CHAPTER VIII

THREE YEARS OF CONTROVERSY

Once again had good fortune saved President Kruger when on the very verge of ruin. No conceivable combination of circumstances could have brought about so complete a rehabilitation of himself and his policy as the Jameson Raid and the events which followed. Dr. Jameson had, by one act of supreme folly, won back for the President the confidence of his burghers, crushed the resistance of the Uitlanders, and dissipated all prospects of future revolt; put out of court and almost ruined Kruger's one great political opponent; hopelessly embarrassed the Imperial Government; and fanned into fierce flame throughout all Afrikanderdom the hatred of England which for the last ten years had gradually been falling to sleep. For a moment it seemed as if Kruger really intended to rise to the height of the occasion. During the stormy week that followed Dr. Jameson's invasion, the President showed a resourcefulness, calmness, and self-control that cannot but claim admiration. He fenced with Johannesburg—which for all he could know was armed to the teeth—while he concentrated all his energies on stopping the Raiders. When Dr. Jameson was in his hands, and the weakness of Johannesburg was discovered, he stretched his influence almost to the breaking point in opposing the clamour of his burghers for immediate revenge. He knew well what the consequences of such a revenge would be, and he was determined to give the Imperial Government no pretext for intervention. When Sir Hercules Robinson returned to Cape Town the President had given away nothing but the lives of the Raiders, and a vague promise to "forgive and forget" and grant reforms to the
UITLANDERS as soon as the occasion should arise. The best public opinion in England and among Englishmen in South Africa was anxious to make reparation for the Raid, and the slightest indications of a conciliatory and statesmanlike spirit would have been welcomed with effusive joy. But it was useless to hope for statesmanship as distinct from cunning and determination from the old Dopper leader. The Raid and the Uitlander revolution taught him no lesson, they only confirmed him in his hatred of the Imperial Government and of the Uitlanders, and in his resolve to pursue with greater energy and greater outlay of money the policy which had almost shipwrecked his State. The arrest of the Reform leaders created a profound shock among English South Africans. The circumstances attending their trial and condemnation, the haggling that preceded their release, only served to show the Transvaal Government in an unfavourable light. Towards the Imperial Government Mr. Kruger maintained an attitude which reduced negotiation almost to a farce.

In spite of Sir Hercules Robinson's failure, Mr. Chamberlain did not despair altogether in January of still securing speedy redress of the Uitlander grievances by conciliatory representations. It was privately represented to him by men whose information was likely to be correct that an invitation to President Kruger to visit London and discuss pending questions would certainly be accepted and lead to positive results. The same suggestion was made by the Cape Ministry, though the despatch containing their views was not received till after the invitation had been sent. On January 27 Mr. Chamberlain formally directed the High Commissioner to invite the President. The idea of the visit to London in all probability emanated directly from Kruger himself. He had visited London three times already on behalf of the independence of the Republic, and on his last visit had gained almost all he had wanted. There only remained a few restrictions, of which Art. IV., submitting the foreign relations of the Transvaal to British control, was the most important. Now that the Raid had supplied him with a good substantial grievance to bargain with, he hoped to
get rid of these also and attain his object of rendering the Transvaal absolutely independent. His disappointment when he found that the invitation expressly excluded the discussion of Art. IV. was great. His reply of February 25, after a month's delay, was in form an acceptance of the invitation, but upon terms quite inconsistent with the offer. It laid down as a condition that "the Government could tolerate no interference in its internal relations, and the official discussion of affairs with the object of requiring changes will have to be avoided," and stated as the chief point for discussion—

"The superseding of the Convention of London, with the eye, amongst others, on the violation of the territory of the South African Republic; because in several respects it has already ceased to exist; because in other respects it has no more cause for existence; because it is injurious to the dignity of an Independent Republic; because the very name and the continual arguments on the question of suzerainty which, since the conclusion of this Convention, no longer exists, are used as a pretext, especially by a libellous press, for wilfully inciting both white and coloured people against the lawful authority of the Republic. . . . In the discussion of the withdrawal of the Convention as a whole, Art. IV. should naturally not be kept back." *

As a substitute for the Convention he offered a treaty of peace, commerce and friendship, by which the interests of England should be placed on the footing of the most favoured nation. In other words, Kruger claimed that it was time for the relations established by the Convention to come formally to an end, on the ground that he had already played fast and loose with the Convention, and that it was derogatory to the independent dignity to which the Republic aspired. The further ground given, that he wanted to stop the mouths of those libellous persons who maintained that the Convention was still in force, was very characteristic.

