

combine together and provide the cost of carrying out any policy which, after mature consideration, they may unite in recommending, and which Her Majesty's Government may think it right and expedient to adopt."

3. It is also with regret that we are compelled to notice throughout Lord Derby's reply a certain incomplete conception of the aims of the Australian people and Governments in connection with such matters as that under consideration. In this portion of the Empire we are daily cognizant of a ceaseless process of development and expansion, as natural as it is inevitable, which it is difficult for any one who is not at least on the skirts of the movement to realize, and I believe that it is partly in a mistaken conception of the attitude which Colonial Governments assume toward this movement that any misunderstanding arises as to the desired extension of Her Majesty's dominions in our vicinity. Their purpose is not, as is apparently assumed, to stimulate unduly this process of expansion. On the contrary, the object of all our appeals to Her Majesty's Government in this connection has been to obtain such powers as may enable us to control this inevitable process and restrict it within the bounds of law and order.

4. In reply to that portion of the despatch in which Lord Derby remarks that "it is much to be regretted that your Advisers should, without apparent necessity, have taken on themselves the exercise of powers which they do not possess," I desire to observe—what must have been already clearly perceived from the purport of previous despatches—that in formally annexing New Guinea we were perfectly aware that the efficacy of our action was altogether contingent on subsequent ratification by Her Majesty's Government. That we had no right, however, without the sanction of Her Majesty's Government, to annex territory in which there exists no settled government is contrary to the whole history of colonial acquisition. So far also as concerns the phrase, "without apparent necessity," I would submit that political necessity is constituted in a large measure by the pressure of public feeling and opinion; and that these were not wanting in this case is abundantly proved by the favourable verdict of the Australian Press, and the support given to our action by the Governments of the other Australian Colonies.

5. As a matter of fact, such apprehensions as made the annexation in question an act of necessity have by no means been allayed by the assurance of Her Majesty's Government that they are unfounded; and subsequent events, which show how eagerly the eyes of another nation are turned towards colonial acquisition in this part of the globe, have rendered the Australian people still more sensitive to the danger of leaving to the mercy of the first-comer a territory the possession of which by a Foreign Power might prove disastrous to our trade and to our peace. The measure recently adopted by the French Chamber of Deputies for the deportation, in tens of thousands, of their most dangerous convicts to various islands in the Pacific, to be set free on arrival at their destinations, renders it doubly necessary that every point of vantage in our vicinity should find our jurisdiction firmly established thereon before these spreading hordes of criminals, who will inevitably converge towards the large communities of Australia, attempt to settle within the neighbourhood of Australian waters. It is unnecessary for me to show how this project of utilizing the Pacific for the free immigration of untrammelled vice connects itself with the New Guinea question.

6. Not only has Lord Derby's despatch failed to allay the apprehensions of the Australian people as to the possible occupation of New Guinea by a Foreign Power, but they have derived as little comfort from his statement in Parliament that the formation of a settlement on the coast of that island by such a Power would be regarded by Her Majesty's Government as an unfriendly act. At the stage at which the act could be regarded as an unfriendly one, it must have been already accomplished; so that Lord Derby's words are either a mere prognostication of regret or a declaration that Her Majesty's Government would submit the matter to the arbitrament of war. If the Imperial Government mean eventually to annex, not only is no advantage to be gained by postponement, but in the meantime the course, which is now open and clear, will have become beset with difficulties, and our lost opportunities will have to be recovered at a much greater cost than would be incurred if we were to avail ourselves of them without delay.

7. In coming to the conclusion that, "even granting that the extension of the Queen's sovereignty to the eastern portion of New Guinea has become necessary, the proposal that the territory so annexed should form part of the Colony of Queensland would be open to strong objection," Lord Derby has omitted to consider the position in which the question rested when negotiations last took place between the Governments of Great Britain and Queensland. Lord Carnarvon, when appealed to by the colonists to annex New Guinea, virtually consented, provided the colonies relieved the Home Government of the cost. The expense of government was then the only obstacle, and we have removed that obstacle by offering to provide the necessary funds. With regard to the objection raised by Lord Derby in the extract from his despatch quoted above, I may point out that the annexation of New Guinea to *this* colony is not considered by the Government to be a vital part of the question: on the contrary, they would prefer that the territory should be made a Crown colony, or, better still, placed under the control of the "United Australian Colonies." Queensland does not desire an increase of territory. The part she has taken, and is still prepared to take, is to provide for the necessary expenditure, should the territory be annexed to her, and thereby remove the only difficulty which, previous to the initiation of the present correspondence, was supposed to exist. The colony will, however, be quite satisfied if annexation to the British Crown takes place in another form.

8. Allusion is made by Lord Derby to a statement in the Press that one reason why Queensland desires the annexation of New Guinea is the facility which would thereby be afforded for obtaining a large supply of coloured labour for the sugar plantations without going beyond the limits of the colony. On behalf of the colony I deny that we have been actuated by any such motive, nor was there the slightest ground for believing the statement. The only attempt at an assertion of fact in favour of such a position was that made by Lord Lamington in the House of Lords, that immediately the annexation had taken place a labour-ship was despatched from Mackay