Mr. Chamberlain, to represent the self-governing colonies as knocking at the door of Imperial power and asking for a share in the management of the Empire, I submit, with great respect to that most distinguished man, that that necessity, wherever else it may exist, is not to be found in this part of the British Empire...." C'wealth Parl.Deb. (1903 Session), H. of Representatives, 9 July, 1903, p. 1976.

2 ibid.
great task did not mean that Great Britain's supremacy in policy-making would be relinquished. The self-governing colonies might have found that a "partnership" with Great Britain gave them less influence in imperial policy than they already exercised.

Since 1885 Liberal and Conservative-Unionist Governments in Great Britain had increasingly shown awareness of colonial interests in their conduct of foreign policy. They were wary of arousing another storm of criticism as vehement as that in the Australian Colonies in 1883–4 when the Gladstone Government failed to prevent a German annexation of part of New Guinea. Rosebery, Knutsford and Chamberlain, supported by Sir Robert Herbert and other senior permanent officials in the Colonial Office, understood well that the Imperial Government's defence of colonial interests, where they touched on British foreign policy, was one of the most valuable ways of ensuring the colonies' lasting association with Great Britain. From time to time, when and as the need arose, adjustments were made in Britain's relations with foreign Powers to allow for the existence of the self-governing colonies in the Empire and their growing external interests.

By 1885 the self-governing colonies had been given the option of adhering to British commercial treaties. In 1899 they were given the power of separate withdrawal. Two commercial treaties were denounced by the Imperial Government in 1897 in response to the unanimous request of the colonies at the Colonial Conference. Clauses in those treaties had prevented the colonies
from granting tariff preferences in Great Britain's favour. By 1902 the colonies were being kept informed of the progress of negotiations for new British commercial treaties. The Imperial Government was willing to conclude a separate commercial treaty with a foreign Power on behalf of a colony and allow a colonial plenipotentiary to take part in the negotiations. Canada made use of this practice in 1893 to conclude a commercial treaty with France; but by 1902 Australia had found no need to ask the Imperial Government to act on her behalf in negotiating a commercial treaty with a foreign Power.

To safeguard colonial interests in the conduct of foreign relations and in British treaties other than commercial agreements set a more difficult task for the Imperial Government. It took on its most complex form whenever colonial interests became involved in the colonial policy of another Great Power. The question at issue could then be settled very seldom on its own merits. Australians found this very difficult to accept when their interests in New Guinea, in the New Hebrides and in the end of French transportation to the Pacific came into conflict with German and French policy. The same pattern was repeated in Samoa where New Zealand rather than Australian interests created problems in British relations with Germany and the United States. A major point was gained in 1886 when Lord Rosebery, then For-

I e.g. with regard to the negotiations with Belgium and Germany for commercial treaties to replace those denounced by the Imperial Government in 1897.
eign Secretary, refused to make an agreement with France to settle the New Hebrides question unless it met the approval of the Australian Colonies and satisfied their interests in the South Pacific. Rosebery therefore rejected a French proposal to settle the question because most of the Australian Colonies found it unacceptable. Salisbury's agreement with France in 1887 did not entirely satisfy the Australian Colonies; but at least a French annexation of the New Hebrides had been prevented.

The Anglo-Japanese Commercial Treaty of 1894 raised serious issues for the Australian Colonies in addition to purely commercial ones. The right of entry stipulated in the treaty conflicted with the colonies' restrictive immigration policies. Because the Imperial Government recognised the right of the colonies to control the composition of their population, an additional agreement was negotiated with the Japanese Government to meet the policies of the Australian Colonies. Although Queensland alone accepted this agreement and adhered to the treaty, the Imperial Government did not disallow the new restrictive legislation adopted by the other Australian Colonies. Another potentially difficult situation existed in 1901 when the Australian Commonwealth adopted legislation to restrict coloured immigration a few months before the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was signed in 1902.

The Imperial Government was not always so ready to negotiate with a foreign Power on behalf of colonial interests. On occasions, British reluctance to prejudice good relations with a
friendly power had to be overcome. In 1888, after urgent representations from the Colonial Office, Salisbury reluctantly and half-heartedly attempted to negotiate an agreement whereby Australian restrictions on Chinese immigration would be accepted by the Chinese Government. When the Liberal Government concluded the New Hebrides Convention with France in 1906, the Australian Government was hardly consulted and little notice was taken of its many representations since 1901 on the future of the islands and their administration. The degree of consultation with a colony, and of regard for colonial views, depended to a greater or lesser extent on the attitude of the Government in office and the weight of other considerations influencing foreign policy. All Secretaries of State for the Colonies did not have Chamberlain's awareness of the importance of securing colonial interests as far as was possible in imperial policy. Nor did they have his influence in the Cabinet when decisions on foreign policy were made.

Sir Edward Grey's address to the Imperial Conference in 1911, when he surveyed British policy and the international situation, marked a new departure; but it was intended as an exposition of British policy and not as the first step towards a colonial voice in determining policy. Nor did the colonies seek to participate in policy-making because commitment to defend that policy might thereby still be implied. The place of the colonies in British foreign policy and the extent to which
their interests should be safeguarded, and, conversely, the extent to which the colonies were bound by British policy and committed to its support, remained a difficult problem until 1914 and beyond.

The future form of inter-imperial trade relations was the second major question left open in 1902. In Great Britain, those who wanted to see closer commercial ties between the mother country and the colonies were divided on the means they wanted to employ but agreed on the end they had in view. They wanted to increase the colonial proportion of Britain's overseas trade. Some of them favoured the creation of a free trade **zollverein** in order to make the British Empire more self-sufficient. Great Britain's dependence on foreign-grown food supplies would be lessened and the market for British manufactures in the colonies correspondingly increased. Others, who were not orthodox free traders, wanted to revise Great Britain's free trade policy. She needed to be given some means of retaliation against the protective tariffs which most other countries had adopted during the 1880s and 1890s. Preferential treatment in colonial tariffs might lead Great Britain to modify her free trade policy and offer the colonies some reciprocal concessions. The consequent increase in the volume of inter-imperial trade would help to reduce Great Britain's dependence on foreign markets that were no longer expanding.

On the colonial side, two major proposals were made at different times. The first of these was the scheme J.H. Hofmeyr
brought before the Colonial Conference in 1887. Hofmeyr's scheme was based on the assumption that imperial defence and commercial relations went together. An additional uniform imposition in Great Britain and the colonies would not infringe colonial powers of taxation and the revenue could be used specifically for improving imperial defence. Little support was forthcoming in 1887; but the idea was subsequently taken up by organisations which sought support for colonial contributions to imperial defence or a system of preferential trade. In the mid 1890s, it was favoured by some organisations in Great Britain for the former of those two purposes. With the latter purpose mainly in view, the Canadian branch of the British Empire League gave it a new but short lease of life in 1902; but it did not win any support from Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the Canadian Prime Minister. The scheme was never commended in the Australian Colonies.

The alternative proposal from the colonies, that of tariff preferences in Great Britain's favour, was supported in principle by the Canadian Government for several years before it was put into practice in 1897. Great Britain was then given a unilateral preference of 12½%. This was subsequently increased to 33¾% by 1902. By its timing, the Canadian action made imperial preference the alternative to the revised form of an imperial zollverein which had been taken up by Chamberlain in 1896.

Chamberlain recognised both the colonies' reliance on customs revenue and their need to protect local industries. He
realised that they could not rely on direct taxation as Great Britain did. For these reasons, the colonies could not remove their revenue duties or the protective duties which operated against British manufactured goods. Chamberlain also recognised the strength of the colonies' defence of their autonomous powers and especially of their power to control tariffs. Over and above the other reasons which prevented their entering into a free trade zollverein, the colonies would not consider yielding any of this power. Chamberlain attempted to meet the colonies' needs by not making absolute free trade the basis of his zollverein proposal. His interest in enlarging the market for British manufactures in the colonies, and in increasing the colonial proportion of Britain's food imports, was part of his concept of a united and largely self-sufficient British Empire.

The colonies, including free trade New South Wales, rejected Chamberlain's suggestion for an imperial zollverein in 1897. Imperial sentiment, and the need to expand their own markets in the United Kingdom, led them to think that tariff preferences in Great Britain's favour might offer far more advantages to themselves. Between 1897 and 1902 the protectionist Australian Colonies and New Zealand, and the Australian Commonwealth after 1901, began to favour a policy similar to that adopted by Canada in 1897. At the 1902 Colonial Conference, Seddon announced New Zealand's adoption of the principle of a tariff preference in Great Britain's favour. The principle was applied in 1903 by raising duties against the foreigner. Although Barton and some other members of the Commonwealth Government were sympathetic towards
offering a preference to Great Britain by raising duties against the foreigner, they felt that the time was inopportune in 1902-3. Besides the special circumstances of the Commonwealth finances which would not allow an immediate preference to Great Britain, there was no certainty that protection had become the settled policy of the Commonwealth and would not be reversed by a free trade government. In 1903, when the Australian tariff became more protectionist and duties were increased on many classes of goods, Great Britain was given a unilateral preference on a wide range of articles.

The Colonial Conference of 1902 closed the question of imperial free trade once and for all. At the same time, there were signs that other colonies might follow the Canadian lead and become more insistent on reciprocity from Great Britain. As far as Chamberlain was concerned, reciprocity was the main basis of the tariff reform campaign which he opened in 1903. Some of his supporters were more concerned with the imposition of a tariff in order to provide Great Britain with a weapon for retaliation against her main trade rivals, Germany and the United States. To all intents and purposes, the tariff reform question was settled, for the time being, by its rejection in the 1906 general election in Great Britain and by the Liberal Government at the 1907 Colonial Conference.

