

THE TRANSVAAL CRISIS

Dr. W. J. LEYDS
Frankensley 337
1899

REPORT

OF

A PUBLIC MEETING

HELD IN

ST. MARTIN'S TOWN HALL

ON

MONDAY, JULY 10th, 1899.

"TO PROTEST AGAINST RECKLESS THREATS OF
WAR WITH THE TRANSVAAL"

London

THE TRANSVAAL COMMITTEE

LIBERAL FORWARDS CLUB

ST. ERMIN'S, WESTMINSTER, S.W.

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No. 29361.



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Part 2

THE TRANSVAAL RISKS

THE Chair was taken by Mr. GEORGE W. E. RUSSELL, who called on the Honorary Secretary, Mr. P. W. CLAYDEN, to read the following telegrams and letters :—

From the Hague :—

“Chairman Transvaal Meeting, St. Martin’s Town Hall London :—Best wishes from meeting now at Hague in support of justice in Transvaal.—Chairman, Diligentia, Hague.”

Mr. C. P. SCOTT, M.P., telegraphed :—

“Greatly regret unavoidably detained. All success to your timely and most necessary protest.” (Cheers.)

Mr. F. A. CHANNING, M.P., telegraphed :—

“Greatly regret unable to join protest against Chamberlain’s official reproduction of infamous Raid policy. The Liberal Forwards’ view of the question is consistent with justice, honour, and the future interest of England in South Africa.”

Mr. T. WRIGHT telegraphed :—

“Thomas Wright, Birmingham, regrets unavoidable absence but hopes an enthusiastic meeting will demand justice to President Kruger, and that the sluggish Nonconformist conscience may be aroused.”

Lord COLERIDGE wrote :—

“I consider that under present circumstances to make war upon the Transvaal would be a national crime.”

Mr. R. SOUTTAR, M.P., wrote :—

“I greatly sympathise with your efforts.”

Mr. T. BURT, M.P., in his communication, said :—

“I am protesting against the war spirit which is being fomented in certain quarters.”

Mr. MICHAEL DAVITT, M.P., wrote:—

“I protest most strongly against the bullying policy adopted by Sir A. Milner and Mr. Chamberlain against the South African Republic.”

Mr. F. MADDISON, M.P., wrote:—

“Chamberlain and his gang seem bent on destroying the little Boer Republic, and we must resist the attempt to the end.”

The Bishop of HEREFORD said:—

“If you can make it known that the mass of the English people, as distinct from a noisy and aggressive faction, are all in favour of patience and courtesy, you will do a very good service to our Empire and to the English name.” (Cheers.)

From Canon SCOTT-HOLLAND:—

“Your meeting will be in time to seal what, I trust, is a foregone conclusion. It is incredible that after these concessions a war should be possible. We have been saved from this disaster by the steadiness, the courage, and the loyalty of the Africander leaders at the Cape.”

Canon GORE sent a message expressing sympathy with the object of the meeting.

Canon E. L. HICKS, of Manchester, wrote:—

“I wish I could be with you at St. Martin’s Town Hall. We Liberals have been too slow in speaking out on this matter. To bring about war in South Africa would be not only a great crime, but a pitiable blunder. Mr. Chamberlain’s action and speech have, as usual, been highly provocative and mischievous; but I trust Mr. Schreiner’s attitude will help to save the situation. The tremendous blow which Jingoism and ‘Imperialism’ have received in the crushing defeat of Mr. W. Churchill at Oldham—(cheers)—may show us that in the democracy, especially of the North, justice and common sense are still strong and active forces. We have not all lost our heads, as so many have in London.” (Laughter and cheers.)

The Rev. F. B. MEYER, Minister of Christ Church, Westminster Bridge Road, wrote:—

“We must do our utmost to arrest the present efforts being made to embroil our country in war. I am only too glad to use my pulpit in this direction, and will do so next Sunday.”

The Rev. J. PAGE HOPPS wrote:—

“Believing as I do that the Johannesburg grievances are very much of a blind, and that our interest in the Republic’s franchise is either hypocritical or sinister, I hope the speakers will draw up the blinds to the top and let daylight into some very bad corners.” (Cheers.)

Sir JOHN SWINBURNE, Bart., wrote:—

“Were we to employ force to coerce the South African Republic it would be, in my opinion, a lasting disgrace to the English nation, and lead to the most disastrous results in the future.”

Mr. W. P. BYLES wrote:—

“There never was a war-cry on so flimsy a pretext.”

Mr. KARL BLIND wrote:—

“I regard the attempt to overmaster the ‘South African Switzerland’ as a disgraceful wrong, not less great than an attempt to overmaster the Swiss Republic in Europe. It would be a ‘*national crime*.’ So Mr. Chamberlain himself said years ago.”

The Chairman of one of the largest South African Companies wrote:—

“I am with you in any endeavour to block the unscrupulous and ignorant men who are now agitating for war.”

The CHAIRMAN, Mr. George W. E. Russell, said:—We have been told by some of our sincere well-wishers that this meeting was out of date, and that by the time it was held all danger of war would be over. God grant that that may be the case. (Cheers.) As far as our present knowledge goes it will not do to reckon too confidently on that possibility. I remember very well that when the present Government was being formed, one of the most experienced politicians then in the House of Commons, who was leaving it and looking back over a long Parliamentary life, made to me this prediction: “I expect that this Government will go on pretty quietly for three or four years, and then at the end of that time, when they find their popularity waning, they will stir up a war in one part of the world or another.” I have anticipated the fulfilment of that prediction during the last six months with great dread. There is no doubt that with regard to one member of the Cabinet that prophecy has come true, and that there is in the breast of a certain notorious politician an earnest desire to force matters in South Africa to what I may call advisedly a desperate conclusion. But, happily, we have no reason to suppose that this politician can lead his colleagues wheresoever he will. Lord Salisbury’s love of peace, as his friends and admirers call it, or what I prefer to call Lord Salisbury’s fear of a commotion, which made him so useless in the Græco-Turkish crisis, may possibly make him useful in the South African crisis. (Cheers.) It is to him and those in his Cabinet who adhere most closely

