

and more. What has so often happened will happen again. Failing the colonization of the great island under proper authority, adventurers will flock there who will neither show regard for the native inhabitants, nor be under any restraint among themselves; the evils and dangers which existed in Fiji will repeat themselves, only on a larger scale, and Queensland, of all the Australias, will suffer from them the most. This has been stated over and over again, in speeches in both Houses of the Imperial Parliament, by the Governments and Legislatures of Australasia, by the Royal Colonial Institute, and by private persons of high rank and experience in affairs, till we are almost ashamed to repeat it ourselves; yet it must be repeated, for the danger is not far off and a pretence, but imminent and a reality. Surely the Imperial Government cannot continue to refuse so reiterated an appeal. But if, fearing the responsibility of assuming authority over a vast and inaccessible region of mountains and forests peopled by several millions of savages, the Imperial Government finally determine not to take full jurisdiction over all New Guinea east of 143°, we trust that the same objection will not apply against establishing law and order along the coast where settlement is now extending. Let it at least exist over the fringe of the southern coast-line for the present, as was done the other day on the West Coast of Africa. No Act of the Imperial Parliament is necessary for this purpose, because Her Majesty has the same right now to assume jurisdiction over the southern coast-line of the island as she had to assume it when the islands in Torres Straits were annexed, and if it were deemed more convenient, the same process as was adopted then might be adopted now, of giving power by Letters Patent to the Governor of Queensland to declare by proclamation that certain portions of the coast-line of New Guinea should be annexed, under such conditions as it might be thought fit to prescribe.

Letters Patent
42 Vict.

We have referred to the irregular settlement that is even now taking place. We must with all respect remonstrate against the doctrine laid down by the High Commissioner on the New Guinea question in 1878, when he "formally and emphatically declared that the Imperial Government disclaimed all obligation to protect or interfere on behalf of persons voluntarily placing themselves in positions of danger in a savage country, and that those who entered on such enterprises must do so at their own risk and peril." It is certainly not by colonists who have founded communities on the other side of the world, whose trade already exceeds in volume the whole foreign trade of England at the accession of Queen Victoria, that this doctrine will ever be acquiesced in. It was by "voluntarily placing themselves in danger" that English adventurers built up our Indian and Colonial Empire, and created a commerce which now is numbered by hundreds of millions every year; nor is the colonizing spirit which has done that work capable of being extinguished by the knowledge that the enterprise of founding new settlements involves risk and peril. But at least it may be said that if the Imperial Government was not to interfere on behalf of English settlers, it should not interfere against them. It surely can never be contended that an elaborate scheme of government was to be invented whose sole object should be to punish a subject of the Queen for any wrong he might commit, while it denied him redress for any wrong that he might suffer.

Sir A. Gordon,
Speech at
Melbourne, 1878.

Imperial interest also concerned.

So far we may perhaps be said to have urged only points that specially affect Colonial interests, or at any rate do not closely touch Imperial ones. This may be true so long as Europe is at peace; but the Imperial interest would spring up the moment any war broke out which involved England in hostilities with a European Power. The Imperial Government have called upon the Colonies to do their part in the defence of their own harbours, and our Governments have not only acknowledged they had a duty in that respect, but are doing their best to fulfil it. They feel that they have a right to ask in return that the task shall not be more difficult for them than the Imperial Government can help, and that they shall not be exposed to the creation of fortified naval stations and *places d'armes* in the Pacific, which should shelter an enemy's fleet and threaten their commerce, their coal measures, and even their safety. The nation will never permit that her naval supremacy in the Pacific shall be endangered; and it can hardly be contested that if France and other European Powers created new naval stations in the islands, the existing conditions in all that ocean would be changed, and everything relating to Her Majesty's Australian squadron assume a new aspect and a new importance.

Concert between the Imperial and Colonial Governments.

But while we have thus represented what the Australian Colonies believe ought to be done by the Imperial Government, they are also ready to acknowledge what they ought to do themselves. Your Lordship stated in the House of Lords, that if anything was to be done, it must be done either by the Imperial Government itself, or by the Australian Colonies acting together in concert, or by the Imperial and Colonial Governments combined; and we assure your Lordship that our Governments will hail with the greatest satisfaction such an invitation to them to co-operate with the Imperial authority. There are two immediate ways in which the Colonies can give their co-operation: by contributing to the cost of the policy they are asking your Lordship to pursue, and by placing themselves in a position to act in union with each other and in concert with you.

As regards the first, whatever differences there were when Lord Carnarvon made his proposal of 1876, there are none now. The Victorian Parliament has already passed an Address, assuring Her Majesty that Victoria will share in the cost of the policy which is being urged upon your Lordship; the Queensland Government has assured your Lordship of its readiness to do the same; and the other Colonies will also do their part. But it does not need for us to remind your Lordship that no Ministries can engage for the payment of indefinite sums, and that the assent of our Legislatures to grants of money must be expressed in the usual way. Permanent appropriation will certainly be necessary; and for this not only time is required, but consultation among the Governments, arrangement of the respective contributions of the Colonies, and the passing of the requisite votes; in the meanwhile, the first point for us to know is the amount which the Imperial Government would require to be provided for whatever action is contemplated by your Lordship.

As regards the other question of concerted action between the Imperial and Colonial Governments, your Lordship expressed your opinion to us at our interview with you in the clearest terms, and repeated it in the House of Lords. "If," you said, "the Australian people desire an extension beyond their present limits, the most practical step that they could take, the one that would most facilitate any operation of the kind, and diminish in the greatest degree the responsibility of the mother country, would be the confederation of the Colonies into one united whole, which would be powerful enough to undertake and carry through tasks for which no one Colony is at present sufficient." The large question of Federation which your Lordship has here raised is one on which the Colonies have not made up their minds, and is one of too grave moment to be decided even under the sway of the strong feelings which now exist among them respecting the policy that ought to be pursued in the Western Pacific. But there is nothing to prevent concerted action at once with the Imperial Government for that particular policy; and we acknowledge that your Lordship may justly require not only such concerted action, but joint engagements on the part of the Colonial Governments for the permanence and stability of the policy itself. This too requires time, consultation among our Governments, and probably legislation also—at any rate concurrent resolutions in the respective Colonial Assemblies. On the other hand, the Colonies will not imagine that your Lordship has invited them to a co-operation which is to be barren of results: and our Governments will feel assured that if they on their part pass the requisite appropriations, and combine for that concert with the Imperial Government which is necessary for any policy to succeed, they may rely upon the policy itself being adopted, and effect being given at last to the wishes which they have cherished for more than thirty years. In once more urging these wishes on Her Majesty's Government, they have not come as suppliants for some light favour, but as Englishmen to whom their country has given a great destiny which must be kept from harm; desiring no new territories for themselves, but asking that the Queen's subjects may enjoy the blessings of peace and order where now the law has no terrors for the evil-doer; not seeking by a clearer policy to set new burdens on the English taxpayer, but willing themselves to bear its cost; and welcoming with gladness an invitation to be associated with the Imperial Government in a work which must assuredly be done one day, and can as certainly be best done now.

We have, &c.,
SAUL SAMUEL.
F. D. BELL.
THOMAS ARCHER.
R. MURRAY-SMITH.