In a wider framework, Chamberlain's attempt to carry tariff reform marked a further stage in a process that had been taking
place in imperial relations over a long period of time. Great Britain made concessions to the colonies in order to retain the imperial link and the mutual advantages it conferred. This policy had been practised step by step since self-government was first conceded; but the pace began to accelerate in the 1880s. To the so-called separationists in the 1870s and early 1880s, it seemed as if Great Britain had made all the concessions possible; and either the colonies must concede some part of their autonomy so that the imperial link might be preserved or separation must eventually follow. During the 1880s and 1890s, the Australian Colonies sought some further concessions from Great Britain in the interests of colonial autonomy. The Australian Colonial Governments generally believed that the mother country would only concede these remaining powers reluctantly. This was not so. In the 1890s the Governors no longer exercised the prerogative of mercy independently of ministerial advice in capital cases; ministerial nominations to increase the number of members in the upper Houses of the legislatures were no longer refused by the Governors; colonial Bills were reserved only when important imperial interests or the interests of another colony were involved; consultation and compromise between the Imperial and the Colonial Governments removed the need for the extreme action of disallowance of colonial legislation by the Queen; and the Australian Colonies were freed from the disabilities which had prevented them from entering into differential tariff arrangements.
outside their own group and New Zealand.

The final, and, therefore, the most important stage in this process for the Australian Colonies came in 1900 when imperial legislation was needed to bring the Commonwealth of Australia into being. Chamberlain's opposition to certain clauses in the Commonwealth Constitution was not motivated by a determination to retain the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. Clauses which gave the best grounds for maintaining imperial supremacy, such as the Commonwealth's assumption of power in external affairs and the application of Australian law to ships engaged in coastwise and New Guinea trade, were allowed to stand. The intention of the authors of the constitution was accepted instead of a strictly legal interpretation of the clauses. Chamberlain's attempt to retain the right of appeal to the Privy Council in all cases arose from his belief in the unity of the Empire and in the Imperial Parliament's role as the guardian of that unity.

For their part, the colonies recognised that benefits would accrue to themselves as well as to Great Britain by their making some concessions in order to retain good relations. Such concessions could be made provided the colonies were not asked at the same time to concede a vital principle or interest. Tariff preferences could be given to Great Britain because they did not detract in any way from colonial control of tariffs. In 1897-8 the Australian Colonial Governments were willing to meet Chamberlain's views and adopt the Natal principle for excluding coloured immigrants provided it acted effectively.
In 1887 the Australian Colonies and New Zealand agreed to participate in providing an Auxiliary Naval Squadron in Australian and New Zealand waters. By so doing, they demonstrated their belief that in the existing circumstances of the colonies they could make the best possible provision for their naval defence by working with the Imperial Government. They did not thereby declare that they were assuming a share in imperial defence. Their purpose was to improve their own local defence and safeguard important colonial interests more adequately. By 1897 the Admiralty and the enthusiasts who wanted the colonies to commit themselves to sharing in the burden of imperial defence thought that the attitude of the Australian Colonies was short-sighted and selfish. It also inadequately recognised the duty owed by the colonies to the Empire. Their misunderstanding of the Australian attitude deepened as time went on.

The Colonial Governments in 1887 and the Commonwealth Government in 1902, with those in the colonies who supported the naval agreements, realised the smallness of a contribution of £126,000 per annum (or £200,000 in 1902) towards the cost of providing adequate defences for the Empire. They contended that they were contributing to the defence of the Empire in other ways. They were developing the resources of the colonies; and they were making their own part of the Empire secure from invasion by providing for the defence of Australian shores and ports. Their defensive outlook clashed with the Admiralty's offensive strategy in 1897 and in 1902. The 1902 naval Agreement was the
best compromise possible until the Commonwealth Government was in a position to heed the demands of Australian opponents of the "naval tribute". By means of an Australian fleet and the training of a naval reserve, Australia could then provide for her own naval defence and also assist in the defence of the Empire in the South Pacific.

Through limited agreements, and objectives and achievements worked out and secured a step at a time, any likelihood of Australia's separation from Great Britain or, indeed, of the disintegration of the Empire had been obviated by 1902. For the same reasons, no form of imperial federation was either possible or needed. The rejection of imperial federation was not paralleled in the colonies by any lessening in imperial sentiment or loyalty to the Crown. Imperial federationists in the 1880s and Chamberlain, Selborne and Brodrick in 1902 attempted to use this sentiment as the foundation on which to build a closely-integrated imperial structure. A.J. Balfour, who in 1926 defined the relationship of the autonomous Dominions to the Crown, showed more awareness than his three colleagues in 1902 of the impossibility of turning imperial sentiment into political, defensive and commercial systems.

Between 1885 and 1902, the loyalty of the Australian Col-

I "It is difficult to systematise a sentiment. And sentiment is the important thing, the form which expresses it matters little". Speech at Fulham, 19 July, 1902, reported in The Times, 21 July, 1902.
onies to the Crown and to their ties with Great Britain was retained and strengthened. During that period, the continuing attachment to Britain and to the British Crown was not always taken for granted. A minority in the 1880s looked forward to the time when the imperial link would snap, and their hopes were not entirely unfounded. Anti-imperialism and republicanism were in part reactions to the imperial fervour aroused in the colonies by the despatch of the New South Wales contingent to the Sudan in 1885. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the colonists began to recognise their attachment to Australia and that she claimed at least an equal part if not all of their loyalty. Should this loyalty take first place, as the colonial radicals and republicans hoped, the independence of the Australian Colonies from Great Britain might sooner or later be the inevitable result.

During the 1890s Australians came to appreciate the material benefits arising from the tie with Great Britain. They also began to realise more fully that Great Britain was unlikely to assert imperial supremacy by lessening colonial autonomy or by attempting to impose further political or other obligations on the colonies. The ties with the British Crown and with Great Britain then became compatible with Australian nationhood. The hopes of those Australian nationalists, who in the 1880s had wanted to see an independent Australia, were dashed. Loyalty to Australia and loyalty to the Empire were not generally in con-
flict by 1900. This compatibility was possible because voluntary obligations to the Empire on the part of the colonies, rather than formal and binding commitments, were recognised in the colonies and in Great Britain as the cornerstone of imperial unity. At the same time, there had been a corresponding willingness on the part of Great Britain to make the necessary concessions in imperial supremacy called for by colonial growth and development.

War and not peace provided the real test of the double loyalty to Australia and to the Empire. Critical attitudes towards Great Britain in the 1880s seemed to show that opposition to assisting Great Britain in war would stem from dislike of the imperial connection and the growth of Australian feeling. This was not so in 1899-1900. Opposition from both British and native born Australians to aiding Great Britain in South Africa did not arise from disloyalty or from the primacy of loyalty to Australia. It arose from a belief in anti-militarism and moral doubts whether Britain's cause was just. Its closest links were with the pro-Boer and the Liberal critics of imperial policy in Great Britain and not with the republican and nationalist agitation in the Australian Colonies in the 1880s. In the testing times of war in 1899 and 1914, the sense of solidarity with Great Britain and the magnitude of voluntary assistance proved that the two loyalties – to Australia and to the Empire – were not in conflict.

Australian attitudes towards Great Britain and the Empire, as they were shaped in the years between 1885 and 1902, have had a continuing influence. Circumstances have changed; and the
voluntary obligations of membership of the British Empire and Commonwealth before 1939 have given way to formal commitments in alliance with Great Britain, the United States and other countries in the Pacific and in South East Asia. The continuities in Australian attitudes towards Britain, the Empire and the British Commonwealth must not be over-simplified, but two major traditions can be identified.

The radicals of the 1880s and the early Labour Parties of the 1890s raised questions which the Labour Party had to face in the early years of the Australian Commonwealth in providing adequate military and naval defence for Australia; and these issues were sharpened during the conscription controversy in 1916. The continuing elements which influenced decisions then, and still retain some significance, were "Australia first", anti-militarism, insistence on an Australian ethos, freedom from the quarrels of the old world and voluntaryism. Only the order of predominance varied.

The other tradition, exemplified at the present time by Lord Casey and Sir Robert Menzies, derives from the beliefs expounded by Griffith, Barton and Deakin. Although Australian born, they recognised no conflict between their loyalty to Australia and their loyalty to the Empire; and they believed that voluntary obligations rested on Australia as long as the tie with the British Crown remained. The defence of British traditions which form part of an Australian national heritage was as much an Aus-
tralian interest as safeguarding Australia's autonomous powers. At the beginning of the twentieth century, when the Australian Commonwealth was formed, Australia's "Britishness" and her growth as a nation were bound up with the continuance of the British Empire. Since then, those who have affinities with this tradition have stressed the importance of Australia's ties with the British Commonwealth.
NOTE A
CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN THE AGENTS-GENERAL AND THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENTS
(Chapter 3 p. II2)

To a certain extent, the activities of the Agents-General did not solve the problem to which William Westgarth had drawn attention in 1870: that of full public knowledge of the questions at issue between the Colonial Office and the colonies.

As a result of his close contacts with British government and parliamentary circles, and of his continued close associations with certain Victorian politicians, notably Charles Gavan Duffy, Childers sent much useful and confidential information in private letters rather than in official despatches which could be published at the request of Parliament. This was a practice which Duffy strongly defended on the ground that confidential and secret despatches, and even private correspondence, passed between a Governor and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and similarly between an ambassador and his Government. Despite strong criticism in the Victorian Legislative Assembly, Duffy maintained that matters under negotiation could only be communicated privately or confidentially, and were not ready for an official despatch to be written before they had been finally settled. Such private or confidential correspondence was not to be handed over to a succeeding Colonial Secretary.

In several of the Australian Agencies-General by the 1880s,
a class of official but confidential communications between the
Agent-General and the Premier, Colonial Secretary or Colonial Treas-
urer, as the case might be, had been established. This overcame the
difficulty which had been created in New South Wales between Parkes
as Premier and Forster as Agent-General. If communications were to
be regarded as private, a certain degree of friendship between the
Agent-General and his political chief was to be supposed. This was
true of Childers and Duffy, and was apparently the case between
Forster and John Robertson in the early years of Forster's tenure of
office.

In the absence of adequate, or, indeed, any private papers of
certain of the Agents-General and Premiers, it is difficult to reach
any definite conclusions about the scope of the activities of the
Agents-General at the Colonial Office before 1883. Much information
about their "diplomatic" activities must have been sent in private
correspondence. Certain private letters which do exist refer to
"diplomatic" activities on behalf of a colony by an Agent-General
to which there is no reference at all in the official correspondence.