to him that we must look for deliverance from the warlike machinations of those who have set their minds on a desperate solution of the matter. It is no part of my purpose to deny the existence of grievances that affect the Outlanders. I have not a sufficiently accurate and detailed knowledge of the life that is lived in the Transvaal to enable me to deny or to affirm that they labour under certain political disadvantages. At the same time, I would warn my friends against accepting unreservedly the heart-rending statements put forward in certain journals that are supposed to be under the influence of South African gold. Such statements must be taken with a grain of salt—with a good many grains of salt. Supposing, however, that the Outlanders labour under certain political disadvantages and difficulties, why are they there? They went to the Transvaal to please themselves. (Cheers.) They did not go with any commission from England, or in response to any invitation from the Government or the inhabitants of the Transvaal. They went—and nobody blamed them for so doing—to push their own fortunes and make money. And people who go to a foreign country simply to make money must expect to take the rough and the smooth together, and to accommodate themselves to the political conditions which they find in the home of their adoption. I dare say that the Polish Jews who come to make money in Whitechapel have good reason to complain of our Registration Laws. They have a perfect right to come. Yet it may take them several years to get on the Register. But if they were to invite the Czar to bombard London on that account, I think we should consider their action—to put it mildly—intemperate. I am far from saying the Outlanders have no right to protest or to agitate for political reform. (Hear, hear.) But I would have my hearers beware of the plausible appeals which have been made to democratic sentiments and principles. These appeals, in respect of the political hardships and grievances of our fellow-Englishmen in the Transvaal, bear, in my opinion, a suspicious resemblance to the nauseous humbug about the peril of unprotected women and children which was used to justify the infamous and abortive Raid. (Cheers.) The advocates of war are prostituting the sacred names of freedom and justice to glorify money-getting and justify bloodshed. We protest against such people monopolizing the name of patriot. We are the true and real patriots. (Cheers.) We do not go swaggering about the world like a company of mercenary swashbucklers, but we are none the less patriotic on that account. Surely we have a better claim to the title of patriots when we stand for the fair fame of Christian England amongst the civilized nations of the world. (Cheers.) Mr. Gladstone, speaking fifty years ago on the subject of foreign policy, said: "When we are asking for the maintenance of the rights which belong to our fellow-subjects

resident abroad, let us do as we would be done by, and let us pay that respect to a feeble State and to the infancy of free institutions which we would desire and should exact from others towards their maturity and their strength." Where Mr. Gladstone stood in 1850 we stand now—for national faith and honour against the frantic craving for unlimited extension and against the yet more degraded and degrading lust of gold. (Cheers.) In the face of our fellow-citizens we reaffirm our unfaltering allegiance to those moral principles of political action of which Mr. Bright once superbly said that "though they were not given amid the thunders of Sinai they are not less the commandments of God," nor less designed to promote the happiness of the human family and the peace and welfare of the world. (Loud cheers.)

Dr. G. B. CLARK, M.P., said :—

I beg to move—

"That this meeting, while desirous of obtaining for the Outlanders redress of their grievances by all legitimate means, condemns the reckless and mischievous attempts of a section of the Press and certain members of the British Government to force this country into war with the Transvaal."

I may say, in the first place, that I have no doubt that the Outlanders in the Transvaal have grievances. I do not know any country in the world where you will not find people with grievances—even in *this* highly-favoured land there are grievances. Some grievances, however, are more serious than others, and I should like to ask whether the Outlanders have any serious grievances which require the British Government to go to war for the purpose of redressing them. I do not think they have, and I know something about gold-mining in various parts of the world. I saw something of gold-mining in Australia in the year 1863. I know something of gold-mining in California, and I know something of gold-mining in the Transvaal. I have watched Johannesburg, more or less, from the day when I went down from Pretoria with the Minister of Education to lay the foundation-stone of its first house until now, and I say, without fear of contradiction, that the gold law of the Transvaal is more liberal, and the conditions under which either citizens or foreigners can mine gold in that country are more generous than anywhere else in the world. They are much more so than in the neighbouring British Colony of Rhodesia or in the Welsh mines at home, where, as Mr. Pritchard Morgan asserts, by the excessive taxation of the Government, the gold industry has been entirely crushed. There were tenfold greater grievances in

Australia and in America than there are in the Transvaal, and there were greater grievances in the earlier days of the diamond mining industry of Kimberley. The statement of the grievances will be found in the petition promoted by the South African League, the association of which Mr. Cecil Rhodes is President, and we had them stated by Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Leonard to the Select Committee of the House of Commons. Mr. Rhodes complained that the indirect taxation was too high, and prevented the gold-fields from being worked profitably, but he had to admit that the indirect taxation of the Cape Colony, of which he was Prime Minister, was higher than in the Transvaal. The taxation of the gold machinery was about 50 per cent. higher in the Cape Colony than it was in the Transvaal. As for making the gold-mines pay, why there was a company formed to work the gold-mines in South Africa, of which Mr. Rhodes and his friend Mr. Ridd were the managing directors. A certain percentage of the profits accrued to the managing directors as commission, and their share of the profits was not hundreds of pounds, but hundreds of thousands of pounds, and the company afterwards bought out the rights of these managing directors for stock worth more than a million of money. As for Mr. Leonard, he admitted that he was making £10,000 a year as a solicitor in Johannesburg, and that his direct taxes, including his license fee as a solicitor, were only about £100 a year. In this country his income-tax alone would have been over £300 a year.

The next grievance was the question of the franchise. Under the Transvaal law any foreigner coming into that country could have a vote for the Second Chamber in two years, and was eligible to be elected a member of that chamber in two years more. In this country no foreigner can vote for our Second Chamber until he has been at least five years in our country, so, as far as the Second Chamber is concerned, that cannot be called a grievance. But the First Chamber in the Transvaal has more power than the Second Chamber, and can veto the acts of the Second Chamber, and, under the law as it now stands, no foreigner is eligible to vote for the First Chamber until he has been fourteen years in the country.

