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DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF

THE SOUTH AFRICAN ASSOCIATION

BY

MR. GEORGE WYNDHAM, M.P.

I am here to address you on behalf of the S. African Association. In your ancient capital, so quick to apprehend any new feature of political life, I need only remind you that the S. African Association is not a party body; it is a society which commands—so its members believe—special facilities for studying the geographical, racial, international, and economic factors in the S. African problem, and which ventures to submit the results of such study to the British electorate.

Our meeting is held to-night in discharge of an old obligation; but it falls opportunely. South Africa is no longer the subject of heated discussion. If you prefer your subject red hot, let me commend you to West Africa or to China. But such a cooling of temperature, such a lull in the hammer-strokes of controversy, is just what we seek. A blacksmith does well to "strike while the iron is hot," but only when he has decided on what he means to do, and on how he means to do it; but to arrive at that decision he must, first, measure and handle it, and he finds this easier while the iron is cool. And, again, recent development, in West and East Africa, have taught us a good deal. We can better appreciate the attendant difficulties, and the abiding value of the northward expansion from Cape Town to Salisbury—a distance of 1,500 miles—in the light of the apparent repudiation by a Continental Power of the doctrines of Hinterland and of Priority of Treaties.

Gentlemen, if the time be opportune, the place is not less fortunate. There are many links between Scotland and S. Africa, which may well be recalled in Scotland's capital. Scotland for long supplied the Dutch Reformed Church in S. Africa with its pastors; she supplied the Lovedale College; she supplied in Leith the cradle of the Castle Line steamers; she supplied such pioneers as Livingstone and Moffat and Mackenzie, who, as first Resident Commissioner of Bechuanaland, shares with Mr. Rhodes the honour of having initiated the policy of an open road to the North. And there is another link—the link of education. Seventy students from South Africa are this year attending lectures in your University. Now federation may be of many kinds—commercial, defensive, judicial, educational. Most people consider only the first two. But our attempts at these have been checked by disappointment. On the other hand, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council is already the Supreme Court of Appeal for the Empire, and when, on July 14th, 1897, the Chief Justice of Cape Colony and Canada adjudicated with the Lord Chancellor on the appeal of a prisoner lying in Hong Kong jail, the foundation of Imperial Federation may fairly be said to have been laid. Another tier may, surely, be added by the organisation of

EDUCA- educational institutions, for a movement is afoot to
 TIONAL transform the growing preference of the Colonies for
 FEDERA- the University of Edinburgh into a permanent federal
 TION. link. A beginning has been made in the Australian
 and South African Unions, the latter of which came into
 existence largely through the generous patriotism of a Scot, my
 friend, Sir James Sivewright, the Commissioner of Works in the
 Cape administration. I understand that Professor Patrick Geddes
 is interested in this movement, and that Sir James Sivewright
 would be prepared, when the moment is ripe, to subsidise a
 South African "house" from the public purse.

But I am not here to talk of memories—even memories of all that Scotland has done in S. Africa—nor of hopes—even the hope of Imperial Federation, that darling child of Lord Rosebery's aspiring patriotism. May his dream come true! But, if it is to come true in the Future, we must face facts in the Present. I am here to talk of actualities; and perhaps my best chance of conveying a sense of actuality will be to follow in my remarks the track of my wanderings.

I sailed for S. Africa in August, 1896, and the voyage itself was an education. For ship-mates I had Lord Rosmead, a brave and kindly gentleman, to whose memory I would pay a tribute of respectful and affectionate regret. But I sailed, too, with officials of the South African Republic, with a grandson of President Kruger, with financiers from Johannesburg, with two companies of actors, and with a host of young Britons bent on trying their luck in a new country.

After 15 days, on a cold spring morning, there, beyond the bowsprit, rose the astounding stone precipice of Table MOUNTAIN. It seemed to overhang the town—almost to overhang the ship. One recalled the words of Drake's companion, who saw it 318 years ago:—"This cape was the most stately thing . . . we saw in the whole circumference of the earth." It is flanked, now, as then, by the Lion's Head, but now the lower slopes are clothed with Mediterranean pines, brought by the Dutch, and below these the flat white town stretches, its level surface only broken by mosques in the Oriental quarter, by the Cathedral, the House of Assembly, and the Jack flying over Government House. And these new symbols of communion with Europe and of British Empire recall Rudyard Kipling's address to Cape town—

Hail! snatched and bartered oft from hand to hand,
I dream my dream, by rock and heath and pine;
Of Empire to the northward. Ay, one land
From Lion's Head to line.