This is particularly clear in the number of official but confiden-
tial letters from R. Murray Smith and Graham Berry in the records
of the Premier's Dept. Victoria.
In Victoria the Agent-General was under the Chief Secretary's
Dept. until 1885, and was then placed under the Premier's Dept.
In N.S.W. the Agent-General was controlled by the Chief Secre-
tary's Dept., except between 1895 and 1899 when most correspon-
dence was carried on directly with G.H. Reid who held office as
Premier and Treasurer. In S. Australia the Agent-General was al-
ways under the control of the Treasurer. In Queensland control
was changed from the Colonial Secretary to the Chief Secretary
(usually the Premier) in the 1880s.

2 N.S.W. V. and P. (1879 Session), vol. 2, pp. 653-671.
3 N.S.W. Parl. Deb. (1881 Session), vol. 2, p. 2537 and p. 2703, 8 and
12 Dec., 1881.
4 This statement is based on an examination of the registers and
records of official correspondence received from the Agents-
General in N.S.W., Victoria, Queensland and S. Australia before
1888.
NOTE B

APPOINTMENTS TO THE GOVERNORSHIPS OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES
AND NEW ZEALAND, 1889-1900

(Chapter 8 p. 345)

The Colonial Office did not officially consult the Colonial Governments in 1888-1889 when Kintore, Onslow and Hopetoun were appointed; but Kintore's appointment was reported in the colonial press three days before Sir William Robinson, the Governor of South Australia, was informed and the appointment officially published in London. The leakage could have been deliberate so as to make certain that there would not be a repetition of the Blake case. As nothing was known about Kintore, Playford, the Premier, sought information from the Agent-General. He was satisfied when he heard that Kintore was spoken of favourably in London, was wealthy and a Whip of the House of Lords. Kintore obviously had a background comparable to Carrington's.

In 1890 the Earl of Jersey's appointment came as a surprise in New South Wales. Parkes insisted that he had not been consulted; and, as he admitted, he could not have offered any opinion because

1 Kintore's appointment was published in the South Australian press on 22 Dec., 1888, from information received in London press telegrams. His appointment was officially published in London on 25 Dec., 1888. Knutsford had intended that Robinson should be officially informed before the appointment was known in London. Knutsford to Robinson, Secret, 12 Feb., 1889. S.Aust. Govt. House Papers.
Jersey was quite unknown to him. Although Jersey did not strictly meet the conditions of suitable previous experience Parkes had laid down in 1888, the New South Wales Premier thought that the Imperial Government had acted within those conditions.

Between 1892 and 1895 the evidence for and against any official or unofficial consultation with the Colonial Governments is somewhat conflicting, but tends mainly to show that the Imperial Government upheld the policy laid down in 1888. When the Earl of Glasgow was appointed to New Zealand in 1892, the Premier maintained that Onslow, the retiring Governor, had mentioned two names to him. The New Zealand Government regarded this as consultation, but did not admit that Glasgow's was one of the two names. Because of his previous connection with the Salisbury Government, as Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, Onslow might have been in a somewhat special position to have information about a possible successor. It did not, therefore, necessarily follow that Knutsford's attitude had changed since 1888. Although Perceval, the Agent-General, was under the impression that the Colonial Office would notify the New Zealand Government before an appointment was announced, no such communication was made, and Perceval found he had been mistaken. All the Colonial Office had promised was an

early notification of the appointment of a new Governor: in other words, that an appointment would be made in the near future.

In 1893 the Dibbs Government in New South Wales asked to be informed before Jersey's successor was appointed. Dibbs, like McIlwraith in 1888, denied he was claiming any rights in the selection of a Governor, but he wanted to have an opportunity to say whether or not the appointment would be acceptable. Ripon, Secretary of State for Colonies in the Liberal Government, refused to do this for the same reasons as Knutsford in 1888. Similarly in 1895, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton's appointment to South Australia was a surprise one. The Kingston Government had asked to be given an opportunity to consider several names; but the Colonial Office still maintained that such a request could not be granted.

G.H. Reid, the Premier of New South Wales, went further than Kingston in his demands in 1895. After the sudden death of Sir Robert Duff while in office, the Colonial Office delayed in appointing his successor. Reid criticised the delay and offered to suggest a suitable Governor from within Australia if the Colonial Office was experiencing difficulty in finding an acceptable or a willing candidate. As far as the Colonial Office was concerned, Reid added

I Private letter from Perceval, quoted by Ballance in ibid., pp. 431, 434.
2 Dibbs to Samuel (Agent-General), telegram, 21 Feb., 1893. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, Telegrams to Agent-General, 4/3986 (Archives of N.S.W.).
3 Samuel to Dibbs, telegram, 21 Feb., 1893. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, Telegrams from Agent-General, 4/3979 (Archives of N.S.W.); also statements in the H. of Commons, 16 Feb., and H. of Lords, 17 Feb., Hansard, 4 Ser. vol. 8, cols. 1577-8, 1694-5.
4 e.g. S. Aust. Advertiser, editorial, 21 May, 1895.
5 Playford (Agent-General) to C.O., 5 and 6 Feb., 1896, enclosing copies of telegrams from Kingston, 28 Jan. and 5 Feb., 1895; and
I insult to injury by having this message published. His action was
probably prompted by irritation arising from the long delay in
appointing Duff's successor, and also by the belief among some
members of the Colonial Parliament that the Governorship was being
"hawked about" with the consequent affront to the dignity of the
colony. There was some criticism of Reid's action in the New South
Wales Legislative Assembly; but there was more unanimity of
opinion in favour of a colonial voice in the appointment of the
Governor than there had been in 1868. There was also a much lesser
expectation of the eventual separation of the colonies from Great
Britain. Parkes criticised the method of communication Reid had
used rather than the content of his demands. He claimed that all
imperial matters should go through the Governor or Acting Governor
and not through the Agent-General. This seemed to imply that
Parkes saw the appointment of Governor as an imperial matter;

I Minutes by Anderson. C.0.15/150.
6 Samuel to C.O., 22 April and 28 May,1895, enclosing telegrams
from Reid of the same dates. C.0.201/617.

I Minutes on Samuel to C.O., 22 April and 28 May,1895. C.0.201/617.
At first the Colonial Office considered replying to Reid in
case other colonies thought they could "act similarly with
impunity". Ripon finally decided on silence, because Meade's
suggestion of an intimation to the Acting Governor that Reid's
message and its publication were not understood was "too delicately
a snub even to be understood by Reid".

2 e.g. N.S.W. Parl.Deb., vol.77, Legis. Assembly, 10 May,1895,
p. 6035 (W.N.Willis). There was a press report that Sir Henry
Loch might be appointed. (Sydney) Daily Telegraph, 8 May,1895.
3 N.S.W. Parl.Deb., vol.77, Legis. Assembly, 30 May,1895, pp.6599-
6620. There were suggestions also that N.S.W., like S.Australia,
should ask for the Chief Justice to act as Governor indefinitely.
Ibid., 8 May,1895, pp.5955-6 (W.N.Willis); and 30 May, p.6604
(W.J.Lyne).
4 Ibid., p.5600. By this time Parkes was bitterly antagonistic
to Reid.
but his resolutions in 1888 suggested that he saw local interests predominating. Shortly before the Liberal Government resigned in June, 1895, Viscount Hampden was appointed Governor of New South Wales.

Chamberlain does not appear to have acted differently from his predecessors when New Governors were appointed to Queensland, Victoria, New Zealand, South Australia and New South Wales between 1896 and 1899, or when Hopetoun was appointed as the first Governor General in 1900.

I Hampden's appointment was telegraphed to the Acting Governor on 17 June, 1895. The Agent-General was privately informed by Meade after the telegram had been sent. Minutes on Samuel to C.O., 22 April, 1895. C.O. 201/617.
NOTE C

THE SELF-GOVERNING COLONIES AND ADHERENCE TO IMPERIAL TREATIES,

1878-1881

(Chapter 10, p. 422)

Between 1878, when the draft article allowing subsequent colonial adherence to an imperial treaty was agreed upon by the Foreign and Colonial Offices, and 1881, when the article was used for the first time in a treaty with Ecuador, the course of action adopted towards the self-governing colonies varied. In 1878, Carnarvon was asked by the Foreign Office whether the self-governing colonies should be included in a treaty with Italy or the new article inserted. Carnarvon suggested that the new treaty should apply to all British colonies if it was in the same form as the existing one. If any important changes were introduced, Carnarvon wished "to have an opportunity of considering them in relation to the Colonies before expressing an opinion on the subject".

Two other methods were used in connection with treaties with Rumania in 1878 and 1880, and with Serbia in 1880. In the first case, the self-governing colonies were included and provision made for them to withdraw if they chose to do so. A similar method was used in the prolongation of the San Salvador treaty in 1886. The treaty with Serbia included the colonies without any provision for their withdrawal. As late as 1886, a treaty with Spain was made applicable to all the colonies without provision for withdrawal.


3 Minute by Ebden on Berry to C.O., 17 Dec., 1888, C.O. 309/133.

4 Kimberley to Sir H. Robinson, 22 July, 1880, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

5 Minute by Ebden on Berry to C.O., 17 Dec., 1888, C.O. 309/133.
Donald's Government and the Canadian Parliament in the project. Detailed proposals were first brought to the notice of the Australian Colonies in 1886. Sir Charles Tupper, the Canadian High Commissioner, associated himself with Fleming in seeking support from the Imperial Government and from the Governments in the Australian Colonies. At this stage, Fleming and the Canadian Government thought that the project should be carried out by a private company with support from the Governments in Great Britain, Canada and the Australian Colonies. In 1886 Fleming was active in the formation of a Pacific Telegraph Company. During the sessions of the Colonial Conference in 1887, the Company sought a subsidy of £75,000 p.a. from the Imperial and the Colonial Governments for 25 years. By this time, Fleming's activities and Tupper's support for the project had roused the able and determined opposition of Sir John Pender, the Chairman of the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company.