In this country we have no vote at all for the First Chamber, as it is hereditary. In several of our most important colonies, such as New Zealand and New South Wales, no one can vote for the First Chamber, because it is appointed by the Crown. Before we go to war with a foreign country, in order to force its Government to give aliens in that country a vote for the First Chamber, let us take the beam out of our own eyes and see to it that our people at home and in our colonies have the same rights which the South African League wishes to secure for the Outlanders in the Transvaal. Mr. Chamberlain, in his speech at

Birmingham the other day, thus defined the grievances of the Outlanders :—

“They pay five-sixths of the revenue. They have no voice whatever in the government of the country. They are not even allowed municipal rights. They cannot control the drainage of their own city or the education of their own children. Their lives and property are at the mercy of corrupt, inefficient officials—officials appointed without reference to them by the Government, which treats the English citizens in South Africa—in which we are the paramount power—as if they belonged to an inferior race.”

I cannot admit that these assertions of Mr. Chamberlain are true. As the bulk of the revenue is paid by indirect taxation no one can tell what proportion is paid by the Outlander or by the Inlander. I have already pointed out that they have a voice in the government of the country, and, by the Bill which is now passing in the Volksraad, they will have a vote for both Chambers after seven years' residence. The statement that they are not allowed municipal rights and cannot control the drainage of their own city is the very reverse of the truth. For many years they have had a Sanitary Board, and over two years ago a Bill was passed giving them full municipal rights. The Municipality of Johannesburg has, in some respects, greater rights than the London County Council, because they appoint and pay their own police. Johannesburg has even more powers than Paris or Berlin, and Mr. Chamberlain knows that very well, as he reprinted the English translation of the Municipal Law in his Blue Book on the Grievances of the Outlanders. As for the assertion that they cannot control the education of their own children, it is simply not true. I see that Lord George Hamilton the other day went one step further than Mr. Chamberlain, and said they were not even allowed to teach their own children English. As a matter of fact, under the law of 1896, there are five schools at the Gold-fields where English is the medium of education. Ten of the teachers are English and five are Dutch. In the lower standards no Dutch book at all is used, and in the higher ones the maximum time required for teaching Dutch, in order to obtain the very highest grant, is only five hours per week. You will find no country in the world where the education of the children of foreigners is so much considered as it is in the Transvaal. As to the charge of corruption—it may or it may not be true—Mr. Chamberlain offers no evidence. I know that some of the Outlanders have done their best to corrupt some of the officials in the country; but I know also that Mr. Kruger, Mr. Reits, Dr. Leyds, and the leading men of the Transvaal Government are as far from corruption as Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, or any of Her Majesty's Ministers. I am afraid that Mr. Chamber-



lain, when he uttered that sentence about the corruption and inefficiency of the officials, was thinking of those appointed by the British Government when they took possession of the Transvaal in 1877, because it applied much more accurately to them than it does to the present officials there. Any one who reads the correspondence between the present Lord Welby, Chairman of our County Council, on behalf of the Treasury and the Secretary for the Colonies will see the kind of Government set up, as Mr. Chamberlain himself said, "by force, fraud and folly" in 1877. The miserable petty peculation it shows is something almost incredible. Regarding Sir Theophilus Shepstone's account, Sir Reginald Welby thus writes on April 17th, 1883:—

"The account is of a most unsatisfactory character, vouchers and details are produced for about one-third only of the payments, and the small portion that is capable of thorough examination contains evidence that the unvouched residue includes several duplicate charges. One item described as forage contained a concertina, a set of vases, a great coat, and some muslin.

"Your Lordship's direction for the abatement of £300 overdrawn salary from Sir T. Shepstone's pension has, doubtless, led him to recognize the gravity of the position in which he has placed himself by the disregard of the elementary rules which ordinarily govern men in their dealings with money other than their own."

The Secretary for the Colonies pointed out that Sir Theophilus Shepstone had served them for nearly fifty years, that he was a poor man, and that to surcharge him £13,000 would ruin him, and suggested that the money surcharged should be paid out of the pension by instalments over a number of years, and that some of the items ought to be allowed.

The following is an extract from the reply of Mr. Leonard Courtney, then Secretary to the Treasury, on 16th October, 1884:—

"A charge for forage which includes a concertina, a great coat, and a set of vases is simply an impertinence on the part of the accountant, and my Lords feel sure that the Secretary of State will not wish them to charge the Consolidated Fund with the cost of Sir Theophilus Shepstone's hat, Mr. H. C. Shepstone's hair brushes, Mr. Finney's cricket bat, or Mr. Thirsk's fishing-rod."

It is said that the Boers vote doles to themselves. Well, during the present Session of Parliament we have a Bill brought before us by means of which the Government proposes to buy back a charter which they gave for nothing, and to pay several

hundred thousand pounds for it. Mr. Chamberlain was a member of the Government who gave it for nothing, and is also a member of the Government that is buying it back at so high a price. He is also a shareholder in the Company. We have also a Bill before us to mitigate the evils of the monopoly in telephones given by a Postmaster-General for nothing, and we find the most unblushing lobbying done by honourable and right honourable members who are interested in this monopoly, including the Postmaster-General who gave this monopoly, and who is now one of the directors of the Company. Then we have a Bill before us to spend £80,000 or £90,000 in paying the half of the parsons' tithe-rates. A year ago we spent several hundreds of thousands of pounds in paying the Irish landlords' rates, and the year before we spent about a million and a-half in paying a portion of the rates of English agriculturists, which will all ultimately go into the pockets of the landlords. With all these facts before him, Mr. Chamberlain may think on the old proverb that those who live in glass-houses should not throw stones.

In his speech at Birmingham he also accused the Transvaal Government of having four times broken the Convention within the course of the last fifteen years. He says :—

“In the course of the past fifteen years we have been four times on the verge of war with the Transvaal. Once, in 1885, when the Warren expedition was carried through. Again in 1894, in the time of the last Government, when President Kruger attempted forcibly to enlist British subjects and to tax them and to take their goods in support of his battles with the native tribes, although at the same time he refused them all representation, all share in the government of the country. In 1895, when the Cape Government asked our assistance and promised their own co-operation in order to prevent the arbitrary action of the Government of the Transvaal in closing the roads to the passage of Cape merchandise ; and again in 1897, when the present Government had to protest against the Alien Immigration Law, which was declared to be a distinct breach of the Convention.”

