

evidence which leads to the conclusion that an ulterior object prompts the policy pursued towards the Colony.

I understand that your own observations in England have led you to the conclusion that the policy of Her Majesty's Government is to dismember the Empire. I regret to say that every mail adds to the evidence which forces this conclusion on the mind of the Colonial Government. Besides the deductions which must logically be drawn from Lord Granville's Despatch already referred to, we have not failed to remark the significant suggestions made by two Colonial Governors—Sir John Young and Sir Philip Wodehouse—as well as the curious history of the decoration of Sir Alexander Galt immediately after his own candid expression of sentiments favourable to severance. Indeed, Lord Granville has not concealed his opinion that the Colonies are free to secede if they desire it. The mere enunciation of such a sentiment on the part of Her Majesty's Government, which Lord Granville represents, is in itself most important, and, as we think, most unconstitutional.

If the doctrine be accepted, it alters at once, and most materially, the relations between Great Britain and her Colonies. It asserts that the connection between the two may be broken by either at pleasure, even by the weaker and the younger. A connection such as this is one of mere temporary convenience, divested of the elements of patriotism or nationality; a mere mercenary alliance, the continuance of which depends on considerations of pecuniary profit and loss to either party. In the event of disputes arising, the idea of separation would be the first to present itself, and the necessity for amicable adjustment—which is always felt between two who are bound to live under one roof to be a bar to extreme hostilities—would cease to exist. It is an evil portent to a country that Revolution should seem to be the natural remedy for its ills.

I am reluctant to be betrayed into any comments which may be misinterpreted into a desire on my part to generalize upon an Imperial question; but it is impossible to fail to see that the jealous preservation of the integrity of an Empire as at the root of all nationality, and of the effectual attainment of those results which extended nationality can alone achieve. A shattered Empire, however brilliant may be its fragments, is practically powerless. Great as the difficulty may be, is it impossible to consolidate the Empire into a vast Federation, with a federal force on sea and land, with common interests and concentrated power? Such a policy is worthier of a statesman than a policy of disintegration. It is strange that the Colonies by which Great Britain has set such store in the past, and which have operated so much as a stimulus to her national glory, should be goaded, or carelessly allowed to drift into separation, just at the time when science has practically conquered the obstacles which distance has interposed to their close union, and when the necessities on either side naturally point to the importance of that union.

I have stated that we consider the doctrine enunciated by Lord Granville to be opposed to the principles of the Constitution under which the Colonies, no less than the Empire, exist. It certainly cannot be contended that one portion of a great nation can separate from the rest without the consent of the whole, unless as the result of open rupture, and by the ultimate ordeal of a conflict such as that which severed the American Colonies from Great Britain. No permission of a Colonial Secretary can confer the right of severance. It may be questioned whether even Parliament can destroy nationality. The Colonial possessions of the Empire are the possessions of the Crown in a peculiar sense. It is reported that on a recent occasion, when it was proposed, in order to provide for the starving thousands who now seek for employment and food in England, that a small portion of the Royal forests should be sold, the refusal of Her Majesty's Government was based on the argument that the Crown was bound to maintain for its successors the appanages it had inherited. Can it be said that this doctrine applies to a few acres of Royal forest and not to the splendid inheritance of the British Colonies? Can it be argued that the beautiful Islands of New Zealand, fertile in so many sources of wealth, already the home of a quarter of million of British subjects, have no special interest for Her Majesty and Her successors, and that, in obedience to Her Responsible Advisers, Her Majesty would be justified in leaving behind Her an Empire less than she inherited? In the case of this Colony, moreover, there are to be considered the claims of the two races which inhabit it, both subjects of Her Majesty, one by allegiance and the other by treaty.

Whatever weight this argument may be entitled to, and whether Lord Granville is prepared to adhere to the position assumed by him or not, I believe that the idea prevails in New Zealand that Her Majesty's Advisers do contemplate with satisfaction the prospect of getting rid of the Colonies. Possibly they would not venture, or even propose, to force them into secession, but they would indirectly continue to endeavour to bring about that result. So long as this is felt to be only the policy of a mere party in the State, the loyalty of the Colonists towards the parent State would not be materially shaken; but if it go beyond this,—if the desire for the dismemberment of the British Empire is shared in by Her Majesty and the people of Great Britain,—then, no doubt, the effect on the mind of the Colonists would be much more serious, and could hardly fail to lead to important consequences. The Colonists are too high-spirited to wish to force themselves on a Sovereign and a nation which desired to get rid of them. If they believed the sentiment to be but that of a party, or of a few among the people, they would patiently bear the painful interval, hoping that the time would arrive when the heart of the nation would assert its old sympathies, and its action become quickened by those old aspirations which animated it in the days when its pride was to be the centre of Colonies in every portion of the world. It is highly important that the Colonies should know the truth in these respects. It is not probable that Her Majesty does participate in the views referred to; nor do we believe that the British nation as a whole desires to throw over that portion of the Empire which so greatly conduces to its weight in the family of nations, its grandeur, and its prosperity. But against a policy leading towards the consolidation of the Empire, the risk of immediate expenditure will be urged. A political school has sprung up which postpones all future considerations of national profit, power, and even existence, to that consideration, and which gauges patriotism by the standard of present gain. According to this ignoble creed, because the Colonies of Great Britain are not taxed by her, they are useless, and ignored as outlets for her unemployed population, her capital and enterprise.

If I have not laid the above considerations before you with the clearness and precision that I