As I gazed, an eminent Dutch politician, who was talking to me on the ship, dropped the sentence: "Your 'flying squadron,' a German told me, was the cannonade of a retreating army." I think his informant was mistaken. But the clash of that surmise on the ultimate destiny of S. Africa—the land of magnificent distances and fabulous wealth, and feverish enterprise—with the sight of its majestic portal, made me reflect. It suggested elementary questions. What is South Africa? By what right are we there? What is it to us? I propose to answer these questions.

And first, what is Cape Town? It is a jumble of every age and country; even its animals and its plants come from all quarters of the world. There you meet Boer and Britain, Kafir and Malay; the electric tram sweeps by the wagon with twelve span of oxen; avenues of oak trees lead to

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flats waving with Australian wattles. But to-night I must speak of Cape politics. Politically, Cape Town is also a jumble, but a jumble permeated by a personality—Mr. Rhodes. Its politics are a patchwork, with but one name embroidered, for praise or for blame, upon every square. But all these elements are confined within the narrow compass of a town of 60,000 inhabitants, of which the majority are natives. So your progressive Imperialist and your quasi-Republican reactionary dine together, and do business together every day. From this there results an amount of frankness and friendliness between all, which rather perplexes an habitual reader of the home Press. But when you go deeper than the universal platitudes—the tributes to Mr. Rhodes, often unqualified, sometimes qualified—or the vague aspiration towards a United S. Africa, you find that the same cause—habitual intercourse—has induced, beneath the outward frankness, a good deal of mental reservation. On the specific items of any political programme, everyone, so to say, keeps his own cat in its bag, and watches to see how his neighbour's cat will jump. So that,

although the election for the Legislative Council will take
CAPE place next week, and for the Assembly during the year,
POLITICS. the issues on which these contests are to be decided have only recently been defined. You have, on the one side, the British-Colonial Imperialist, the urban and progressive factions, including many of the Dutch, banded together for the first time on a common platform, in this instance of Compulsory Education and Redistribution of Seats. On the other side, you have the Bond, the Dutch-Colonial party, loyal in the main to the British Connection, but just tinged with Republicanism, and wholly steeped in sympathy with President Kruger's methods.

Much that I have said of Cape politics applies to the whole of S. Africa. Politically it is a patchwork, although racially and physiographically it is one. Of course there are mountains and plains, arid and well-watered districts, and, of course, there are English and Dutch and native races. But these distinctions nowhere coincide with political divisions. The country is one from Sea Point to the Zambesi, and, though it has not one people, it has one mixture of peoples; mixed in different proportions, but mixed everywhere of the same elements.

Let us look at the map. There are (1) Colonies:—Cape

Colony $3\frac{3}{4}$, and Natal $\frac{1}{2}$ the size of Great Britain; (2) Native States, Tongoland and Zululand—now transferred to Natal, north,—Basutoland, Griqualand, Pondoland, south, of Natal; (3) Foreign Protectorates, German S.W. Africa and Portuguese territory; (4) Dutch Republics, Orange Free State, $\frac{1}{2}$, and the South African Republic $1\frac{1}{2}$ the size of Great Britain. As for the scale of the map, from Cape Town to Salisbury is 1,500 miles—say the distance of Constantinople from London; and the British seaboard extends for 2,000 miles.

OUR TITLE Now I come to the second question. *By what*
TO *right are we in S. Africa?* and what are our rights in
S.AFRICA. respect of the two Republics?

In S. Africa, excepting spheres specifically allocated to Germany and Portugal, our title to sovereignty is unimpeachable. In 1814, at the end of the Napoleonic wars, we paid the Netherlands and their creditors £4,000,000, we lent them £2,000,000, and we restored Java. In return we received the absolute sovereignty of the Cape and several S. American possessions. By every title known to nations, by conquest, by purchase, and by international agreement, Great Britain is the sovereign power of Cape Colony, and, therefore, of its offshoots, except, of course, in so far as we may have abrogated or qualified our sovereign rights.