Is this accurate? The Warren expedition was not sent against the Transvaal Government. Its scene of operation was outside the boundary of the Transvaal altogether. It was native territory, where two native chiefs had been fighting for paramouncy. One of them went down to Kimberley and hired British soldiers to fight for him, the other went into the Transvaal and got the assistance of a number of Boers, and after the war was over the British and Boer volunteers of the rival chiefs took over the territory for themselves. As this blocked our way into the interior we annexed the territory by proclamation, and sent Sir

Charles Warren to take possession of it. The Boer Government were no more responsible for their citizens who took part in the war than the British Government were for those who had been recruited in Kimberley. The description of what took place in 1894 is also inaccurate. The right of commanding all the residents in the country has existed from time immemorial in South Africa. It exists in our own Cape Colony; it exists in the Island of Java, where British residents are bound to serve in the militia when required. The then Government never asserted that this action was a breach of the Convention. All they asked of President Kruger was a favour, which he granted, and Mr. Chamberlain's statement is a perversion of the facts of the case. The next alleged breach of the Convention was the closing of the Vaal drift in 1895? Every Government has a right to determine where its Custom Houses shall be and its port of entry, and the Transvaal Government were entirely within their rights in removing their Custom House from the Vaal drift in question. There is a general law in South Africa that when a bridge is built over a stream the drift is closed. The railway bridge was built over the Vaal, and there was a contention between the railway companies as to the proportion of the freights to be divided between them and the Cape Colony, of which Mr. Rhodes was at that time Prime Minister, and had under his control not only the Cape Railway, but also that of the Orange Free State. In order to get what they thought was a fairer arrangement, the Transvaal determined to close the drift where the new bridge was formed. The Custom House was one between the Orange Free State and the Transvaal, and all the roads and all the Custom Houses on the frontier between the Transvaal and Cape Colony and between the Transvaal and Natal were unaffected by it. It was a Custom House on the frontier between a foreign country and the Transvaal. It might have been called an unfriendly act to the Cape Government, but it was in no sense of the word an infraction of the Convention. The Alien Immigration Law of 1897 was similar in principle to the law passed in 1881 giving the Government power to prevent the entrance of some of the undesirable aliens, many of them criminals of the worst type from Europe, America, and Australia, who were then flocking into the country. Mr. Chamberlain states that one thing has in common fairness "to be set on the other side in drawing up the balance-sheet of our relations with the Transvaal, and that is the Jameson Raid. I have never said a word in defence—I could not of that most mischievous proceeding, but that one great fault has been, I think, sufficiently atoned for." Mr. Chamberlain thinks that one great fault had been sufficiently atoned for. Has it been atoned for? Men were killed in that raid who left widows and children, but not one penny of compensation has as yet been paid. The soldiers who took part in that raid were set at liberty by the Boers. The

officers came home to be tried, and everyone of those officers has been replaced in his position in the army. Dr. Jameson was imprisoned for a few months, and then became the lion of Society, and the man who found the money for the raid, though he admitted his crime, is still the Right Honourable Cecil Rhodes, a member of Her Majesty's Privy Council, and it seems to me that the way Mr. Chamberlain means to atone for the Jameson Raid is by a Chamberlain Raid.

A great many of the people who went to the Transvaal thought they would find there all the comforts and conveniences of Piccadilly, and all the conditions under which they lived at home, and this not being the case they were dissatisfied, but if they had gone to America, or to any other country of the same character they would have found things very similar. There was a complaint that the language of the Oath of Allegiance was very objectionable. But the Oath of Allegiance in the Transvaal was word for word similar to what had been the Oath of Allegiance in the United States of America for over a century, and was copied by the Boers from the American Constitution.

The facts of the case do not warrant the assertions that have been made by the two Cabinet Ministers, and I have been very much amused to see Lord George Hamilton agitating for the Outlanders, while he knows that there are hundreds of thousands of intelligent Europeans in India who have no voice in the Government of the country, and are ruled over as despotically in India as they would be by the Czar in Russia, that there are gold-fields in India as well as in Africa, but the miners there have no political or municipal rights. The iniquity of the case of the Natus brothers outrivals the conduct of the General Staff towards Dreyfus, because Dreyfus had a trial before he was banished, but the Natus have never been tried at all.

These are the men who plead for justice abroad, and deny it at home, and who are making these excuses, because the Transvaal is a rich country, and they mean to secure it for ourselves.

If this policy of misrepresentation and incitement of public feeling is successful, and we go to war with the Transvaal, it will be a very serious matter for this country. I do not know whether victory or defeat would be the greater evil. But there is no just cause for war. I trust the common sense of members on both sides of the House of Commons and the great bulk of the public in this country, will prevent this country from plunging into an unjust, a wanton, and wicked war. (Loud cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN: I now have pleasure in calling upon that staunch friend of all good causes, Dr. Clifford.

Dr. CLIFFORD: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I have very great pleasure in seconding this resolution, and

especially in following a speech like that to which we have just listened—a speech so full of facts, and coming to us with all the authority of a personal witness. If for no other purpose this meeting had been gathered together, than simply to have had an opportunity of listening to such a representation of the actual facts of the Transvaal problem, that would certainly have justified our assembling here to-night. (Cheers.) There is one other point to which I may be permitted to refer—the condition of the Nonconformist conscience. (Cheers.) I am always thankful to anybody who will rouse my conscience — (laughter and cheers) — and especially if with that arousal there is given some illumination. A conscience that is active but is ill-informed is sometimes almost as mischievous as a conscience asleep; but if you can get a conscience that is well informed and completely awake there is something powerfully beneficial. (Cheers.) So far as the Nonconformist conscience is concerned, I can bear witness that it is fairly awake on this topic. Respecting the telegram in which it has been mentioned, you will observe it came from Birmingham. (Laughter.) Nonconformists have had a good deal to endure in Birmingham. There is a certain soporific which passes, not only through the political, but also through the ecclesiastical world in Birmingham, and you must not judge of Nonconformists generally from anything that comes from Birmingham. (Laughter.) So far as the Nonconformist Press is concerned, it has spoken out with distinctness, energy and vehemence, and, so far as the pulpit is concerned, I can bear witness that its voice has been heard again and again protesting against war, not only in this city, but throughout the length and breadth of the land. (Cheers.) I can assure this gathering that the conscience of Nonconformity is in perfect sympathy with the resolution we are passing—(cheers)—and if Great Britain's Government should, at this juncture, venture to introduce war in the Transvaal you may be perfectly certain that there will be such a rising of Nonconformity throughout this country as will make an exceedingly uncomfortable time for the Government. (Cheers.) One of the things that has been said again and again is that this question requires a great deal of caution—that, in the consideration of this crisis through which we, as a country, are passing, there should be close weighing of sentences and carefulness in the expression of convictions and opinions. I am prepared to admit the gravity of the situation, and I welcome the advice; but I ask that the advice should be applied on both sides. (Loud cheers.) If it is necessary for the party of peace to be cautious, I think it is unspeakably more necessary that the party of war should be cautious. (Cheers.)

