

THE
ORGANIZATION
OF
THE EMPIRE.

BY
THE HON. JOSEPH HOWE.

LONDON:
EDWARD STANFORD, 6, CHARING CROSS, S.W.
1866.

ORGANIZATION OF THE EMPIRE.

UNDER the Providence of God, after centuries of laborious cultivation, the sacrifice of much heroic blood, and the expenditure of a vast amount of treasure, the British Empire, as it stands, has been got together, and the question which is presented to us, in some form of Parliamentary or Newspaper disputation almost every week is, what is now to be done with it?

Two opinions appear to prevail. A great many persons are content to drift on without forethought or statesmanlike provision for the future, but others hold that it is the duty of the parent State to prepare the outlying provinces for independence—to so group and organize as to inspire them, at the earliest possible period, with the ambition and the desire to dissolve the National connection and set up for themselves. They think that Great Britain, regardless of her own interests, should be content with the glory of founding, peopling and setting great provinces adrift. That they will prosper by the separation, and that she will share their prosperity and be secure of a

moral and political influence, without care or cost, in proportion to the liberality of her conduct and to the sacrifices she has made. This party is reinforced, from time to time, by those who take a lower and more sordid view of the question—who think that Great Britain would hardly want an army or a navy, arsenals or dockyards, if she had no Colonies; who charge them with sums borne on the estimates, but never credit them with their consumption, or with the sacrifices they make to defend the interests and to uphold the dignity of the Empire. The parental relation is assumed to sanction this policy. Young men grow, and, when they are of age, marry and set up for themselves, and why should not colonies do the same? But the analogy is not perfect. One house would not hold all the married members of a large family, nor one estate maintain them. They scatter that they may live. They are kept in friendship by the domestic affections, and personal ties, which in respect of distant communities, do not exist, and at the death of the founder of the family there is an estate to divide.

Not so with Colonies. Their life begins at a distance from the homestead. There are few personal attachments. There is no estate to divide, and no security that when they separate they may not drift into antagonism to each other, and to the parent country. The policy then of rearing them, with the thought of separation ever in their minds,

of prematurely preparing them for separation, or of rudely casting them off, appears to me an unsound policy. The idea to be cultivated, instead of that of the parental relation, with its inevitable termination at the close of a very limited period, should rather be that of a partnership, which may last for centuries, and need not terminate at all, so long as it is mutually advantageous.

That Colonies have the right to break away and set up for themselves, if they are oppressed, will not at the present day be denied. That they will do this, if kindly and fairly dealt by, I hold to be at least "not proven." I would act as though it could not be proved. I would discountenance the idea of separation. I would have faith in the future—in our common brotherhood (which ought to count for something) even less than in the conviction, founded on our daily experience, that it is our interest to keep together.

It is sometimes thought that the Empire was weakened by conceding to the Colonies the system of responsible Government. The very reverse is true. They would inevitably have been dispersed sooner or later, had it not been conceded. This was a great Conservative measure, as well as a substantial reform. So far as the British North American Provinces are concerned, proof of the correctness of this opinion was given in a letter which I addressed to Earl Russell in 1846. Ample evidence has been accumulating ever since. Not only were the provinces presently saved by this

concession, but it makes an organization, for national purposes, comparatively simple and easy for the future.

It is true that in some of the Colonies this system does not yet appear to be worked very adroitly. But it must be borne in mind that it is not taught in a horn book, but has to be wrought out with temper, tact and skill, only to be acquired from experience. When called to the task of self-government, few of the public men in any of the Colonies were accustomed to the responsibilities of office : but the system is rapidly training them, and, as the circle widens, there will be less blundering, less temper, more skill, and a higher appreciation of precedent and authority.