How then comes it that there are two Dutch Republics? When we abolished slavery we did not pay the Dutch slave-
ORIGIN OF holders as much in compensation as they, perhaps,
THE legitimately expected, and later in 1834, we supported
REPUBLICS. the natives in their quarrels with Dutch settlers, not altogether judiciously. We meant well, but in seeking to remedy one injustice we inflicted another. As a result, some of the Dutch trekked to the North, but we did not surrender our Paramount Power over these Ishmaelites. We dared not, for their marches and counter-marches threatened to bring down the whole of barbarism upon a civilisation, at that time, too weak to withstand its forces. But in those days we were still possessed by "the fear of being great." So, after saving the trekkers by fighting the Basutos, in 1852, at Berea, and after defeating the trekkers, in 1854, at Boomplatz, we washed our hands of them. But we did not wash our hands of them altogether.

This is vital. You sometimes hear it argued that Mr. Chamberlain's doctrine of Great Britain's paramountcy over S. Africa, including the Republics, is a new doctrine. That is not so. By none of the Conventions, whether of the Sand River, in 1852, of Bloemfontein, in 1854, of Pretoria, in 1881, or of London, in 1884, has this country renounced paramountcy in S. Africa.

Let me quote a chain of evidence from statesmen of both parties.

Lord Carnarvon, in 1871, laid it down "That as Paramount Power, Great Britain might interfere in the affairs of the two Republics, whenever the interests of S. Africa, as a whole, necessitated such intervention." On that ground, he refused arbitration between Great Britain and the Orange Free State. Now, no one can pretend that the autonomy granted to the Orange Free State, by the Bloemfontein Convention, is not larger than the autonomy granted to the South African Republic by the Conventions of London and Pretoria. If, therefore, as Lord Carnarvon urged, the doctrine of paramountcy applies to the Orange Free State, *a fortiori* it applies to the South African Republic.

In 1879, Sir M. Hicks-Beach declared that "neither by the Sand River Convention, nor at any other time, had Great Britain surrendered the right and duty of requiring the Transvaal to be governed with a view to the common safety of the various European communities."

In 1883, Lord Derby, addressing, mind you, the Transvaal Deputation charged with forming a new Convention, and speaking of the Sand River Convention, said "that Convention, like the Convention of Pretoria, was not a treaty between two contracting Powers, but was a declaration made by the Queen and accepted by certain persons, at that time her subjects, of the conditions under which, and the extent to which, Her Majesty could permit them to manage their own affairs without interference."

And so, in the last Blue Book, Mr. Chamberlain has written: "Under these Conventions, therefore, Her Majesty holds towards the South African Republic the relation of a Suzerain who has accorded to the people of that Republic self-government upon certain conditions."

That was and that is the position. The London Convention does but formulate the limits within which the South African Republic is free to manage its own affairs. It is a covenant that we shall not interfere within those limits, unless, indeed, which I do not anticipate, the misgovernment of the Transvaal should, in the language of Sir M. Hicks-Beach, threaten "the common safety of the various European communities."

It is, therefore, plain that no European Power, other than Great Britain, has the right outside their own colonies to interfere in S. Africa, even diplomatically, and that the idea of submitting alleged breaches of the Convention to arbitration is as preposterous as the idea of accepting arbitration between this country and, say, Nepal.

I would now ask you to take the train with me in imagination from Cape Town to Johannesburg. Every night the station was, and no doubt is, full to overflowing with a crowd in a state of excitement only comparable to that which we see when a regiment leaves for foreign service. For every night the train is packed with the young and the confident who hope in the Transvaal or in Rhodesia to find the opening denied them at home. Nothing is more striking in S. Africa than the contrast between that swollen stream of new life and the rigidity of the old barriers which it is destined to sap and overwhelm. But that stream of new life, and enterprise, and knowledge, runs in a narrow channel. All the three nights and two days of the journey you passed through a land which seemed all but uninhabited. Then, on the third morning, this stream, which has been confined to the narrow gauge of the railway, debouched into the vortex of Johannesburg, a town with 100,000 inhabitants led up to by forty miles of tall chimney-stacks along the Rand. In such a town, with its ceaseless roar of activity, its network of overhead wires, its exchanges and theatres and marts, you will guess how the new stream, poured in daily, chafes against the old embankment!