The Colonial Conference of 1887 recognised the national importance of a British cable across the Pacific and supported the Canadian Government's request that the Admiralty should survey the route. The Australian Colonial Governments took their first positive steps in support of the project in 1888, with the Victorian Government in the lead, they urged the Admiralty to

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1 A number of ex-colonials were connected with the company, among them H. Finch-Hatton who often regarded himself as a spokesman for the Australian Colonies.
2 This would enable the company to charge a maximum tariff of 4s. per word over the Pacific Cable section.
complete a survey of the Pacific between the Australian Colonies and Canada, and they offered to share equally in its cost. Apart from any influence that Sir John Pender might have had and the Treasury's desire to avoid financial commitments, the Colonial Office and the Admiralty were disinclined to take any further action until there were prospects of funds for laying the cable. Despite the auspicious beginnings of the Pacific Telegraph Company, and the visit of Owen Jones, one of its directors, to Canada and the Australian Colonies in 1888 to seek government support, little progress was made. The Australian Colonial Governments were disinclined to commit themselves until the Admiralty survey had been completed and the feasibility of the project established. The South Australian Government opposed the project because of that colony's interest in the overland telegraph which linked the Australian Colonies to the Eastern Extension Telegraph system. For these reasons, the Canadian Government failed to draw the Australian Governments to agree to a conference in Canada between 1889 and 1891.

In 1889 the Canadian Government made a significant change in its attitude towards the project. It adopted Fleming's suggestion that the construction of the cable should be undertaken

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2 Knutsford to Carrington, Circular despatch, 1 May, 1888. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. Also minutes on Fleming to C.O., 15 May and 8 June, 1887. C.O. 201/606.
By the time of Mackenzie Bowell's visit to the Australian Colonies in 1893, New South Wales, Victoria, Queensland and New Zealand were becoming more favourable towards laying a cable from Australia to Canada over a route as yet undetermined and offering government guarantees. In Canada and in the Australian Colonies, the cable was seen as an essential complement to the new Canadian-Australian steamship service before intercolonial trade could increase greatly. A resolution adopted by the 1894 Colonial Conference offered a way out of the impasse of an Admiralty survey of the route. The Canadian Government was asked to call for tenders. The tenders would prove the feasibility of the project and be useful for comparison with Sandford Fleming's

optimistic estimates of the cost of construction, expenses and receipts and the discouraging estimates of the British Post Office. The tenders fulfilled these objects; but no further practical steps could be taken until the Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand had decided to participate with the Canadian Government in financing and constructing the cable, and the Colonial Governments had prevailed on the Imperial Government to bear a proportionate share. The 1894 Colonial Conference did not decide on a definite route for the cable; but it was still expected that a cable-landing station on one of the Hawaiian islands would be necessary between Fanning Island and Vancouver. In 1894, at the request of the Colonial Conference, the Imperial Government made a half-hearted attempt to acquire one of the small Hawaiian Islands (Necker Island) for a cable landing station; but the United States Government prevented this.

Although Chamberlain, like his predecessors in office, saw that Britain had less direct interest in the project than the Australian Colonies, New Zealand and Canada, he was much more sympathetic towards its "imperial" aspects than Knutsford or

1 In 1890 Fleming estimated the cost of construction at £1,800,000. Fleming to the Governments of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, 18 July, 1890. Vict. Premier’s Dept. records, in letters 90/3174. In 1893 he estimated the cost at £1,600,000; and he expected an effective surplus of receipts over expenditure after 10 years at a tariff of 2s per word over the Pacific Cable. Memorandum of II Oct., 1893.

2 The lowest tenders were £1,517,000 and £1,880,000.

3 The conferences of Postmasters-General in 1894 and 1895 recommended guarantees from the Australian and New Zealand Govern-
Ripon had been. In response to a request from a deputation of the Canadian High Commissioner and the Agents-General of the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, the Imperial Government appointed a Pacific Cable Committee in 1896. It consisted of two members each from Great Britain, Canada and the Australian Colonies with New Zealand. The Australian Governments were willing to accept in principle that the cable should be government-owned and it should be laid by way of Fiji and Fanning Island; but the two Australian representatives on the Committee were instructed not to commit the colonies to any particular scheme.

Fleming worked indefatigably in providing detailed information for the Committee's use. After a careful examination of estimates of the cost of construction, maintenance and revenue, the Pacific Cable Committee reported early in 1897 in favour of State ownership of the cable; that it should be under the control of a Board representing the Governments concerned; and it should follow the route Vancouver Island, Fanning Island, Norfolk Island, New Zealand and Queensland.


1 The deputation was received by Chamberlain on 19 Nov.,1895.
Samuel to Reid, telegram, 19 Nov.,1895, copy with Sydney G.P.O. papers on the Pacific Cable.
2 At the beginning of February,1896, the Agents-General of New South Wales and Victoria were appointed to represent the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. Bowell and Sir D. Smith (the High Commissioner) represented Canada; and Selborne (Colonial Office) and G. H. Murray (Treasury) represented Great Britain.
4 Report of Pacific Cable Committee, 5 Jan.,1897. The estimated cost of construction was £1,422,000. At a tariff of 3s. 3d. per
Although the Pacific Cable project was briefly discussed at the 1897 Colonial Conference, no further progress was made.

The Australian Premiers wanted to wait until they had had time to examine the Committee's Report; and Chamberlain intended to await I definite proposals from the colonies. Laurier was far less interested in the cable than Macdonald or Bowell had been, and he did not press for immediate or early decisions by the Imperial and Colonial Governments. In the following year, the colonies of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland agreed to guarantee three-ninths of the cost provided Great Britain and Canada guaranteed five-ninths and New Zealand one-ninth. At a conference in London in 1898, the High Commissioner and the Agents-General invited the Imperial Government to join in guaranteeing the capital loan as well as an annual deficit in the proportion of Canada three-ninths, the Australian Colonies and New Zealand four-ninths and Great Britain two-ninths. The Imperial Government's decision was made known in April, 1899. Great Britain would not become a joint owner of the cable because colonial interests in the project were much greater than imperial interests. The Colonial Govern-

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I Proceedings of 1897 Colonial Conference, C.O.Confid. Print, Misc.No.III, pp.40-44. South Australia decided not to oppose the cable; but she sought an indemnity to cover any loss she incurred on the overland telegraph. ibid., p.41.

2 Resolutions of Premiers' Conferences, March and August, I898. S.Aust. Procs of Parl. and Papers, I898-9 Session, vol.2, Paper No.24. In August the three colonies offered to guarantee one-ninth each. Tasmania had also been included in the March
ments would have to bear the cost of construction and working; but the Imperial Government would guarantee five-eighteenths of the amount by which receipts fell short of expenditure up to a maximum of £20,000 per annum for a period not exceeding twenty years. The Colonial Governments were disappointed with this decision. After further joint representations from the High Commissioner and the Agents-General, the Imperial Government agreed to use its credit so that the capital needed for the construction of the cable could be raised at lower interest rates.

At this point, when some definite support had been obtained from all the Governments concerned, Victoria and New South Wales accepted proposals from the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company to lay a cable to Western Australia from South Africa. With the completion of a third cable from Great Britain to Australia, and as a result of the facilities offered in Australia to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Company, the revenue from the Pacific Cable was likely to be reduced considerably.

resolution. New Zealand agreed to guarantee a maximum of one-eighth. N.Z. Appendix to Journals of the H. of Representatives, 1898 Session, Paper I-7, Report of Public Accounts Committee regarding the Pacific Cable.

3 Chamberlain to High Commissioner and Agents-General, 28 April, 1899, copy enclosed in Chamberlain to Beauchamp, N.S.W. No.33, 28 April,1899. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.

I ibid.
2 High Commissioner and Agents-General to C.O., 9 May,1899; and Chamberlain in reply, 6 June,1899. Printed in N.Z. Appendix to Journals of the H. of Representatives, 1898 Session, Paper F.8, Correspondence regarding the Pacific Cable, pp.26,29-30.

3 Proposals for a cable via the Cape had been made since 1897. W.Australia and S.Australia would benefit more from this route; and for strategic reasons British military and naval authorities favoured it in preference to the Pacific Cable. The New South Wales and Victorian agreements with the Eastern Extension
During 1900 the Imperial and the Colonial Parliaments adopted legislation authorising the raising of funds and the construction of the Pacific Cable; guaranteeing any loss of revenue; and establishing a Pacific Cable Board to manage the cable on behalf of the Governments concerned. The cable was laid during 1901–2 and opened for business throughout its length on 1 January, 1903.

Telegraph Company and the commitments of the three eastern colonies with regard to the Pacific Cable were taken over by the Commonwealth Government in 1901. The agreements involved that Government in complicated negotiations.

A tender from the Telegraph Construction and Maintenance Company to lay the cable at a total cost of £1,975,000 was accepted by the Imperial and Colonial Governments; and a loan of £2,000,000 was authorised by the Imperial Parliament. The cable was to be completed by 31 Dec., 1902. The Pacific Cable Board consisted of 8 members. Great Britain was represented by three members, Canada by two and the Australian Colonies and New Zealand by three.

In its origin, the project for a Pacific steamship service was closely connected with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway and its possible use in connection with a fast mail service from Great Britain to the Australian Colonies and New Zealand. At the same time, a Pacific steamship service would provide facilities for trade between Canada and the Australian Colonies. These aims proved to be contradictory. Speed, frequency and regularity were essential if a faster mail service than the P.&O. and Orient services via Suez was to be provided and the new service was to win a large part of the British and Australian mail service subsidies. If the steamship company was to depend mainly on freight, calls at more ports would have to be put before the speed of the service.

Proposals for a Pacific service as well as for a fast new Atlantic service began to take shape in 1886. The London representative of the Canadian Pacific Railway, supported by the High Commissioner for Canada, approached some of the Australian Agents-General. They had hopes that the Queensland Government might be particularly interested in the new service instead of joining in the subsidies paid to the companies operating the Suez service.