There are three foes we have to fight. They are all parties of greed in some form or other. First of all, there is the party

that has such lust for revenge :—blatant and clamant, obtrusive and implacable, expressing itself through the morning and evening Press with constant reiteration, and urging only that we should try to wipe out Majuba. It is a barbaric sentiment, altogether—(loud cheers)—unworthy of men, not to say unworthy of a country that professes to be Christian. (Cheers.) Then, next, we have the party of gold, that goes out in its capitalistic and chartered fashion for the purpose of draining the Transvaal of its wealth and spending it afterwards in Park Lane and similar districts. (Cheers.) It is an intrusive capitalism that ought to be fought to the last ditch. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) The third party is the Jingoistic party that cries for annexation—that has always been for Empire: as though bigness were greatness, and the mere addition of acres of land were a positive addition to the power of a country. (Cheers.) If there is necessity for caution, I think the caution ought to be on the side of those three parties. Instead of the irritating and menacing utterances that come from Mr. Chamberlain, and the impracticable suggestions and disingenuous tactics that come from other parties, there ought to be a locking of the lips; or else an opening of them only to advise patience, insight, judgment and recognition of legal rights and the advancement of the welfare of the whole country. (Loud cheers.)

What is it that has created this crisis? First of all it is asserted the Uitlanders have not got the franchise. In a country like ours, is it necessary I should reply to that? (No, no.) Half the people in this country have not got the franchise. (Cheers.) And in my opinion the better half. (Loud cheers.) Why don't we initiate an Amazonian fight—the fight of the women to get from men the franchise? (Loud cheers.) Instead of that you have your House of Lords voting against the admission of women to serve our city. I say this is a wrong to the city. (Cheers.) I do not put it on the ground of the rights of women, but I put it on the ground of the rights of the community. It is a crying wrong to reject good service from capable, cultured, trained, philanthropic, patriotic women. (Cheers.) For us to talk about starting a war for the Uitlanders while we keep women from the franchise in this country, is an absurdity complete and utter. (Cheers.) Then, again, who sent the Bishops and Archbishops to the House of Lords? Did you? (Cheers.) I had no share in it. (Cheers.) Lord Hugh Cecil suggests I should be made a peer. I do not want to be degraded. (Loud cheers and laughter.) If I went into a House of Parliament at all—(loud cheers)—I would enter it the elected representative of the people—(continued cheers)—and not because I was my father's son. Had you any part at all in sending Lord Salisbury to his present position? Who elected him to be practically king of this country. (A Voice: the

Constitution.) Yes, the Constitution gave him his place in the House of Peers, but that House of Peers is not in the slightest degree representative of the people. It only speaks and acts for a fragment of them. It is a great grievance—the greatest grievance I have as a citizen. (Cheers.) If I wanted to get up a fight, it would be for the abolition straight away of the House of Lords. (Cheers.) It has been the patron of persecution. (Hear, hear.) It has been the nurse of intolerance, the mother of a thousand hindrances. I believe nothing has so much stood in the way of the real progress of the people as the House of Lords. (Loud cheers.) The Uitlanders' grievance is a mere flea bite to the grievance of having to bear with the obstinacy and stupidity of the House of Lords. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Again, do you ever go through an election, any of you? What do you discover at such times? Man after man coming up to the Committee-room and saying, "Haven't I got a vote?" "Oh, no; you've changed your residence and lost it." Our registration laws are as great a grievance to the Britishers of this country, nay, a greater grievance than any the Uitlanders are suffering from. I am not airing this grievance for the sake of airing it, but for the sake of showing that the question in debate now is, whether this crisis in the Transvaal is to be settled by patience, by tact, by insight, by consideration, or by the brutal arbitrament of the sword. And I say, that if there is the slightest reason for using the sword on behalf of the Uitlanders, there is a thousand-fold more reason for using it on behalf of the Britishers. (Loud cheers.)

That there is a great deal of maladministration in the Transvaal, I have no doubt. I can imagine that the judiciary is not so effective as it should be—(hear, hear)—and that the police are open to bribes. (No.) But, the police of other towns—we will say nothing about London—did you ever hear anything about them. It really is too bad for these people to present these complaints as though they could only be dealt with by the sword; it is an indescribable wrong for Mr. Chamberlain to stir up ill-will by his menacing and irritating speeches: all that injustice ought to be got rid of in the Transvaal as we are getting rid of our injustices at home: by exposing each injustice, by debating it, and by bringing the people to see that the injustice is inimical to the entire welfare of the Empire. (A Voice: Republic, not Empire—the Transvaal.) This matter requires a great deal of patience. Patience is one thing that is wanted; consideration is the other. Look, for a moment, at the condition of things in the Transvaal during the last thirty or forty years. In Africa you have two races. You have more than two; but two in collision with one another—two civilizations in collision with one another. The Boer civilization has not yet reached the height of the nineteenth century civilization. You have, in addition to that, an

inheritance of injustice, which is, I think, the greatest difficulty in connection with this problem. The Jameson Raid is spoken of by Mr. Chamberlain as having been atoned for ; but you cannot atone for a wrong like that. Money won't do it. Diplomacy cannot remove it. Arbitration cannot extinguish it. (Hear, hear. A Voice : It was a mistake.) And supposing it was a mistake, the evil is done ; you have created an injustice in the Boer mind which will take centuries to wipe out. (Cheers.) What we have to do is to take care we solve the problem now in such a way that no sense of injustice shall be left behind. Then we shall have given stability to British power in South Africa ; but if we inflict any injury in the process of solving this problem we shall imperil our own authority, and leave an evil which generations will not wipe out. What we ask for to-night, then, is patience and tact and justice to all interests concerned, so manifested by Her Majesty's Government that there shall not be left rankling in the hearts of the Boer people such a feeling of irritation as will make impossible the blending together of these two races, the harmonizing of these two peoples, already united by many bonds, and so they may march together in company with the rest of civilized peoples towards an era of justice, of liberty, of righteousness, and of universal well-being. (Loud cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN : I have now the satisfaction of calling upon an expert witness, Mr. Molteno, whom I shall now introduce to you. Mr. Molteno is the son of the first Prime Minister of the Cape Colony. He has spent a great deal of time in the country, with which he is intimately acquainted, politically and financially.