Mr. Chamberlain replied in very moderate language. He did not take up the challenge as to suzerainty, but merely repeated that Art. IV. of the London Convention would

* C. 8063, p. 13.
require to form a part of any new convention or treaty. At the same time he offered "as part of a general settlement to give a complete guarantee on behalf of Her Majesty’s Government to the South African Republic against any attack upon its independence either from within any part of British dominions or from the territory of a foreign State." * In reply the Transvaal Government rejected this offer of a guarantee. They expressed their regret that Her Majesty’s Government had not acceded to their desire to reconsider the Convention, and stated that if this could not be obtained they would "as the aggrieved and injured party prefer to content themselves with the postponement of the question." † Mr. Chamberlain’s further suggestion of a "modified local autonomy, with powers of legislation on purely local questions, and subject to the veto of the President and Executive Council," ‡ for the Rand, in place of Mr. Kruger’s farcical Municipal Law, was likewise rejected.

The attitude assumed by the Transvaal Government left no room for further negotiation. The situation was dangerously strained and the necessity of sending an ultimatum to the Transvaal was openly talked of. No doubt it would have been possible to formulate an ultimatum containing the proposals in favour of the Uitlanders contained in Mr. Chamberlain’s despatch of February 4, 1896, § but that ultimatum would certainly have been rejected and must have led to war. As to the nature of that war the Government were under no illusion. In words that have often been quoted Mr. Chamberlain told the House of Commons on May 8, 1896—

"A war in South Africa would be one of the most serious wars that could possibly be waged. It would be in the nature of a civil war. It would be a long war, a bitter war, and a costly war, and, as I have pointed out already, it would leave behind it the embers of a strife which I believe generations would be hardly long enough to extinguish. Of course there might be contingencies in which a great power has to face—even such an alternative as this... if some of those wild rumours which
attributed to President Kruger a design to break the Convention should prove true."

Of the necessity of such a war, neither the Government nor the nation was convinced. The psychological moment for pressing reforms had been missed when Johannesburg was allowed to lay down its arms without conditions, and during the remainder of the tenure of office by Sir Hercules Robinson it did not recur. The Government, conscious though it was of its moral obligation to the Uitlanders, felt that for the present it was necessary to subordinate all other matters to the endeavour to restore better relations with the Transvaal without yielding any of the rights contained in the London Convention. When more cordial relations were restored it might be possible to make representations. Meanwhile everything was done to allay Boer suspicions. The movements of British troops in connection with the Matabele war in the spring and summer of 1896 were carefully notified to the Transvaal. To this policy also belong those attempts at a personal conciliation of the old President, most quoted of which was Mr. Chamberlain's inquiry after the health of Mrs. Kruger.

Unfortunately the policy of the Transvaal was not merely unconciliatory and distrustful; it soon showed itself openly defiant and aggressive. President Kruger was determined to convert into fact his assertion that the London Convention had virtually ceased to exist. In the summer of 1896 an Expulsion of Aliens Act was passed in spite of the protest of Mr. Chamberlain that the law was inconsistent with the letter and spirit of the London Convention. Attempts were made to cut down the agreement made under the previous Government between Sir Henry Loch and President Kruger in respect of commandeering, and to limit its application to white persons in place of the original assurance which covered all British subjects, white or coloured.* Repeated efforts were made to evade the express requirements of Art. IV. of the London Convention as to the submission of treaties with foreign powers. A variety of such treaties,

* C. 8423, p. 62.
harmless and unobjectionable in themselves, were withheld from submission on different technical pretexts, the common link between all these cases being the clear intention of bringing the provision of the Convention into disuse.*

In November, 1896, an Aliens Immigration Act, laying severe restrictions on the entrance of foreigners to the Transvaal, was passed by the Volksraad. Mr. Chamberlain at once objected that this law infringed Art. XIV. of the London Convention, inasmuch as by it new and burdensome conditions, in most cases probably impossible to fulfil, were imposed on persons who, under the Convention, were at full liberty to enter and reside in the South African Republic on condition of conforming to its laws, and expressed his confidence that no attempt would be made to enforce the law.†

The Transvaal Government refused to comply, basing its refusal on the grounds that the law was a mere police measure. In a peremptory despatch of March 6, 1897,‡ Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that any necessary police measures could have been provided for after arriving at some understanding with Her Majesty's Government, and not by legislation which was in direct conflict with the London Convention, and could be used in such a fashion as to make the entrance or residence of foreigners absolutely impossible, and insisted that the measure should at once be repealed or formally suspended. To make the meaning of the despatch yet plainer, a special squadron was sent to Delagoa Bay.