Though, with the power of the purse, the right to have a Cabinet responsible to the House of Commons, is popularly assumed to have been won by the people of England in 1688, the right was hardly secure or the system very intelligibly worked, down to the close of the reign of George the third. The undue pressure of the prerogative was the difficulty, just as the blundering of Governors, or the undue pressure of the democratic element in some of the Colonies, may be the difficulty now ; but the system which ultimately controlled the prerogative will control Governors and democracies. A man is laughed at in the Maritime Provinces now, who puts forward pretensions which he cannot justify by Parliamentary record ; and so it will be, presently, in all the Colonies, as

experience and good sense, fortified by authority, are more largely drawn into the public service.

England has not been weakened by those municipal and parochial organizations which assume and exercise authority within certain well defined limits, and do a vast amount of valuable work which the general Government could never overtake, or do so well if it could; nor will the Empire be weakened by throwing upon the Provincial Legislatures and Colonial Municipalities all the responsibilities and labour of government that do not conflict with the general laws and regulations which can only be wisely framed and administered by some central authority. This division of labour is now universally recognised and appreciated, and if all the outlying possessions of the crown were peopled with English speaking inhabitants, capable of self-government, the system might be extended to every part of the Empire. The presence of a foreign population, as in India and elsewhere, will for a long time make it doubtful to what extent political franchises can be conferred, but I can hardly imagine any state of society in which the people might not be gradually trained to the exercise of municipal privileges with great advantage. Assuming then that the powers conferred upon the English speaking Colonies leave them, as respects domestic administration, nothing to desire; and that, as regards crown Colonies and foreign possessions and dependencies, our present system, subject to modifications from time

to time, is the best that can be devised, it is apparent that but for external pressure, and danger from without, we might go on as we are without any material change. The Maori question in New Zealand, the land question in Prince Edward Island, and the "tacking" question in Melbourne, are but ripples on the surface of the general tranquillity, and may soon be set right by a little firmness and discretion. As a general rule we may rest upon the assurance that the outlying portions of the Empire are prosperous and contented; and, if peace could be maintained, the people of England, annually enlarging their trade and reducing their taxation, might be content to keep up, as they have hitherto done, the ordinary armaments necessary for national police, and the security of the seas, without calling upon the Colonies to aid them.

But we have no security for peace, or if there be any, it is only to be sought in such an organization and armament of the whole Empire as will make the certainty of defeat a foregone conclusion to any foreign power that may attempt to break it.

This conviction was forced upon my mind, while endeavouring, under instructions from Her Majesty's Government in 1855, to draw a few thousand soldiers from the United States, while not a man was moved, of the millions that we had to spare, in every quarter of the globe, to reinforce, it might have been to save, the gallant little army fighting and perishing before Sebastopol. This

subject has occupied many a leisure hour since, and I have never dwelt upon it without feeling that the question of questions for us all, far transcending in importance any other within the range of domestic or foreign politics, is, not how the Empire can be most easily dismembered, not how a province or two can be strengthened by a fort, or by the expenditure of a million of dollars, but how the whole Empire can be so organized and strengthened as to command peace or be impregnable in war.

Many people have, since 1855, been driven to think of this question. Passing over all the second and third rate powers, which possess no navies, and whose armies may always be neutralized by being balanced or broken against each other by skilful diplomacy, France, Russia, and the United States, grow with our growth, and loom up before the mind of every thoughtful British subject, as standing menaces, warning him to prepare for any eventuality.

Prussia is now coming forward as a fourth great power, and will presently control an extensive sea-board, behind which there will be a warlike population of twenty or thirty millions. In estimating her influence as well as her strength, it may be wise to remember that the German emigration to the United States has been as extensive as the Irish, that Germans swarm in the sea-board cities and in the western States, that Frankfort was

the chief mart for National Securities during the Civil War, and that the sympathy between the great Republic and the Fatherland is an element too apparent to be overlooked by diplomatists in any prudent calculation of forces.

A very distinguished person said, at the outbreak of the Crimean war, that our free institutions were about to be put upon their trial. Our free institutions were really in no danger, what was upon its trial was the mode in which we organize the physical force of the Empire, and that, as we have all since been compelled to acknowledge, was found to be sadly defective.