I Garrick to Griffith, 19 Nov., 1886, reporting a conversation with H.M. Kersey, the London representative of the C.P.R. Q'ld. Chief Sec. Papers, in-letters 86/I0II4.
By the time the Colonial Conference met in 1887, proposals had been drawn up for a Pacific service from Vancouver to Brisbane and a fast new Atlantic service. The Pacific project was regarded as visionary by most of the Australian and New Zealand representatives at the Conference; but the New South Wales representatives thought that it might be looked at more sympathetically at some future time because it would help to link the Empire together.

Between 1889 and 1891, the Canadian Government attempted on several occasions to arrange a conference between Canadian and Australian representatives to discuss the Pacific steamship service as well as the Pacific Cable. In 1889 the Canadian Parliament provided subsidies to support three new steamer services. A two-weekly service between Canada and Australia would be granted a subsidy of £25,000 per annum for 10 years. Towards the end of the following year, the Australian Colonies were asked to subsidize a Pacific service to the sum of £30,000 per annum. The Imperial Steam Navigation Company proposed to build steamers to provide a 35-day service for mails between Moreton Bay and Great Britain via Vancouver. A subsidy of £15,000 was sought from the

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4 The other two services were across the Atlantic and from Vancouver to Hong Kong.
5 In addition to this sum and the Canadian subsidy of £25,000, a subsidy of £50,000 was sought from the Imperial Government.
6 Kersey acted as representative for the steamship company. It was expected that the time the mails were in transit would prove to be 31-2 days. The steamers for this service and for the new Atlantic service were to be built by the Naval Construction and Armaments Co. Hartington was the Chairman of the syndicate.
Queensland Government if the terminal port was in that colony and £15,000 from New South Wales. When these proposals were revised, a terminal port in New South Wales was offered if the Government would agree to a subsidy of £15,000. Queensland was then asked to grant a subsidy of £10,000; and the Victorian Government was to be asked to provide £5,000. The Queensland Government was interested in the proposals because that colony was likely to benefit most from the new mail service; but £15,000 was regarded as too large a subsidy and Griffith, the Premier, would not agree to a subsidy unless one or more of the other Australian Colonies would also subsidize the service. Parkes, the Premier of New South Wales, procrastinated for several months. His successor, Dibbs, ended any hope of support from the Australian Colonies by refusing to grant a subsidy. By that time, at the end of 1891, financial and economic difficulties were beginning in the Australian Colonies.

No further proposals for a Pacific service were made until 1893. James Huddart, a Melbourne man, then proposed to operate two ships on a monthly service between Vancouver and Sydney. He obtained a subsidy of £25,000 per annum from the Canadian Government; and the Dibbs Government in New South Wales entered into an agreement to grant a subsidy of £10,000 per annum for three years. Huddart also gained support from the Canadian Government

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2 Dibbs' decision was notified to Samuel (Agent-General) on 29 Dec., 1891.

3 Aberdeen to Duff, 8 Feb., 1894. N.S.W. Col. Sec. Papers, in-letters
to establish the fast Atlantic line needed to complete the new 
mail service. The Pacific service opened when the "Miowera" left 2 
Sydney for Vancouver on 18 May, 1893. Huddart was optimistic 
that there would be a quick increase in the amount of freight 3 
offering from Vancouver and Sydney. Others were not so certain. 
Among these was Sir Henry Norman, the Governor of Queensland. 
Norman thought that Huddart was attempting too much and that the 
new ships he proposed to use would be too large for the amount 
of freight offering; and he feared that either the company would 
fail before a large amount of trade had developed or heavy subsi- 
dies would be needed to maintain it. Such apprehensions were in 
part justified.

When the Pacific service began, New South Wales was the 
only Australian Colony to grant a subsidy. The McIlwraith Govern- 
ment in Queensland was willing to grant a subsidy of £5,000 per 
amnum provided the ships called at one or, preferably, two Queens- 
land ports. In comparison with the Torres Strait mail service, 
the new Pacific route offered the prospect of a faster service 
to Queensland. Early in 1894, the New Zealand Government was pre-
pared to offer a subsidy of £10,000 per annum but this would mean a port of call in New Zealand instead of a branch service from Fiji. Dibbs, the Premier of New South Wales, refused to agree to additional ports of call or an alteration in the route; and he and McIlwraith made no attempt to reach a compromise. With some justification, Dibbs claimed that New South Wales was subsidizing a fast mail service and the proposed changes would slow down the service. Because Fiji was on the direct route of the steamers, a call was permitted and in 1895 a subsidy of £1,500 was granted by the Fijian Government. The Victorian Government refused to grant a subsidy because Melbourne was neither a port of call nor the terminus for the line.

In addition to his failure to obtain further subsidies from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand, Huddart faced difficulties in the early months of the service when one of the two ships, the "Miowera", ran aground and a slower ship, the "Arawa" had to be chartered as a temporary replacement; and, besides this, the mail service between Australia and London took much longer than had been forecast. This lessened his chances of acquiring a share in the mail contracts and subsidies when

letters 93/I0365.


1 Lambton (N.S.W. Post Office) to Dibbs, 26 March, 1894, concerning the conference of Postmasters-General at Wellington. N.S.W.Col.Sec.Papers, in-letters 94/I794I.
they came up for renewal. The main problem, which Huddart for several reasons failed to solve, was whether he should concentrate on providing a fast mail service or encourage the increasing volume of trade between Canada and Australia. In order to gain subsidies from the Imperial and the Colonial Governments, he had to design the Pacific and Atlantic services as fast mail routes. Huddart addressed the 1894 Colonial Conference to outline his plans for a new Atlantic service and attract further subsidies for the Pacific service. Between 1895 and 1897, with the encouragement of the Canadian Government, he sought a subsidy of £75,000 per annum from the Imperial Government for the Atlantic service. Chamberlain was sympathetic towards the project. Huddart had more or less taken it for granted that when he secured a subsidy from the Imperial Government he would obtain the contract for the service. He had good hopes of obtaining a subsidy of £150,000 per annum from the Canadian Government. On these assumptions, he made plans to build ships for the new Atlantic service. In 1896 Chamberlain insisted that the Canadian Government should invite tenders for the service. Huddart was unsuccessful then and in 1897 when tenders were again invited. The subsidies he asked were much greater than those required by the successful tenderers. Not only did he feel he had just cause for complaint, but he was certain that the companies concerned would not be able to operate the type of service required on the subsidies they sought.

In 1896 the contract had been awarded to J. and A. Allen of Glasgow. The offer made by Petersen, Tate and Co. of Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1897 was much lower.
While Huddart had been concentrating his efforts on the Atlantic service, the Pacific service had been carrying increased amounts of produce between Australia and Canada. By 1897 more than full cargoes were offering from Canada and particularly of flour and manufactured goods from the United States. J.S. Larke, the Canadian Government's Agent in Sydney, claimed that trade from Canada to Australia had increased four-fold in four years. The increase in the amount of Australian produce carried had been less marked; but the amount of raw wool carried had doubled since 1893. As far as the carriage of produce was concerned, the prospects for the steamship company were good when a third ship, the "Aorangi", was purchased in 1897 in order to increase the frequency of the service from monthly to four-weekly. By 1899 capacity cargoes were reported for the three steamers. The future of the mail service was less bright. The expectation of bettering the average time of the Suez service was not fulfilled. In comparison with an average time of 33-34 days by the Suez route, the Pacific route averaged 38 days. The monthly Vancouver service had been regarded as too unsatisfactory by the New South Wales Post Office for it too be relied on as a link in the weekly mail service to Great Britain. The New South Wales subsidy of £10,000

1. e.g. reports on the arrival of the "Warrimoo" in Sydney on 4 March, 1897, and the "Miowera" on 3 April, 1897.
2. Statement in the S.M.H., 8 May, 1897.
per annum was renewed in 1896 for another three years; but the company failed to attract subsidies from any of the other Australian Colonies. In 1895 the New Zealand Government negotiated a provisional agreement with the company on the basis of £20,000 per annum for a port of call in New Zealand or £30,000 for a terminal port in New Zealand. The ratification of this agreement was held over until the 1896 session of Parliament; and then new negotiations took place in 1897 and 1899.

By the beginning of 1898, the company was in financial difficulties and had suffered a trading loss of about £41,000 over a ten-month period. The Colonial Office refused to intervene; and, although the New South Wales Government was sympathetic to the company's difficulties, the Agent-General was instructed to assist Huddart as far as possible without giving or promising any financial assistance. In August, 1899, the New Zealand Shipping Company purchased the three steamers, the goodwill and contracts of the Canadian-Australian line for £145,000. A few months previously, the New South Wales Government had renewed its subsidy of £10,000 for another four years; and the Queensland Government had agreed to a subsidy of £7,500 per annum. A call at Brisbane or Wellington was permitted at the company's discretion, and the call at Fiji discontinued.

3 Burns Philp had acted as managing and contracting agents for the Canadian-Australian company in Sydney.
4 Minute by Lambton (N.S.W. Post Office), 7 May, 1899. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, Public Offices, in-letters 99/6483. In 1899 the mail service between Brisbane and London by the Pacific route averaged 34 days.
On 17 November, 1897, Reid introduced two Bills into the New South Wales Legislative Assembly. One Bill repeated the provisions of the 1896 Bill, but exempted British subjects from its operation; the other dealt with British subjects by the use of the Natal principle of exclusion in what Reid regarded as an improved form. Kingston wanted to re-submit the 1896 Bill to the South Australian Parliament in the form in which it had already been passed. At the same time, he offered, once it had received the royal assent, to bring in an amending Bill. This would exempt British subjects from the operation of the existing Act and impose on them restrictions in the form of the Natal provision.

Reid disagreed with Kingston's suggestion. Even if there was any certainty that the 1896 Bill would be given the royal assent, there was none that Kingston would obtain a majority in the House of Assembly for the subsequent measure.