Mr. MOLTENO : I feel at a considerable disadvantage rising, as I do, after two great speakers, who have spoken to us in such eloquent language. The connection of my family with South Africa dates back for eighty years. From my earliest youth I have been acquainted with South Africa. I know its people well, and a very fine people they are. I only wish I could introduce you to them. I am personally acquainted with some of the leading actors in the recent negotiations, Mr. Fisher, Mr. Hofmeyr, and Mr. Schreiner, and they will stand comparison in patriotism, in patience, and in high-mindedness with any public men in any country in the world. (Cheers.) We are here to-night to protest against war. At the same time we should have some reasons for the faith that is in us. I should like to run through the reasons shortly why we object to war. It would be unjust. It is unnecessary. It will raise greater difficulties than it could possibly settle. It is against the declared policy of Cape Colony and Natal. There are other remedies which will effect the purpose far more harmoniously and surely. This war is unjust because

we have no right to force it upon the Transvaal. Our rights are clearly defined in the Convention of our own making, which gives us no right to urge an easy naturalization, and no right to ask for easy terms for the franchise. The Convention does define our rights. But these are not amongst them. Why does Mr. Kruger hold out against immediately giving the franchise? Is it because he is obstinate, pigheaded and foolish? I think not. It would be interesting to have Mr. Chamberlain's opinion as to what would happen if the franchise were given. I have that opinion here. If you have the patience I will read it. In the House of Commons, on the 13th February, 1896, Mr. Chamberlain said: "We have to deal with the demand of a majority of the population of the Transvaal to have the franchise which they do not possess at present, and to have a fair proportion of political power, which they do not possess at present. But the answer that has hitherto been given, not on the part of the Government of the Transvaal, but on the part of some of its friends, has been that to grant this request would be to commit suicide, inasmuch as the moment the majority got the franchise the first use they would make of it would be to turn out the existing Government of the Transvaal and substitute a Government of their own making. I confess I think that there was some reason in that objection. It was rather difficult to persuade one so capable as President Kruger that it was desirable he should proceed with his own extinction." (Hear, hear.) That is at the bottom of the difficulty. That is why President Kruger hesitates to hand over his country (and he would be a very unpatriotic man if he did) to a set of strangers. He may consider that he must attempt to solve the problem of gradually fusing the newcomers with the older inhabitants. But we must remember that the older inhabitants have borne the burden and heat of the day; have rescued their country from savagery, and have brought it into a state of comparative civilization. I have also said war is unnecessary. It is so because fusion could be brought about without the employment of so drastic a method as war. There are none of us who know South Africa who do not believe in course of time—and before any long time—that the sentiment in South Africa in favour of giving privileges in order to assimilate the new population to the old would so grow that no force could resist it. Here there would be a pacific solution. War only damps that South African feeling and prevents the force of reform from going forward as it otherwise would do. (Cheers.) But I have said another reason against war is that it would produce greater difficulties than those which we have at present. We have in South Africa a large population of Dutch extraction. That population has strong sympathies with its brethren in the Transvaal. These sympathies

have been brought into active play and prominence by that disastrous raid of 1895. It is comparatively easy for us sitting here in this hall to set aside that raid and to talk as if it was no longer to be taken into consideration. But in South Africa the animosity that that raid has aroused is the governing factor, and cannot be set aside. They are our fellow-citizens; they are entitled to express their opinions and make themselves heard. That is not only my own opinion. I have the high authority of Mr. Chamberlain for that proposition in his better days. (Laughter.) Yes; and his better days are not so far off. Speaking in the House of Commons on the 13th February, 1896, he used these words: "We are constantly reminded of the fact that our Dutch fellow-citizens are the majority in South Africa; and I think I may say for myself, as for my predecessor, we are prepared to go as far as Dutch sentiment will support us. It is a very serious thing—a matter involving most serious considerations if we are asked to go in opposition to Dutch sentiment." That, I believe, is absolutely correct. I have stated it is against the declared policy of the Cape Colony and of Natal, our two great self-governing colonies, who have represented to Mr. Chamberlain on more than one occasion that to resort to force would be disastrous, not only to the white inhabitants of the country, but to the coloured inhabitants. No great disturbance can take place amongst the white inhabitants without bringing about a disturbance between whites and blacks. This consideration is of the utmost importance to those acquainted with the condition of South Africa. (Cheers.) Gentlemen, I am detaining you; but let me say that it seems to me we should recognize the difficulties with which President Kruger has to deal. We have the old population which occupied the country before the newcomers arrived. They are Conservative. They may be ignorant and prejudiced; but they are there and they have their rights, and we have a new population, energetic, active and enterprising. These are two great factors. It is the duty of statesmanship, of diplomacy, to reconcile these two factors and bring about an amalgamation. To my mind a man who brings force to the solution of this problem is doing a mad thing. He is firing a pistol into a gunpowder magazine. We do not forget in South Africa that after the Imperial Government established its own Government in the great mining camp of Griqualand West, a rebellion broke out and troops were sent up to quell it. The British Government cannot say it has any special or certain mode of governing a mining camp comprising a population come together from all parts of the earth without any bond of cohesion, but all with the desire of leaving the country as soon as they have made sufficient money. Gentlemen, I have said that war is unjust. That is, I think, one of the most important reasons why

it should not for one moment be contemplated. Those of us who have lived on the outskirts of the Empire realize the importance of the words of Sir Michael Hicks Beach, confirmed by Sir William Harcourt, that in the Government of a great Empire such as ours, it is of the utmost importance that the word of England should be her bond, and that her character for justice and fair dealing should stand well-founded and unblemished before the world.