Combined with France we could only bring Russia to terms with half the fortresses in the Crimea frowning defiance at us; but the question naturally arises, what would we do were France and Russia combined against us? or should that combination, so familiar to the American mind, be formed between the Fleets and Armies of Russia and the United States for the humiliation of England? With France as an ally we might still have nothing to fear, but we ought to have something more secure to rely upon than the eccentricities of French politics or the life of a single man.

Russia, controlling so large a portion of the earth's surface, inhabited by seventy-four millions of people, obeying one mind with reverential awe, and in close neighbourhood to our Eastern Pro-

vinces, is a formidable power; and the development of her great natural resources, under the inspiration of personal freedom recently acquired, may make her yet more formidable.

France, with a martial population of thirty-seven millions, a vast but compact territory, resting on two sea-boards, with a powerful navy, and a naval reserve, fostered with politic liberality on the banks and coasts of Newfoundland, would be a dangerous neighbour now that steam has bridged the Channel, even if we had, in that country, the ordinary securities of constitutional Government for the preservation of peace. But we have them not. The will of one man controls all these vast resources, with a secrecy and directness which, in diplomacy and war, give great advantages over our system of checks, accountability and free discussion; and although, at this moment, our relations with France are most amicable and friendly, a death or a revolution are events not so improbable as to justify the assurance that they may not at any moment occur.

Turning to the United States we find our most formidable commercial rival, and, as matters stand, perhaps our least reliable friend and ally. I am not without some hope that by prudence, firmness and good humour, and by systematically setting public opinion right, through American channels of circulation, as to the power, the public sentiment, and the designs of this country, we may yet

be able to so inform the masses who control the Government as to make war with Great Britain nearly impossible; but, in the present temper of the Republic, we have no security for peace, and we may as well then survey with discriminating forecast the strength and resources of the nation with which we may have to contend.

Assuming that under our present organization, or as matters would stand were the Colonies thrown off, a war were to break out between these Islands and the United States, the Republic would have the advantage in numbers now, of thirty-four millions to thirty; but this disproportion must annually increase, because they have a boundless territory to fill up, while the British Islands are occupied from shore to shore. The increase of the population in Ireland goes to the United States, and every twenty years they draw from the Mother Country, as many people as there are in all Scotland. Visitors come here to see the wonders of the old world, but very few remain. Besides, those who go out, mingling at once with an unfriendly population soon take a hostile tone, and as they keep up correspondence with friends at home, the Mother Country is weakened, in Ireland at all events, by the disaffection that these emigrants can propagate and encourage.

Perhaps there is no living Englishman who estimates more highly than I do, the accumulated wealth, the large experience, and the perfect dis-

cipline which Great Britain can bring to bear upon any contest; or who better knows with what heroism and self-devotion these Islands would be defended against any foreign attack. But yet I would be sorry to see them, even now, without any support from the outlying provinces, engaged in a war with the United States; and I cannot disguise from myself that twenty years hence their position will be much more perilous, and the odds against them vastly more disproportionate. But if the United States were combined with either of the great Military and Naval Powers of Europe, the most sanguine lover of his country would scarcely desire to see our strength so tried.

Now I would lift this question above the range of doubt or apprehension, and prepare for all eventualities, by such an organization of the Empire as would enable the Sovereign to command its entire physical force. If Russia, France, or the United States, is involved in war to-morrow, the revenue and the manhood of the whole territory are at the disposal of the Executive; while, if we go to war, the whole burthen of sustaining it falls upon the people of these two small Islands. This is not fair, and, what is worse, our unprepared condition makes war at all times possible, sometimes imminent.

But, it may be asked, suppose this thing to be desirable, how is it to be done? And I answer, as all other good things are done in this free country,

by propounding the policy, by discussion and argument, to be followed, when the public sentiment is prepared for it, by wise legislation.

I foresee the difficulties: in this as in all other cases there is a certain amount of indifference, of ignorance and of selfishness, to be overcome, but I rely upon the general intelligence of the Empire to perceive the want, and upon its patriotism and public spirit to supply it. Surely if a Russian serf can be got to march from Siberia to the Crimea to defend his Empire, the Queen's subjects can be educated to know and feel, that it is alike their duty and their interest to march anywhere to defend their own.