Although the end result in New South Wales and South Australia would be the same, the difference in method was due to Kingston's conviction that the practical disallowance of colonial
legislation was at stake. Chamberlain refused to agree to Kingston's request; but, in line with his statements to Reid during the conference, he went some way to meet the colonies by instructing the Governor of South Australia that he could assent immediately to any Bill incorporating the Natal principle. Kingston's request was not refused on account of any doubts about his intentions. It was refused because there was no certainty that the South Australian Parliament would pass the amending measure. A few days earlier, in response to an inquiry from Reid if a Bill dealing with British subjects on the lines of the Natal Act would be reserved, Chamberlain had implied to Sir Daniel Cooper, the Acting Agent-General for New South Wales, that such a Bill would not need to be reserved. Selborne, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for the Colonies, thought that Reid had met the Imperial Government fairly, and, indeed, had gone further than had been expected of him. One further difficulty about the colonial Bills

I Kingston to Reid, 27 Oct. and I Dec., 1897. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in letters Public Offices 97/10609 and II881. This was a feeling shared by at least one member of the N.S.W. Legis. Assembly, N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.91, 24 Nov., 1897, p.5060-1.
3 Minute by Anderson on Playford to C.O., 18 Nov., 1897. C.O.15/I52. Cooper to C.O., 7 Oct., 1897, and C.O. reply, 14 Oct., 1897. Copies enclosed in Chamberlain to Hampden, Confidential, 20 Oct., 1897, N.S.W. Govt. House Papers. Cooper had been instructed to tell Chamberlain of the two Bills Reid proposed to introduce, and to seek confirmation of Reid's recollection that Chamberlain had assured him that legislation on these lines would not be resisted by the Imperial Government.
4 Minute on Yardley (for Cooper) to C.O., 7 Oct., 1897. C.O.201/522.
still remained. This arose from the Japanese Government's reiterated protests about the colonial Bills, and its objections to the use of any method of excluding Japanese from the colonies other than the Natal principle. On account of the Japanese attitude, Chamberlain preferred the application of the Natal provision to all immigrants; but, failing that, he suggested it should be applied to Japanese as well as to British Indians.

The two New South Wales Bills did not complete their passage through Parliament in November, 1897. No definite explanation for this can be offered. However, it seems very likely that Kingston's attitude was a major factor. On 1 December he suggested to Reid that any further action on coloured immigration restriction should be postponed until the matter had been discussed by the Premiers when they met in Melbourne in January, 1898. He was still very much concerned about the creation of a precedent. If New South Wales and South Australia adopted new legislation based on the Natal principle, the colonial Bills of 1896 would in effect have been disallowed. Kingston also thought that "the submission of any Colony to the Natal principles would seriously interfere with the possibility of future united action".

1 e.g. Kato to Salisbury, 8 July, 1897; and summary of further protest in Chamberlain to Hampden, N.S.W. No. II8, 20 Oct., 1897. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
2 Chamberlain to Hampden, N.S.W. No. II8, 20 Oct., 1897. N.S.W. Govt. House Papers.
3 Kingston to Reid, telegram. 1 Dec., 1897. N.S.W. Treas. Papers, in-letters Public Offices 97/II8II.
4 This was not the origin of the 1898 Premiers' Conference. It had been decided at the beginning of Nov., 1897, on Reid's initiative, that a conference would be held to discuss inter alia the future of the New Guinea administration and Chamberlain's suggestion that the Australian Colonies should take over the
In December, 1897, Western Australia adopted the Natal principle in legislation restricting coloured immigration. This probably influenced the Premiers' Conference in reaching a decision: "That the colonies which have not already done so pass an Act on the lines of the Natal Act (on the understanding that the same shall be vigilantly enforced) and [the Premiers] agree that if, after trial of that Act, any difficulties shall still arise in any one colony, then the colonies will join in such further legislation as may be necessary". Reid abandoned the two Bills of 1897 in favour of one Bill dealing with Indians, Japanese and all other coloured immigrants by means of the Natal provision. South Australia and Victoria followed suit later in 1898.

Despite the compromise they had adopted, the Australian Colonies had not departed from their intention to legislate on a matter of vital concern. A different precedent had been created from that to which Kingston had objected. The Imperial Government had accepted a Bill incorporating the Natal principle of excluding undesirable immigrants without its being reserved by the Governor. Under the Instructions issued to the Governors of the separate Australian Colonies, Bills containing restrictions on immigration were to be reserved. The Instructions issued to the administration of the Solomon Islands. Turner also thought that the restriction of coloured immigration should be discussed by the conference. Turner to Reid, telegram, 30 Nov., 1897, loc.cit. Kingston to Reid, 1 Dec., 1897, loc.cit.

2 The Governor assented to the N.S.W. Bill on 17 August, 1898.
Governor-General in 1901 contained no such direct injunction.

When the Natal provision was adopted by the Commonwealth Parliament in the Immigration Restriction Bill of 1901, Hopetoun inquired if such a Bill should be reserved. The Colonial Office, fearing protests from European countries because the education test was to be in the English language, thought that the Bill should be reserved if it contained such a provision; but a decision was left to Hopetoun in the exercise of the discretionary powers conferred on him by the Commonwealth Constitution and the Instructions. For its part, the Commonwealth Government acted on the Colonial Office's suggestion, and an amendment was adopted so that a test in "a European language" replaced on in English. Even after this alteration, Hopetoun still had some doubts whether the Japanese would be satisfied. At that particular time it seemed especially important that there should be no break in the existing good relations between Great Britain and Japan. Against this had to be weighed the intense feeling in Australia in opposition to unrestricted immigration, particularly of Asias. Hopetoun thought it unlikely that the Imperial Government could have any objection to any other clause in the Bill; but he decided that when the Bill passed the Senate he would ask for instruc-

1 Hopetoun to Chamberlain, telegram, 20 August, 1901. C.O.418/IO.
2 Minutes on ibid.; and Chamberlain to Hopetoun, telegram, 9 Sept., 1901. Commonwealth National Library Archives, Despatches from Secretary of State, C.P.78, Set I, Bundle 2.
3 Hopetoun to Chamberlain, telegram, 12 Dec., 1901. C.O.418/IO.
lations whether or not he should reserve the Bill. When he understood from Chamberlain that the Imperial Government could hardly suggest a modification of the education test, and realised there was no prospect that the Commonwealth Government could be induced to accept such a suggestion, Hopetoun saw no reason for reserving the Bill. He assented to it on 23 December, 1901.

The Japanese Government continued to protest strongly both in London and in Australia against the discrimination to which Japanese nationals would be subjected. This would fall more heavily on them with the adoption of a European language test instead of English. Because of the negotiations for an Anglo-Japanese alliance, Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, was more sympathetic towards the Japanese protests than Chamberlain. The latter pointed out that in 1897 the Natal principle of exclusion had been acceptable to the Japanese Government. To a further Japanese protest that Barton and Deakin had stated that the Bill was aimed at Asiatic and not at European nations, Chamberlain maintained that only the wording of the Bill was relevant and that was satisfactory. He also gave Lansdowne to understand that if the

2 C.O. to F.O., 18 Oct., 1901; copy enclosed in Chamberlain to Hopetoun, No. 82, 18 Oct., 1901. C.N.L. Archives, C.P. 78, Set I, Bundle 2. Despatches from Secretary of State.
5 Hayashi to F.O., 10 Dec., 1901, and C.O. to F.O., 4 Jan., 1902.
Bill had been disallowed, or the Commonwealth Government had been persuaded to drop it, the probable result would have been the adoption of an even more drastic measure. Chamberlain was convinced that it was useless to instruct Hopetoun to reserve the Bill or to advise its disallowance. Lansdowne was obliged to agree; and it was left to him to explain to the Japanese Minister why his protests had to be rejected.

Once the precedent of immediate assent had been established in 1897-8, and the form of the colonial Bills had complied with the Imperial Government's suggestions in order to smooth Indian and Japanese susceptibilities, there was, as Chamberlain realised, no valid contention that could be put forward in 1901 in favour of reservation or disallowance. The only open question was whether or not the exigencies of British foreign policy and the Anglo-Japanese negotiations might outweigh the Imperial Government's understanding of the strength of Australian feeling in favour of restrictions aimed primarily at Asiatic immigration. It was here that the compromise adopted by the Australian Colonies in 1897-8 to meet Chamberlain's objections probably paid its greatest dividend. In 1901-2 Chamberlain and Lansdowne had the good sense not to demand a further compromise from the Australian Commonwealth.

Filed with Lyttelton to Northcote, Confidential, 5 August, 1904; C.N.L. Archives, C.F.78, Set I, Bundle 2, Despatches from the Secretary of State.

1 C.O. to F.O., 4 Jan., 1902. loc. cit.
2 F.O. to C.O., 8 Feb., 1902; and F.O. to Hayashi, 8 Feb., 1902. loc. cit.
NOTE G

THE OPPOSITION TO THE DESPATCH OF THE FIRST AND SECOND CONTINGENTS TO SOUTH AFRICA IN OCTOBER AND DECEMBER, 1899

(Chapter 13 p.600)

In the divisions on the motions for the despatch of the first contingents, there were 78 in favour and 10 (including 9 Labour Party members) against in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly; and in the Victorian Legislative Assembly there were 67 in favour and 13 (including 7 Labour Party members) against.

In the Queensland Legislative Assembly, 28 voted in favour of Dawson's amendment disapproving of the offer of a contingent and 39 against. Those who supported Dawson's amendment included 21 Labour Party members. In the South Australian House of Assembly, 18 were in favour of the offer of a contingent and 10 (including 9 Labour Party members) were against; and 12 members formed pairs.

There were no divisions at the end of the debates on the despatch of the second contingents. In New South Wales, two Labour Party members (Holman and Thomas) still spoke in opposition. In Victoria, one Labour Party member (Murray) spoke in opposition, and another (Maloney) was uncertain. Although H.B. Higgins did not speak in this debate, he continued to oppose the despatch of the contingents. The Labour Party members voted as individuals on the issue of the contingents and not as a party.