In the politics of Johannesburg the thing that strikes—and it strikes hard—is the deep-seated irritation against our country. That the Dutch should dislike us seems unfair, since we made them a present of self-government; still, one can understand it. The shock comes from our own people. It is not too much to say that you will

not glean one word of praise for Great Britain from any lip; they regard us with bitter resentment. They point to their burdens, which are heavy enough, yet they recognise that, unless these constitute a breach of the Convention, our hands are tied. Where they are, I think, mistaken is in alleging that we have winked at breaches. When I was there they instanced certain laws, the Aliens' Expulsion Law and the Aliens' Immigration Law, and the management of the Netherlands Railway, and now, I see, that they point to the removal of Chief Justice Kotzè. But in these matters there is, I submit, a misapprehension, universal in Johannesburg and fairly

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VENTION.

general at home, as to what does constitute a breach of the Convention. The lax wording of such laws and their apparent intention may legitimately lead to the presumption that breaches of the Convention are contemplated. The same may be said of the iniquitous railway rates, of the monopolies, and of such tyrannical acts as the summary removal of Chief Justice Kotzè. This presumption undoubtedly drives the best men out of the country and restricts the influx of capital, but, even if we ourselves entertain the presumption, believing that a breach is contemplated, still we cannot act until it has taken place. We are concerned not with questions of drafting, or apparent intentions, but with questions of fact.

Let me illustrate this from two laws. The Aliens' Expulsion Law is so worded as to constitute a menace to many law-abiding men. It places their careers and their fortunes at the mercy of an arbitrary junto. But, so long as it remains a menace, we can do nothing. We can only intervene if, under that law, some law-abiding person should be expelled, and our law officers should find, on the facts, that his expulsion infringed the Article of the Convention which vouchsafes liberty to pursue lawful avocations.

But the Aliens' Immigration Law constituted, in itself, a breach of the Convention, for it infringed, *ipso facto*, the article which provides for free access into the country. Very well, Mr. Chamberlain did not, and could not, take exception to the first law, but he could, and did, take exception to the second, and it was withdrawn.

Take the administration of the Netherland's Railway. There is nothing like it in the whole world. It pays two Directors in

Holland nearly £12,000 a year a piece! It is a cancer eating into the industries of S. Africa, for the Colonial lines join with its system at the frontier of the South African Republic. They were constructed by our colonies at a cost of £22,000,000. They extend over distances, by comparison enormous; in the case of Capetown to Johannesburg, say, roughly, 1,000 miles constructed by Cape Colony, and beyond the frontier only 52 miles. Yet the rates on that 52 are 6*d.* per ton per mile, as against 1½*d.* rates on the 1,000 miles on the same articles.

Eighty-five per cent. of the profits on that railway go to the Transvaal Government. But the voting power is divided in this astounding fashion: 76 votes to Amsterdam, 30 to Germany, and only 6 to the Transvaal.

You are not surprised to find that such a railway, besides crushing the mining industry, is most unfriendly to British imports.

	£	s.	d.	
British Girders, delivered at ...	11	1	1	per ton.
German ,, ...	8	5	5	„
British Hardware ,, ...	11	5	5	„
German ,, ...	9	10	0	„

How can we compete? Under the Convention we are entitled to equality of treatment. Why then, asks the Johannesburger, do you not interfere? I suppose because the constitution of the Railway Company, as a private industrial enterprise, prevents our law officers from being able to put their finger on any literal breach of the Convention. The veil is thin, but it suffices, and rightly, because, when we are exacting a scrupulous fidelity to the letter of the Convention we must set the example ourselves, even although we see it shattered in the spirit.

I may say, on behalf of the South African Association, that we dissociate ourselves wholly from two sets of critics who condemn Mr. Chamberlain. There are those who complain that his despatches are too forcible, that he "shouts" at the Transvaal Government. I don't agree. "Shouting" would be out of place in a drawing room. But S. Africa is not exactly a drawing room. It is a stormy region, and in a storm a speaking trumpet is often the only medium for politeness. Would not any British statesman be condemned at the

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tribunal of history if he failed to warn a very weak and dependent Power, in time and effectively, not to step over a bound, the transgression of which must lead to war?