The young men of Maine and Massachusetts rushed to protect their capital from rebellious fellow citizens, and I am sure, when once the possibility of a requisition is made familiar to the Colonial mind, that the youths in our outlying provinces would rush as eagerly to defend London from a foreign foe. But it may be said the Russian obeys a central authority, that it would be vain to dispute, and that the American fights for his perfect citizenship, which includes the control of his foreign policy and representation in the National Council. This is the weak point in our case, but let us see if it cannot be met, by such reasonable concessions and appeals to the good sense of our people as suit their practical turn of thought, and would give to the Colonies prepared for it a direct influence

in the National Councils, without disorganizing the political machinery already working so well.

The House of Commons, whatever may be its defects, enjoys the respect of the Empire, and I assume, that whatever may come hereafter, nobody wishes to see its composition and character very materially changed. How far representation in Parliament can be safely conceded to the outlying portions of the Empire, by what modes these members should be selected and distributed, to what extent they should be permitted to interfere, are questions beset with difficulties which I need not linger to state, but which have been pondered with some anxiety during the last ten years. I can see no solution of them all more simple and easy than this.

To treat all the Colonies, which have Legislatures, and where the system of responsible Government is in operation, as having achieved a higher political status than crown Colonies, or foreign dependencies, and to permit them to send to the House of Commons one, two, or three members of their Cabinets, according to their size, population, and relative importance.

The advantages gained by this mode of selection, assuming the principle of any sort of representation to be sanctioned, are various.

1. We get rid of all questions about franchise and the modes of election, which might or might not correspond to those which obtain in England.

2. We are secure of men truly representing the

majority in each Colony, because they would speak in the name and bring with them the authority of the Cabinets and Constituencies they represented.

3. We have no trouble about changing them, as they would sit till their successors, duly accredited, announced the fact of a change of administration.

4. We have no contested elections or questions about bribery and corruption to waste the time of Parliament.

5. We are secure, by this mode, of obtaining the best men, because only the best can win their way into these Colonial Cabinets, of whom the flower would be selected by their colleagues to represent the intellect and character of each province on the floor of Parliament.

6. We do nothing more in fact, than permit Colonial Ministers to defend their policy, and explain their conduct before Parliament, as British Ministers do now, thus training them in the highest school of politics for the better discharge of their duties at home.

Technical difficulties of all sorts may be urged against the adoption of this proposition, but, for the present, I will assume that these may be overcome, if it is seriously entertained. To one or two objections, involving principle, I would for a moment invite attention.

It may be said that the introduction of these men by this mode would destroy the symmetry and violate the general principles upon which

Imperial legislation is based ; but I would respectfully submit that all our Legislation springs out of a series of compromises. That this would only be another, and one quite in accordance with the general spirit of all the rest.

In the House of Lords the three kingdoms are variously represented, and the Dissenting interests are without any spiritual representation at all. The House of Commons presents but little simplicity of outline, but is the result of a series of compromises, between those already in possession of the seats and the growing wealth, population and intelligence outside. To distribute a certain number of seats among great provinces, peopled by Englishmen, prepared to discharge all the duties of loyal subjects, would seem to be only a move in the same direction as all the others, by which a working legislature, representing all interests, but the Colonial, has been secured ; and surely the millions who are now claiming an extension of the franchise will hardly think it right that the millions beyond the seas, who are bound by British Legislation, should have, in the Parliament which can at any moment plunge them into a war, no representation at all.

But it may be asked, would you allow these men to speak and vote on English, Scottish and Irish questions ? This is a matter of detail of easy adjustment. If I were a resident of these Islands I would say yes, let us hear what such men as Mr.