I N.S.W. Parl. Deb., vol.100, p.1585.
3 Q'ld. Parl. Deb., vol.82, p.479.
In New South Wales, of the 10 members in the Legislative Assembly who voted against the despatch of the first contingent on 19 October, 3 had been born in Australia, 5 in Great Britain and the places of birth of 2 are unknown. To these should be added those who spoke against the despatch of the contingent, but did not take part in the division. Of these, 2 were born in Australia, 8 were born in Great Britain and the places of birth of 2 are unknown. Of the 78 who voted in support of the despatch of the contingent, 32 were born in Australia, 32 were born in Great Britain and the places of birth of 14 are unknown.

No comparable information for Victoria, Queensland and South Australia is available. It is only possible to indicate that some of the most out-spoken opponents were British born. Among those in Queensland, 5 were British born and 2 were Australian born.

Information on places of birth is based mainly on A.W. Martin and P. Wardle, *Members of the Legislative Assembly of N.S.W., Biographical Notes*, Social Science Monograph, No.16, Australian National University, (Canberra, 1959).
NOTE H

BARTON'S CONFERENCE WITH THE CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVES IN 1902

(Chapter 14 p.65I)

The Canadian Postmaster-General, Sir William Mulock, visited Australia in 1901. The main reason for his visit was to discuss how advantage could be taken of the completion of the Pacific Cable. Mulock discussed with Barton closer trade relations, improved steamship communication between Australia and Canada and the problems of cable communication associated with the Pacific Cable. Of these, the discussions on the means of achieving closer trade relations between Canada and Australia held most significance. Four alternative suggestions were considered; and, in view of the course of the discussions at the Colonial Conference in 1902, it may be noted that the Canadian and Australian Governments in 1901 had already to some extent faced the issues which were involved in each different method. These four alternative methods were: free trade between Canada and Australia with the exclusion of liquors and tobacco; free trade on an enumerated list of commodities; reciprocal trade on a preferential basis with the exclusion of liquors and tobacco; and reciprocal preferences on an enumerated list of commodities.

1 The Pacific Cable was opened for traffic throughout its length on 1 January, 1903.
2 W. Mulock to Barton (from Sydney), 28 May, 1901. C.P. I03 Set I2 B3 File B, Papers for Conference convened by Laurier on Closer Trade Relations, C.N.L. Archives.
3 loc. cit.
In December, 1901, when Laurier knew that representatives from all the colonies would be likely to gather in London for the coronation, he suggested to Barton that there should be a full discussion by Canadian, Australian and New Zealand representatives of the same subjects as Mulock had discussed when he was in Australia and any other matters that the participating Governments liked to raise. Barton readily agreed to such a conference in London. In addition, there were two other subjects that he wished to discuss with Laurier so that Australia could learn from the Canadian experience. These were the establishment of the office of High Commissioner in London and the operation of the Colonial Laws Validity Act. This subsidiary conference between Canada, Australia and New Zealand was one reason, although not the most important, for the inclusion of W.S. Fielding, the Minister of Finance, W. Paterson, the Minister of Trade and Customs, and Sir William Mulock, the Postmaster-General, in the Canadian delegation to England in 1902. This conference can

1. Laurier to Barton, telegram, 7 Dec., 1901; and letter, 20 Dec., 1901. C.P. 107 Set I 2 B 3 File B, C.N.L. Archives. In addition to trade relations, the subjects suggested by Laurier were the improvement of mail services between Great Britain, Australia and New Zealand via Canada; the improvement of the steamship passenger services from Vancouver to Australia and New Zealand; the establishment of a line of cargo steamers to run between eastern Canada and Australia via South Africa; and the effect on the Pacific Cable scheme of the concession granted by N.S.W. to the Eastern Extension Telegraph Co. in 1900. C.P. 217 Set I vol. 32, C.N.L. Archives.

2. Barton to Laurier, telegram, 11 Dec., 1901. C.P. 107 Set I 2 B 3 File B, C.N.L. Archives. Barton stated that an official invitation to the coronation had not yet been received; but once it had been received and accepted, he would be willing to meet the Canadian and New Zealand representatives in London to discuss the subjects suggested by Laurier.

3. Subjects for discussion with Sir Wilfrid Laurier. C.P. 217 Set I vol. 32, C.N.L. Archives. While he was in London, Mr. Justice
also be regarded as the successor of the 1894 Colonial Conference in Ottawa. It was called by the Canadian Government and marked a further development in inter-colonial relations between Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Little is known of the course of the discussions. They were probably held from time to time while the Prime Ministers were in London; but Barton's attitude on preferential trade in the Colonial Conference offered little hope of an early agreement with Canada. In the end, the discussions were cut short because of

Laurier's return to Canada. Barton was in Canada for three weeks on his way back to Australia, and the discussions could have been resumed while he was in Ottawa.

Hodges of Victoria, at Barton's request, inquired into the workings of the Canadian High Commissioner's Office. Hodges to Barton, 11 Oct., 1901, C.P.I03 Set 12 B3 File D(I), C.N.L. Archives.

I Barton to Deakin, telegram, 18 August, 1902, that Laurier left London before Barton could discuss the application of the Colonial Laws Validity Act with him. C.P.I03 Set 12 B4, London Telegrams, C.N.L. Archives.
NOTE I

BARTON AND THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE
1902 COLONIAL CONFERENCE

(Chapter 14 p. 660)

The confidential nature of the proceedings of the 1902 Colonial Conference has been attributed in the main to Barton's influence. This seems unwarranted. Given the precedent of 1897, there is no reason to suppose that Barton's attitude was at variance with the procedure that Chamberlain himself wished to follow.

The assertions are based, first, on a likelihood that Barton was apprehensive about the political repercussions in Australia of the discussions at the Conference on the naval Agreement; and, secondly, on the existence of a letter from Barton to Chamberlain, written before the first session of the Conference, in which Barton said that in a conference where the proceedings were to be published it would be impossible for the colonial Premiers to speak as fully and freely as they would otherwise do on subjects requiring "great delicacy in handling". During the course of the Conference, Chamberlain, as in 1897, stated that the proceedings would be confidential. The reports of the proceedings would later be examined and a decision taken whether any or all of the discussions should be published. The final decision

against full publication was taken in a private session.

In 1903, when the question of publication was again raised, Barton twice stated that his opinion was still the same as it had always been, that the full report of the Conference should be published. On the first of these occasions, the Bill to implement the 1902 naval Agreement had not then been submitted to the Commonwealth Parliament. Chamberlain officially stated that the decision of the Conference against publication was taken in deference to the wishes of Canada. This being so, there is no discrepancy in Barton’s attitude in personally favouring publication, although the decision of the Conference was unanimous against publication.

Ibid., p.195.
TABLE I

TO SHOW THE IMPORT-EXPORT TRADE OF THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES WITH
THE UNITED KINGDOM AND FOREIGN COUNTRIES, 1885-1902

(Source: T.A. Coghlan, The Seven Colonies of Australasia: A Statistical Account of Australia and New Zealand)

(i) Imports into Australia and New Zealand

(a) from the United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount (£)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>25,662,185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>30,137,584</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>30,823,474</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>19,696,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>32,122,508</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>30,702,029</td>
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(b) from foreign countries

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<tr>
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<td>1891</td>
<td>7,490,424</td>
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<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>4,135,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td></td>
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<td>1901</td>
<td>14,430,544</td>
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<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>15,350,541</td>
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(ii) Exports from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand

(a) to the United Kingdom

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Australia only

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<td>23,256,062</td>
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1894 £30,846,593
1895 £22,943,100
1896 £23,767,175
1897 £21,630,820
1898 £25,823,931
1899 £23,806,313
1900 £25,564,690
1901 £34,491,816
1902 £29,675,152

(b) to foreign countries

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<td>1888</td>
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<td>£12,116,680</td>
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<td>1901</td>
<td>£13,170,709</td>
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<td>1902</td>
<td>£12,109,561</td>
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(iii) British imports as % of total imports into Australia

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<td>70.93</td>
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<td>64.58</td>
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<td>1901-2</td>
<td>59.06</td>
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Foreign imports as % of total imports into Australia

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881-5</td>
<td>13.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886-90</td>
<td>16.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891-5</td>
<td>17.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896-1900</td>
<td>24.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901-2</td>
<td>28.70</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Australian and New Zealand trade as % of the total trade of the United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>£50,957,705</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>£59,493,519</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£49,761,764</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£53,728,781</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>£58,305,956</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I88I-I89I British trade with the Australian Colonies and New Zealand increased by £13,457,708 (i.e. approx. 27%).
Australian and New Zealand trade with foreign countries increased by £8,649,233 (i.e. approx. 120%). Note that direct lines of steamers to European ports were established after I883.
I89I-I896 British trade with the Australian Colonies and New Zealand decreased by £9,322,477 (i.e. approx. 14.69%).
Australian and New Zealand trade with foreign countries increased by £55,673 (i.e. approx. 0.36%).