But there are others who complain that Mr. Chamberlain does not "shout" over matters which, under the Convention, we have left to the Transvaal Government. Unless misgovernment reaches a point at which it compromises the safety of other S. African States, we cannot, in honour, intervene. Well, but if you are not going to intervene, what is the use of "shouting?" Some people seem to think that the tactics pursued by Joshua under the walls of Jericho are applicable at all times and in all places. But they are not. It is a capital plan to march round a city blowing trumpets if you know that the walls will fall on the seventh day. But if you think they won't—it is a waste of breath, which serves only to exasperate the garrison.

Again, if some Transvaal orator makes a violent speech I do not think we need notice it.

The eagle suffers little birds to sing,
And is not careful what they mean thereby.

Now let us leave Johannesburg, for the key to this distressing puzzle must be sought elsewhere: in Rhodesia. I drove for four days in a Cape cart west from Johannesburg to Mafeking, and in all that distance I only saw habitations three times. I drove for eight days and nights from Mochudi to Buluwayo through a like desolation. But on the crest of the Mangu Pass I drew a long breath, the first breath of that exhilarating wind which blows over Rhodesia. The physical atmosphere of Rhodesia corresponds to its political atmosphere. It is a land of hope and high spirits. The RHODESIA. Blakes and Laboucheres may fill books for all I care. I shall not trouble to reply. The country is there; the climate is there; the soil is there; the mineral wealth is there, and the population is pouring in. And all these things are there for this Empire, thanks to one man. After this meeting somebody is sure to ask me whether there is really any gold. Somebody always asks me that after every meeting. I shall not argue the point; it does not concern me, except in so far as payable gold, if found in large quantities, will accelerate the influx of population. I believe that gold has been found, that some will be crushed this

year, and more next year, and so on in succeeding years. And, therefore, as I hold that the logic of facts is more persuasive than even my own oratory, I prefer to wait. When I have time I read the jeremiads, and smile in confident expectation that next year the Jeremiahs will be tumbling over each other to invest. If I am mistaken the rate of influx will be slower, but that it will continue I have not a shadow of doubt. Some day—soon as I hold—the population of Rhodesia will warrant the concession of self-government. Rhodesia will then join hands with Natal and the Cape Colony, and then there will follow the federation of South Africa, consummated with a due regard to the autonomy of the two Republics, but established under the protection of the Paramount Power.

But what is South Africa to us? A great countryman of yours, the Duke of Argyll, has said that the world is governed by ideas; so it is. But some ideas have a remote, and some a deferred, relation to fact. The relation to fact of the idea of Portuguese Empire in S. Africa is remote; the relation to fact of the idea of fuller self-government, and of consequent Federation beneath the British flag, is thought by some to be deferred.

But how can I doubt its proximate realisation? A year and a-half ago, when I was there, Buluwayo was 500 miles beyond the rail-head. Now the railway is at Buluwayo, and the telegraph is at Lake Nyassa. A year and a-half ago, Natal and Cape Colony were at daggers drawn, now they are drawing together. A year and a-half ago, Mr. Rhodes was a political exile, now he is on the eve of an electoral victory. And why? Because a year and a-half ago, when

MR. RHODES. I rode out 20 miles from Buluwayo, there he was, waiting at the base of the Matoppo Hills, for nine weeks, without a watch-fire or a sentry, in order to make a lasting peace with the Matabele. I say here to-night that every soldier and every Imperial officer in S. Africa disbelieved in that peace. And I say here, to-night, that they were all mistaken, for the Matabele have kept their word, on the terms which were finally confirmed in my presence. Gentlemen, it was a unique experience. Night after night as I sat with Mr. Rhodes, darker figures emerged from the darkness, and, making obeisance, sat down. These were the chiefs that nine weeks before had led impi against our

troops. On the last morning they all came in, 300 Matabele, and offered their peace in the presence of six unarmed Englishmen, sitting on biscuit boxes. Can I doubt that the reminder of these ideas will be clothed with the consistency of accomplished feats? Or that the great underlying idea will fail of realisation? What is that idea? Let me give it in Mr. Rhodes' words, spoken to me then, on the summit of a hill in the Matoppos, which commanded a view of 50 miles in every direction. Circling his hand about the horizon, he said "More homes—that is what I work for." More homes, that is the underlying idea of the new Imperialism, which counts among its standard bearers, men of all parties—Mr. Rhodes and Lord Rosebery, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Edward Grey. More homes for the young of this crowded island, and the acceleration of secure transport to bring those homes ever nearer home.

EDINBURGH,

March 9th, 1898.