Mr. CONYBEARE: When you consider the closely-argued utterances delivered by our Chairman, Dr. Clark, Dr. Clifford, and the last speaker, I don't think much can usefully be added in order to convince all right-minded Englishmen of the iniquity, as well as of the idiocy, of a war at the present moment. If I have to state a claim to speak on this occasion, I may say that although I have not been associated with South Africa so long as Dr. Clark, my experience of South Africa and of the rise of Johannesburg dates from 1887, a year after the foundation of that great city. I have been closely connected with the country, and with its financial undertakings of a perfectly legitimate order. I have had to pay several visits of considerable duration to that country; and I suppose there is no man in this meeting, unless it be Mr. Molteno, who can boast of having travelled over the Transvaal more than I have, or seen more of the country than I have. I have climbed up Majuba Hill, and I have been struck with the marvellous pluck of the Boers who swarmed up that hill and sent our men flying from the top of it. I hope there are men among us magnanimous enough to admit the pluck of those Boers, and not to cherish those hideous and barbaric sentiments of revenge, which I see daily in the "yellow" Jingoistic press of this country—the *Daily Mail*, the *Pall Mall*, the *St. James's Gazette*, and other papers, that are a disgrace to a civilised Christian country. (Cheers.) Those papers are seeking day after day for a war of revenge against the Transvaal just because the plucky Boers drove us from the top of Majuba Hill. Another reason why I claim to say a few words on this subject is that I have represented the miners of Cornwall for ten years, who constitute the bulk of the Outlander population. There is hardly one in a thousand of them who cares a rap about the franchise. The moment these men become burghers and are entitled to vote, what happens? They are liable to be commandeered; and they are liable to be called upon to go and serve in the Boer army against Magato or any other of the warlike chiefs. That is exactly what the Cornwall miners don't want to do; and they showed their good sense at the time of the Jameson Raid, when some of the miners came up from the pits and had rifles put into their hands and were told to go and fight. They said,

“Who the devil are we going to fight?” (Cheers.) They were told they didn’t show British pluck; but they did show British common sense. (Loud cheers.) They said, “We don’t want to fight. We are not going to fight the Boers. We have no complaint against the Boers, and no quarrel. We have come here to work in the mines, and so long as we are paid wages we are satisfied. We are not going to fight for you bloated capitalists. (Loud cheers.) What for?” They said this, and it is perfectly true—“We would rather a hundred thousand times that the Boer Government, however corrupt it might be, should rule this country and look after our interests than you capitalists; because the first thing you would do after you got the government into your hands would be to pass laws to cut down our wages at every turn.” (Cheers.) It is all very well for Jingo Chamberlain to go about making warlike speeches; but let him understand that there are people in this country who do know what is going on, and who are not going to submit to this contemptible attempt on his part to drive this country into an unjust war, simply because he has been laid flat on his back half-a-dozen times by Kruger. (Loud cheers.) It is the Jingo press that wants to avenge Majuba Hill; but it is the Jingo Chamberlain who wants to pay off an old score against Kruger. But we are not going to help Mr. Joseph Chamberlain to restore his injured dignity, or recover his character as a great statesman by going to war against President Kruger, because he has had the better of him. (Loud cheers.) Now let us understand each other. The bulk of the honest workers—and I say it without fear of contradiction—the bulk of the honest workers are Cornish miners and miners of other countries; and those men are, as you can see from letters published in the *Daily Chronicle*, that great champion of justice—(loud cheers)—day after day, averse to war. I am here to tell you, as an old representative of these men, and knowing them personally, and knowing what their ideas are, that these men do not want war; they do not want the Transvaal to be governed by Downing Street. They want to have Republican institutions out there. Those people who are going to make the Transvaal their permanent home will get a fair share in the Government if they have patience; and we will do everything we can to assist them to get it; but we will not tear up sacred treaties and covenants we have made with the Boers, which have granted to the Boers the right to govern themselves. We will not go and interfere by warlike means with the constitution granted to the Boers, simply because a certain number of people are clamouring for a franchise that they will be able to get if they have patience in a few years. (Cheers.) Nobody who has read the latest accounts of the Volksraad can for one moment say that President Kruger and his Government have not met us very fairly and amicably. (Cheers.) Mr.

Chamberlain and the war party here constantly make other demands than those they have previously insisted upon. So it is that I say without hesitation that those who insist on driving the country into war will have no shred or tittle of justification, no moral ground whatever on which to ask for the sympathy of Europe; but they will deserve the detestation of every honest Englishman and the condemnation of the world. (Cheers.)

The resolution was then put and carried unanimously.

Mr. H. J. WILSON, M.P. : I do not intend—I don't think it would be wise even if I had plenty of time—to occupy your time and attention in this atmosphere, especially after all the speeches we have heard. We appear by the vote that has just been taken to be all of one mind; for although there appeared to be one or two gentlemen opposing, they did not show it when we came to the vote. I should think we are all of one mind. (Cheers.) I have only this one thing to say in addition to the arguments that have been used. It has not been mentioned to-night, and I should like to bring it to your recollection. It is not yet thirty years—I think it is twenty-seven years—since the franchise was extended to the working-men in our large towns. It is only fifteen years since the franchise was extended to the working-men in the counties; and it is folly to pretend to such a state of virtuous indignation, because another nation has not ventured to go as far as we have. They are only neglecting to do what Lord Salisbury and his friends hesitated to do for such a long time, until they could not prevent it. It seems to me that this outcry against the Boers is the height of hypocrisy. (Cheers.) And now allow me to propose a vote of thanks to our chairman—a man whom I greatly admire, and I think you greatly admire, for his sterling common sense, his true patriotism, and for that which he is always ready to uphold—the doctrine that only righteousness can exalt a nation, and that it is not by blood and war that we can make England great. I take great pleasure in proposing that the hearty thanks of this meeting be given to Mr. Russell for his presence, his speech, and conduct in the chair. (Cheers.)