(iv) Major imports from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand into the United Kingdom

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Wool</th>
<th>Tallow</th>
<th>Copper, smelted</th>
<th>Sheepskins</th>
<th>Wheat</th>
<th>Meat</th>
<th>Butter and Cheese</th>
<th>Lead</th>
<th>Other goods</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I876</td>
<td>£16,646,000</td>
<td>547,000</td>
<td>856,000</td>
<td>91,000</td>
<td>1,474,000</td>
<td>324,000</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2,013,000</td>
<td>£21,951,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I900</td>
<td>£16,331,000</td>
<td>1,590,000</td>
<td>1,221,000</td>
<td>817,000</td>
<td>1,315,000</td>
<td>5,636,000</td>
<td>2,727,000</td>
<td>1,231,000</td>
<td>4,636,000</td>
<td>£35,417,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**TABLE II**

TO SHOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES AND CANADA IN THE 1890s

(Sources: Canadian Sessional Papers No.5, (1899) Trade and Commerce and No.10 (1905) Trade and Commerce. Canadian House of Commons Journals (1899) vol.34 and (1905) vol.39,no.4, Accounts and Papers. T.A.Coghlan. *A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia*

(i) Imports from Canada into the Australian Colonies and New Zealand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1,004,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>1,161,727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>3,112,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>546,208</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>731,916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>1,570,326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1,803,032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>1,653,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>2,311,405</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>2,940,247</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) Exports from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand to Canada

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount (£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>1,195,291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>1,177,941</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>2,113,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>1,479,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>1,553,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>660,411</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>1,642,237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>1,572,237</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exports from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand to Canada

(a) total value of dutiable goods (b) total value of free goods (in dollars)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Value (dollars)</th>
<th>Total Value (dollars)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>73,702</td>
<td>82,832</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>33,625</td>
<td>84,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>27,613</td>
<td>186,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>22,228</td>
<td>125,672</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>39,672</td>
<td>114,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>449,606</td>
<td>210,805</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>33,972</td>
<td>130,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>40,856</td>
<td>116,381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(iii) New South Wales (Source: New South Wales Statistical Register)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports from Canada</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exports to Canada</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>£37,959</td>
<td></td>
<td>1889</td>
<td>£4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>£16,784</td>
<td></td>
<td>1890</td>
<td>£10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>£32,864</td>
<td></td>
<td>1891</td>
<td>£20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>£10,655</td>
<td></td>
<td>1892</td>
<td>£237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>£35,316</td>
<td></td>
<td>1893</td>
<td>£37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£52,740</td>
<td></td>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>£61,742</td>
<td></td>
<td>1895</td>
<td>£33,316</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£83,810</td>
<td></td>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£523</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>£167,291</td>
<td></td>
<td>1897</td>
<td>£16,804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>£131,962</td>
<td></td>
<td>1898</td>
<td>£37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>£92,710</td>
<td></td>
<td>1899</td>
<td>£40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>£114,321</td>
<td></td>
<td>1900</td>
<td>£523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iv) The principal imports into the Australian Colonies from Canada were:
- Agricultural implements; lumber and manufactured wood;
- Fish and fish products; flour; cottons; and bicycles.

The principal exports from the Australian Colonies to Canada were:
- Raw wool; metals and minerals; canned meats; mutton; hides and skins; butter; fruits; and sugar.
TABLE III

TO SHOW THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN COLONIES AND JAPAN IN THE 1890s

Sources: T.A. Coghlan. A Statistical Account of the Seven Colonies of Australasia, Sydney, 1896 and 1898 editions
New South Wales Statistical Register, 1895 and 1900 editions
Statistical Register of the Colony of Victoria, 1894 and 1900 editions
Statistics of the Colony of Queensland, 1898 and 1900 editions
South Australia Statistical Register, 1897 and 1900 editions

(a) Imports from Japan into the Australian Colonies and New Zealand (value)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>£23,245</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>£61,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£62,583</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£125,823</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Exports to Japan from the Australian Colonies and New Zealand (value)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>£6,872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>£16,578</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£37,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£100,128</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii)

(a) Imports from Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N.S.W.</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>South Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£27,468</td>
<td>£27,188</td>
<td>£2,039</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>£28,179</td>
<td>£27,441</td>
<td>£3,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£40,857</td>
<td>£32,567</td>
<td>£5,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>£69,615</td>
<td>£60,984</td>
<td>£8,120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>£77,679</td>
<td>£80,724</td>
<td>£9,135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>£104,522</td>
<td>£78,211</td>
<td>£9,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>£122,041</td>
<td>£82,019</td>
<td>£10,208</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Queensland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£8,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>£7,932</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£15,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>£20,555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>£26,701</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>£36,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>£34,690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Japan Imports (i) and Exports (ii)
(b) Exports to Japan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N.S.W.</th>
<th>Victoria</th>
<th>South Australia</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£15,302</td>
<td>£365</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>£54,242</td>
<td>£23,195</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£35,523</td>
<td>£16,559</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>£58,452</td>
<td>£4,760</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>£64,221</td>
<td>£24,474</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>£121,423</td>
<td>£2,811</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>£133,989</td>
<td>£3,524</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Queensland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>£704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>£933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>£2960</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>£6,009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>£32,796</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>£39,379</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>£32,169</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iii) Principal Imports from Japan

(a) New South Wales 1895

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>£563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brushware and brooms</td>
<td>£662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cotton waste</td>
<td>£550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drapery</td>
<td>£1,258</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs, etc.</td>
<td>£600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upholstery</td>
<td>£1,572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy goods</td>
<td>£3,440</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>£8,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mats and matting</td>
<td>£389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silks</td>
<td>£3,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spices</td>
<td>£695</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Victoria 1897

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canes and rattans</td>
<td>£375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpeting and druggeting</td>
<td>£1,117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China and porcelain</td>
<td>£1,616</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy goods</td>
<td>£2,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and Upholstery</td>
<td>£739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handkerchiefs</td>
<td>£3,734</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatters' materials</td>
<td>£3,446</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>£3,519</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silks</td>
<td>£3,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matting</td>
<td>£1,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodenware</td>
<td>£1,443</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baskets and basketware</td>
<td>£4,823</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canes, willows and rattans</td>
<td>£1,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China and porcelain</td>
<td>£2,019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>£3,334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy goods</td>
<td>£7,037</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>£2,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upholstery</td>
<td>£2,773</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>£40,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hatters' materials</td>
<td>£6,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mats and matting</td>
<td>£2,621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silks</td>
<td>£27,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur</td>
<td>£5,751</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(c) Queensland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct imports by country of origin</th>
<th>1898</th>
<th>1900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fancy goods</td>
<td>£1,503</td>
<td>£1,899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>£11,227</td>
<td>£17,585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silks</td>
<td>£2,390</td>
<td>£2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulphur</td>
<td>£5,667</td>
<td>£3,668</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct imports by country of origin</th>
<th>1899</th>
<th>1900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Apparel</td>
<td>£1,568</td>
<td>£1,617</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinaware</td>
<td>£266</td>
<td>£338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drapery and haberdashery</td>
<td>£1,087</td>
<td>£1,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy goods</td>
<td>£2,084</td>
<td>£2,966</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture</td>
<td>£1,705</td>
<td>£2,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>£11,217</td>
<td>£13,310</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(d) South Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1897</th>
<th>1900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cotton piece goods</td>
<td>£202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drapery</td>
<td>£1,125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fancy goods</td>
<td>£789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice</td>
<td>£4,958</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(iv)

Principal Exports to Japan

(a) New South Wales (i.e. from N.S.W. ports)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1895</th>
<th>1900</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>£3,330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preserved meat</td>
<td>£465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tallow</td>
<td>£2,252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool (greasy)</td>
<td>£2,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool (scoured and washed)</td>
<td>£40,697+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ 85,690 lbs. greasy wool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 950,529 lbs. wool (scoured and washed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>++ 415,833 lbs. greasy wool</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* 368,787 lbs. wool (scoured and washed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Victoria (from Victorian ports)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1897</th>
<th>1900</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wool (scoured) 71,895 lbs.</td>
<td>£3,857</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(c) Queensland (Queensland produce) 1898 1900
Tallow £15,220 Preserved meat £4,105
Yellow sugar £638
Tallow £1,695
Clean wool £511

(d) South Australia (from South Australian ports) 1897 1900
None directly listed Flour £327
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PART I OFFICIAL SOURCES

(A) Manuscript
(B) Printed

PART II OTHER SOURCES

(A) Manuscript
(B) Printed

1. Newspapers, Journals, Reviews, etc.
2. Bibliographies and Guides
3. Other Printed Sources
   (i) Select List of Contemporary Sources
   (ii) Select List of Later Books and Pamphlets
   (iii) Articles in Journals and Periodicals
   (iv) Unpublished Works

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   C.O. 201 New South Wales (1869-1900)
   C.O. 234 Queensland (1863-1900)
   C.O. 309 Victoria (1869-1900)
   C.O. 418 Australasia (1889-1902)
   C.O. 812 Confidential Print, Miscellaneous
      No. 68 Colonial Conference, 1887. Papers laid before the Conference
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   Letterbooks of Despatches from the Governors (incomplete series to Nov., 1887); and Despatches from the Secretary of State, 1881-1900.
(iii) Victoria. Records in the Office of the Governor of Victoria, Melbourne
Letterbooks of public despatches from the Governors; despatches from the Secretary of State; and local official correspondence, 1883-1900.

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C.P.78 Set 9 Letterbooks of confidential and secret despatches from the Governor-General, 1901-2.

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Boxes 101,109 Agent-General, 1878-9
I40, I42, I43 New Guinea, 1884-5
I44, I47 Sudan Contingent, 1885
I46 Federal Council of Australasia, 1885
I56, I57 New Guinea and New Hebrides, 1886
I64, I67 Papers to the Premier, 1886-7 (including naval defence)
I66 Proposal to change the name of N.S.W., 1887
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I68</td>
<td>Colonial Conference, 1887</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I75</td>
<td>Chinese Immigration, 1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I85</td>
<td>Correspondence to Governor, 1874-1890</td>
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<tr>
<td>I89</td>
<td>Papers from Sir Henry Parke's room, 1887-1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I93</td>
<td>Navy, 1890-1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>200</td>
<td>Colonial Conference, 1894</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>249</td>
<td>Transportation of convicts to New Caledonia, 1876-1904</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C.S. I92 Telegrams from Agent-General, 1882-1900

C.S. I94 Telegrams to the Agent-General, 1883-1900

Minute papers and minutes of the Executive Council, 1883-1900

(b) Colonial Treasurer's Office
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C.P.103 Set I2 B5 Papers prepared for the Colonial Conference, 1902. These include:-
File A(2) Colonial defence
A(3) Preferential trade
A(4) Relations of Australia and New Zealand with the islands of the Pacific
A(10) Australia-New Zealand-Canada mail service with the United Kingdom
A(18) Loss of most-favoured-nation treatment
A(20) Treaties affecting colonial interests
B(I) Conference with Prime Minister of Canada on closer trade relations
C(8) Papers for a discussion with Chamberlain on the Solomon Islands
D(I) Papers for a discussion with Laurier on the status of the High Commissioner

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I888 No. 46, C. 30 Correspondence re Chinese Immigration

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- 1881 Nos. 21 and 43, Instructions to Agent-General
- 1885-6 No. 19, Instructions to Agent-General
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