Verdon, of Victoria, Mr. Galt, from Canada, or Mr. Tilley, from New Brunswick, have to say even on domestic topics, because their testimony would be all the more valuable as they would have no interest in the matter. But if permitted to express their opinions, good taste would probably restrain Colonial gentlemen from mingling, but upon rare occasions, in purely local controversies. They would probably confine themselves to the exposition and defence of those measures for which they were at once responsible to the provinces they represented, and to the august assembly which must then form, as it does now, the high court of review for all Colonial questions.

Matters of foreign policy, they should not only be permitted, but invited to debate, because, upon the wise adjustment of these, depends the preservation of peace, in any breach of which the provinces would be directly compromised. What more appropriate theme for British Americans to discuss than the relations between Great Britain and the United States? And I am quite sure that an earnest minded man, speaking good sense upon any of the varied questions that these relations involve, would be listened to with respect by the House of Commons, and would not be without influence in the great country which it might be sound policy to conciliate.

But, take a purely provincial question, and I select one at random because it often attracts a

good deal of public attention. There are 60,000 Englishmen in the Colony of New Zealand, who hold a portion of the Islands by what has often appeared to be a most precarious tenure. The Maoris hold all the rest, under some agreement with the British Government, and are said to have the patronage and protection of certain worthy people in England, whose philanthropy seriously embarrasses the local Government. When war breaks out nobody in this country can get at the merits of the controversy. The Colonists are accused of provoking it, that they may despoil the Maoris of their land, or profit by military expenditure; and the policy is seriously entertained of leaving these sixty thousand Englishmen, thousands of miles from home, to fight and slay these savages at their own cost and charges. Then matters become complicated by disputes between the Executive and the Commander-in-Chief, and nobody knows who to blame. We rarely get out of these entanglements without a good deal of bloodshed, and a large expenditure. And scarcely anybody in England can tell, even when the war is over, why it was begun. Now I would simplify all this by saying to the New Zealanders, send over here the best man you have got, clothed with the authority of office and sustained by the public confidence, and let him explain your case before the Parliament of the Empire. If you are right you shall be sustained, if wrong, you must give way or change

your policy. A single night's discussion in the House of Commons, with the New Zealand Minister there, would do more for the peace and order of the Colony than a year's debate without him. No man would come here with a bad case, and, if he did, and if it broke down, no wise man would persist in a line of policy which had been patiently reviewed and condemned by the House of Commons, in his own presence, after a fair discussion in which he had been heard at large.

But it may be asked would the Colonists value this privilege? Would they send these members? I think they would, but if they did not, their mouths would be closed: and the offer of free consultation, not only on such local concerns, as from their pressure on the Imperial Treasury challenged the investigation of Parliament, but on the great questions of Peace or War, having been freely tendered to them, they could not complain if the British Government took such measures for the preservation of domestic tranquillity and the general defence of the Empire as in its wisdom seemed politic and discreet. It is not probable that all the Colonies would send these members, to waste their time in the House of Commons, when they had no special grievances to discuss, or policy to represent, because their leading men, in the absence of these, would be better employed at home; but when they had, the privilege would be much esteemed, and the conviction that they had the right to send them at

all times would add a new element of strength and cohesion to the Empire.

But it may be asked might not these Colonial representatives combine and form a Brigade, embarrassing Governments and obstructing public business in pursuit of anti-British or other unworthy objects. There is no danger of this. These men would represent communities wide as the poles asunder, with climates, soils, productions, interests, as varied as the skies under which they were bred. They would know less of each other and of each other's interests than the body of Englishmen, among whom they were thrown, would perhaps know of them all. These men would bring with them stores of accurate information, often invaluable in Parliamentary inquiries, and they might sometimes throw into debates the fruits of long experience and the subtle vivacity of very accomplished minds; but I cannot conceive with what designs, or under what leadership, they could possibly combine for objects that were not legitimate. The effect of this concession would not only be to supply the House of Commons, at first hand, with much valuable information, but to raise the standard of qualification, and to elevate the tone of public instruction and debate, in all the Colonies.