Mr. CROOK: (loud cheers for *The Echo*)—I have great pleasure in rising to second the vote of thanks to one of our leading statesmen who, when courage is required in great causes, is never wanting. (Cheers.) I have listened with intense interest to the arguments brought forward here to-night, but, I think, most interesting to me were the interruptions that came from the body of the hall. I came here anxious to know what is the position of those people who are prepared to go to war with the Transvaal. The stand of Sir Alfred Milner has been on the question of the extension of the franchise and the extension of political

power in the Transvaal; and while we are preparing to use the sword for extending the franchise in the Transvaal, our own House of Lords is busy at present depriving the women of England of what little administrative power they previously had. I am aware that, as a nation, we who inhabit these islands are not entirely devoid of a sense of humour; and yet one would think so. (Laughter.) Reference was made this evening to a grievance of a couple of years ago, the result of commandeering in the Transvaal; and yet Lord Lansdowne, only the other night, was telling us he was going to commandeer all of us. (Laughter and cheers.) I can't believe this great nation is going to draw the sword in order to make a little Republic in South Africa go forward when its own chosen Government is busy going back as hard as it can go. (Laughter and cheers.) After attending this meeting and listening attentively to every interruption, I cannot but still hold my opinion that the people who want to go to war with the Transvaal do not care anything about the franchise either in the Transvaal or out of it. (Cheers.) It has been very well said this evening that Lord George Hamilton, and the men who have devoted their lives to fighting against the franchise, have no right to pose as the champions of the franchise in South Africa. They want to destroy the independence of the Transvaal and annex it; and their vexation is that it will not haul down its Republican flag, and allow itself to be crushed. (Cheers.) I speak as a loyal subject and an Imperialist when I say I admire that little Republic. (Loud cheers.) If it is patriotism in Englishmen to stand up for England, surely it is patriotism in the Boers to stand up for the Transvaal. (Loud cheers.) Those who prate of patriotism in this country, and boast of our Empire and are proud of the honour of our flag, ought to recognise that this little State is proud of its history, its flag and its institutions likewise. But I do not intend to detain you now. I second the vote of thanks to one who bears an honoured name in the history of England, that for two or three centuries has been identified with fighting for the extension of political power—one who has the right to claim to be on the side of freedom in South Africa. (Cheers.)

Mr. BOURCHIER F. HAWKESLEY :—I must apologise for rising at this late hour to address you on a motion which is always considered very much of a formality. I would like to say I came to this meeting, as my friend Mr. Crook came, to listen to the speakers at this meeting, which I understood from the notice was to protest against the threats of war. Such a protestation would have my most hearty support. I can only say that the last occasion on which I was in this hall was as one of the members of the Executive Committee of the International Crusade of Peace, and when I say this you will

know I do not stand here as a Jingo. I listened to the speeches made in support of the resolution; but a very much wider meaning has been given to the meeting by the speeches we have heard from the introducer, and more especially the seconder, of what is usually a formal vote of thanks. I expected we should have had other resolutions than the one which has taken up the whole of the time this evening. So far as that resolution is concerned it has my most hearty support; but I could not allow the report of a meeting which will be telegraphed to different parts of the world as a meeting of great influence held in the city of London, without explaining that the difficulty has arisen by the conduct of Her Majesty's Government. The Chairman and the speakers have admitted that there are grievances in the Transvaal, and I voted for the resolution; but we must not allow this meeting to conclude with the observations that were made, more particularly by my friend the editor of the *Echo*, who has gone very much further than the purpose for which this meeting was called. (Cries of "No!") I say he has. I repeat what I said just now—the difficulty does not arise from the troubles in the Transvaal, but from the conduct of Her Majesty's Ministers. We have no other means of dealing with a subject like this except by charging those persons who are responsible for the Government of this country. We are not brought to a crisis to-day because the Outlanders in the Transvaal presented a petition to Her Majesty. That was within their rights. But without warning of any kind we are suddenly plunged into a national crisis, because Her Majesty's Government has brought us into the difficulties we are in to-day. I have heard no single gentleman who has spoken to-night complain that our Ministers have allowed this thing to go on. That is where the trouble is. These despatches have been published over three weeks. That is where the trouble is. It would not be right—it would be unfair to those in the Transvaal who presented this petition if we closed this meeting without distinguishing, as we can do, between the trouble that has arisen and the merits of their case. At this late hour it is not for me to move a resolution, but I should like to support a strong vote of censure on Her Majesty's Government. During the last three weeks Mr. Chamberlain has explained. He went as far as man could go. He deliberately said that the proceeding of publishing these despatches was to press the matter on Her Majesty's Government. It would then be a disastrous result if it were to go forth to South Africa that there had been a wholesale condemnation of the Outlanders' negotiation undistinguished from the action of Her Majesty's Government. We must not prejudice the rights of our citizens in the Transvaal. (Cheers.)

Mr. H. J. WILSON, M.P. : The original resolution carried unanimously by this meeting does condemn the reckless and mischievous attempts of certain Members of the British Government to force this country into a war with the Transvaal.

The CHAIRMAN : I do not think the proceeding is irregular. I know my friend Mr. Hawkesley too well to have expected a scathing accusation from his lips. Passing from this to the resolution, I will ask Mr. Crook to put it to the meeting.

The vote on being put was carried with acclamation.

The CHAIRMAN : I have only to thank you for that resolution, and for the speeches in which Mr. Wilson and Mr. Crook moved and seconded it in. I regard it as a high privilege to be allowed to preside over a meeting of this nature. We have been small in numbers, but enthusiastic in spirit. At any rate, if our meeting has done nothing else, it has given a great opportunity of registering a public protest against what we believe to be a moral abomination. (Cheers.) Mr. Crook was good enough to attribute to me what I hope is not a very uncommon quality among public men, that is, readiness to come forward in support of an unpopular cause. I hope I may lay claim to some share in that virtue, but I hope that I by no means monopolise it. I am surrounded by men on the platform who have fought for good and unpopular causes at home and abroad, many years before some of us attained man's estate. And now because I know one verse of a poet will linger in the mind of an audience long after prose remarks have died away into a well-deserved oblivion, I will give you a verse of Robert Browning :—

“ Was it then all child's play, make-believe and mumming ?
 No, we battled it like men ; not boylike sulked and whined :
 Each of us heard clang God's ' Come,' and each was coming,
 Soldiers all to forward face : not sneaks to lag behind.”

THE TRANSVAAL COMMITTEE.

Formed to protest against War with the Transvaal.

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