The Crown Colonies and foreign populations are not included in this scheme. Her Majesty's Ministers may devise some mode by which they

can be provided for. I pass them by, because I do not see the way clear to admit them, until they have achieved the status of self-governing provinces with responsible Ministers to send; but, if they were made to feel that, by qualifying themselves for rational self-government, they might ultimately enjoy the full privileges of British citizenship, the effect even upon those portions of the Empire, still treated as territories are treated in the United States, might not be without its value in exciting to emulation and improvement.

Having made this step in advance, I would proceed to treat the whole Empire as the British Islands are treated, holding every man liable to serve the Queen in war and making every pound's worth of property responsible for the national defence.

Great care should be taken that, in every province, a decennial census should be prepared under every possible guarantee for fulness and accuracy, and the information furnished by these returns should be digested and condensed so as to present at a glance a picture of the Empire.

The census would of course give, as the basis of legislation :

The number of people.

The value of real and personal property.

The amount of Exports and Imports.

The tonnage owned.

New ships built.

The number of Fishermen and Mariners employed.

The information gathered by the last census may, for present use, be sufficient, and if so:—

A Bill, making provision for the defence of the Empire, may be prepared to operate uniformly over the whole, and should be submitted simultaneously to all the provinces. It should provide:—

For the enrolment of all the men from 16 to 60 liable to be called out in case of war.

For the effective organization and training, as Militia, of men between the ages of 18 and 45, year by year in time of peace.

For fixing the quota, which in case of hostilities any where, each province is to provide during the continuance of the war, the Colonial Government having the option to supply its quota by sending regiments already embodied, or by furnishing volunteers from the youth of the country who might be better spared.

For incorporating these men into the British Army with their Regimental numbers, but with some distinctive name or badge to mark their origin, as the “Welsh Fusileers,” or “Enniskillen Dragoons,” are distinguished. They should be paid out of the Military chest, and treated, in all respects, as British troops from the moment that they were handed over to the Commander-in-chief.

For the establishment of Military Training Schools in each province, and for instruction in military engineering and the art of war, at some seminary within reach of the youth of every group of Colonies.

For the enrolment of all seafaring men from 16 to 60 as a naval reserve, the effective men between 18 and 45 being obliged to serve on board of block ships, harbour defences, or in any of Her Majesty's ships on the station, or in forts or water batteries, for the same number of days which effective militiamen are obliged to serve on shore.

As labour in all the Colonies is high, and in some of them the season for profitable industry is short, it would be wise in Her Majesty's Government, having secured this organization and these high powers, to press as lightly as possible in times of assured tranquillity upon the people, who, in that case, would always be the more ready, in times of impending danger, when the reason of the thing was apparent, to submit to heavier sacrifices.

By another Bill, to operate uniformly over the whole Empire, (India being excluded as she provides for her own army,) the funds should be raised for the national defence. This measure, like the other, should be submitted for the sanction of the Colonial Governments and Legislatures. This tax should be distinguished from all other imposts, that the amount collected could be seen at a glance,

and that every portion of the whole people might see what they paid and what every other portion had to pay.

This fund could either be raised as head money over the whole population, in the form of a property or income tax, or by a certain per-centage upon imports; constituting, next to existing liabilities, a first charge upon the Colonial Revenues, and being paid into the military chest, to the credit of the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury.

As the great arsenals, dockyards, dépôt and elaborate fortifications, are in these Islands, as the bulk of the naval and military expenditure for arms, munitions and provisions, occurs here, where are the great fleets and camps, the people of Great Britain and Ireland ought to be prepared to pay, and I have no doubt would, a much larger proportion towards this fund than it would be fair to exact from the outlying provinces, where, in times of peace, there is but little of naval or military expenditure.

In another respect a wise discrimination should be exercised. Within the British Islands are stored up the fruits of eighteen centuries of profitable industry. All that generations of men toiled for, and have bequeathed, is now in possession of the resident population here, including all that was created and left by the forefathers of those by whom the British Colonies have been founded. Besides, the machinery is here which does now,

and will continue to do to a very large extent, the manufacturing business of the Empire. If it be true that these machines earn the wages and do the daily work of eight hundred millions of people, here are sources of wealth and an amount of property to be defended out of all proportion to what can be found in all the provinces; and it is of the utmost importance that this elaborate mechanism of industry, which has cost so much and earns so much, should never be perilled or stopped for a single day.

Taking into view, then, the comparison which these wealthy and densely peopled Islands bear to the sparsely populated Colonies beyond the sea, it would seem but fair that they should assume, in proportion to numbers, a much larger share of the burthens of National defence.

If the general principle be admitted we need not waste time with the details, which actuaries and accountants can adjust. Fair allowance being made, under these two heads, I can see no reason why the Colonies should not contribute in peace and war their fair quotas towards the defence of the Empire.

As respects the mode in which this contribution should be levied, there are many reasons why a tax on imports should be preferred. Direct taxes are easily collected in a densely peopled country like England, where everybody can be got at, and where every acre of land has a marketable

value. In the provinces direct taxes often cost more than they come to, because the scarcity of money in new settlements, the distance to be travelled by the collectors, and the difficulty of enforcing payment if there is evasion or resistance, renders this by far the least satisfactory mode of collecting revenue. But, added to their *ad valorem* duties, the tax for National Defence could, if fairly adjusted, be paid by all the colonies without restricting their commerce or being burthensome to their industry.

But the question may now be asked, and everything turns upon the answer that may be given to it, will the Colonies consent to pay this tax, or to make any provision at all for the defence of the Empire? It must be apparent that no individual can give an answer to this question: that the Cabinet, were they to propound this policy even after the most anxious inquiry and full deliberation, could only wait in hope and confidence for the response to be given by so many communities, so widely dispersed, and affected by so many currents of thought. There is enough of doubt to perplex and almost to deter them from trying the experiment, yet it is so hopeful, there is so little to be lost by failure, and so much to be gained by success, that, with all respect, I would urge Her Majesty's Government to give the question their grave consideration.

That it is the duty, and would be for the interest,

of all Her Majesty's subjects in the outlying provinces, fairly admitted to the enjoyment of the privileges indicated, to make this contribution, I have not a shadow of doubt. Without the protection of the fleets and armies of England, they are all defenceless. Without efficient organization, they cannot lean upon and strengthen each other, or give the Mother Country that moral support, which in peace makes diplomacy effective, and in war would make the contest, short, sharp, and decisive. Besides, the overflow of labour and of capital into the Colonies, is to some extent checked by doubts as to the security of their future. If once organized and consolidated, under a system mutually advantageous and universally known, there would be an end of all jealousies between the taxpayers at home and abroad. We would no longer be weakened by discussions about defence or propositions for dismemberment, and the irritation which is now kept up by shallow thinkers and mischievous politicians, would give place to a general feeling of brotherhood, of confidence, of mutual exertion, dependence, and security. The great powers of Europe and America would at once recognize the wisdom and forethought out of which had sprung this national combination, and they would be slow to test its strength. We should secure peace on every side by the notoriety given to the fact, that on every side we were prepared for war.

Now let us see if Her Majesty's subjects, making these sacrifices and giving these aids, would be worse off or would stand on a lower level than the people of any other great Empire, with whom our pride might tempt us to challenge equality. We would have, in all the provinces, responsible Governments, independent Courts and Legislatures, a Free Press, Municipal Institutions, the entire control of our own revenues (the defence contribution being deducted), and the regulation of our trade, foreign and domestic ; and we should have the right of free discussion of international and intercolonial questions in the House of Commons. What privileges are enjoyed by Russian or Frenchmen, or by the subjects of any European sovereign, that can be compared with these ? Turning to the United States, and admitting the entire success of their political experiments, it must be confessed that, from the moment that the Colonies are permitted to send their accredited ministers, representing their Parliamentary majorities, to the national Council, we shall have attained a status that will leave us little or nothing to desire that they have achieved. In a pecuniary point of view we shall be better off. The whole of the import duties in all the States now go into the National Treasury to sustain the general Government. We should still retain ours (less the contribution for national defence), and have, in all the provinces, a large fund available for local services and internal improvements.

But suppose this policy propounded and the appeal made, and that the response is a determined negative. Even in that case it would be wise to make it, because the public conscience of the Mother Country would then be clear, and the hands of her statesmen free, to deal with the whole question of national defence, in its broadest outlines or in its bearing on the case of any single province or group of provinces, which might then be dealt with in a more independent manner.

But I will not, for a moment, do my fellow Colonists the injustice to suspect that they will decline a fair compromise of a question which involves at once their own protection and the consolidation and security of the Empire. At all events if there are any communities of British origin anywhere, who desire to enjoy all the privileges and immunities of the Queen's subjects without paying for and defending them, let us ascertain where and who they are—let us measure the proportions of political repudiation now, in a season of tranquillity—when we have leisure to gauge the extent of the evil and to apply correctives, rather than wait till war finds us unprepared and leaning upon presumptions in which there is no reality.

But it may be asked can such an Empire as this, wanting the compactness of France, Russia, or the United States, ever be kept together, and so brought to yield to the guidance and control of any central

authority, as to be strong in war, and in peaceful times mutually interested in a common name, and in a simultaneous development? We may save our pains if this question cannot be answered; but, after much reflection on the subject, I think it can, with as much certainty as any question can be answered that includes so many elements of speculation to which no positive test can be applied.

A nation of soldiers, like the Romans or the French, would hardly have known what to do with such an Empire as ours had Providence bestowed it as a gift. But to a nation of merchants, manufacturers, planters, fishermen, and sailors, its very extent, expansion, and diversity of production and consumption, are its chief attractions. All that the sun ripens or the seas produce is ours without going beyond our own boundaries. If a zolverein, such as the Germans have, or free trade between States such as the great Republic enjoys, be advantageous, we have them on the widest scale, and with a far larger population. The seas divide our possessions it is true, but out of this very division grow our valuable fisheries, our mercantile marine, our lines of ocean steamers; and out of these our navy, and the supremacy upon the sea, which, if we hold together, with cheaper iron, coal, timber and labour, than almost any maritime country, no other power can dispute.

Besides, though in some respects our distant possessions are a source of weakness, on the whole

they give great strength and power. Through India we command the trade and almost control the policy of Asia; and even in America, which at this moment is held to be our weakest point, while we possess half the Continent with the provinces of British America and the West Indies, we control the North Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico, and have a power of offence as well as the duty of defence, all along a frontier which no surveillance can possibly close against our trade; and so it is in every quarter of the globe, the risks and the costs of Empire are counterbalanced by the possession of political power and of great commercial advantages. While we act in concert these are the common property of us all, and I cannot believe that there is in a single province of the Empire, in which British settlers form a majority, a disposition to break away from the honourable compact under which these advantages are mutually shared, or an indisposition to contribute towards their perpetual guardianship and protection.

That this paper might be kept within readable compass, I have not encumbered it with details, nor have I touched upon a number of subsidiary measures, such as a national currency, weights and measures—uniformity of police—systematic plantation, and the relief of the poor rates, postal savings banks, public improvements and decennial exhibitions, and generally those measures which would have a tendency to foster national feelings

and stamp upon the whole population of the Empire a national character.

In submitting these thoughts, I trust I may be pardoned for venturing to discuss a question of such magnitude and importance in presence of statesmen and public writers, whose exalted positions and long experience, render it hazardous to ask their consideration of new principles of Government. But, during thirty years of active public life, I have been compelled to study closely the nature of our Colonial and Imperial relations, with the opportunity of mingling freely with the public men of the United States, and of examining their system and development, and I respectfully indulge a hope that some weight may be given to sincere convictions, formed after many years of anxious deliberation, and expressed with no wish to embarrass, but with a very sincere desire to aid the public men of the Mother Country in dealing with the great interests committed to their care.