In a second despatch of the same date, dealing with the other questions at issue, his attitude was less urgent. After stating the position of the Imperial Government in regard to each of them he summed up the position as follows:—

"In several of the cases above cited the strict letter of the Convention could apparently have been observed without any difficulty, while in others the objects which the Government of the South African Republic had in view could have been attained without any infringement of the Convention by a previous understanding with H.M. Government. H.M. Government therefore cannot conceal from themselves that the Government of the

* C. 8423, p. 71. † C. 8423, p. 67. ‡ C. 8423, p. 113.
South African Republic have in these cases failed to give effect in practice to the intention, so frequently expressed in public and official utterances, of upholding the Convention on the part of the Republic and of maintaining that good understanding with H.M. Government which is so necessary in the interests of South Africa."

The reply to Mr. Chamberlain's despatch, covering eight and a half pages of Bluebook, was thoroughly characteristic of Boer diplomacy. The Transvaal Government began by aggressively declaring that it could not consider the demands of Her Majesty's Government, but went on to state that it had decided for reasons of its own—"among others, that the law as it was formulated and operated at that time contained certain provisions which exposed the citizens and inhabitants of several neighbouring states and colonies, against whom no objection can be raised, to certain inconveniences"—to revoke the law with a view to introducing new legislation. In other words it complied with what was practically an ultimatum, while taking care to "save its face" by a formal refusal and a threat to do the same thing again whenever it thought fit. With regard to Mr. Chamberlain's protest on the other breaches of the Convention, the Transvaal refused to change its course in any way. In regard to them it however proposed the principle of arbitration by an independent authority, suggesting a jurist to be appointed by the President of the Swiss Republic. The object of this proposal was simple enough. Appearance before a neutral foreign court would have formally ratified the claim of the Transvaal to be a "sovereign international state." That would have been enough for the moment. Any unfavourable decision of the court could always subsequently have been repudiated as against the independence of the country. This despatch, which, while opening large questions, satisfactorily closed the immediate matter in dispute, was one of the first papers sent home by Sir Alfred Milner.

In February, 1897, the Transvaal Government presented its claim to compensation for the Raid, in principle admitted by Mr. Chamberlain, but made ridiculous by its extravagance

* C. 8423, p. 117.  
† C. 8721, p. 6.
as well as by the form in which it was put forward, viz., £677,938 3s. 3d. for actual outlay, and a round £1,000,000 for "moral and intellectual damages." The policy upon which President Kruger had now decided, and which Dr. Leyds and afterwards Mr. Reitz expounded in their despatches, was simply this: that the Transvaal would listen to no representations made by the Imperial Government, and that if it yielded on any point it was simply because it did not consider the matter worth going to war about. Kruger's triumph over the Raid and the Johannesburg revolution had produced an exaltation of temper, and a defiant arrogance both towards the Imperial Government and towards the Uitlanders, that made war almost inevitable. That war did not come about in 1896 or 1897 was not due to any conciliatory spirit shown by the Transvaal, but to the genuine reluctance felt by the British Government and by the British people to declare war upon a state to which certain Englishmen had done a grievous wrong.

Throughout South Africa the victory of the Transvaalburghers over Dr. Jameson's force and the complete triumph of President Kruger's policy raised Afrikander nationalist sentiment to a pitch which it had hardly reached even in the period immediately following the retrocession of the Transvaal. Afrikanderdom rejoiced that the Boers had disposed of the much-vaunted Rhodesian troopers in 1896 as easily as they had disposed of the red-coated regulars in 1881, and added Doornkop next to Majuba on the list of its national triumphs. At the critical moment Sir Hercules Robinson had shrunk from taking up a firm attitude on the question of the Uitlander grievances from fear of irritating Dutch nationalist feeling in Cape Colony, just as Mr. Gladstone shrank in 1881, and with the same consequence, that he made worse the evil which he tried to assuage. If Dr. Jameson had succeeded in fighting his way through to Johannesburg, or even if, after his defeat, the High Commissioner had succeeded in securing a reasonable measure of redress for the Uitlanders, passion would never have blazed forth so fiercely in South Africa. More, even, than the indignation at Mr. Rhodes' conspiracy, it was the thrill of exultation over
President Kruger's victory that gave fresh life to ambitions which, except in the Transvaal itself and among a select few outside, had for some years been relegated to future development or had been toyed with rather than seriously prosecuted.

And with that thrill of exultation there was also the realisation of the imminent peril through which the Afrikander cause had passed, and which still faced it in the future. It was the Raid that first clearly brought home to the Afrikander party the fact that the Transvaal, the centre of all their ambitions, the corner-stone of the future edifice of South African independence, was itself in a perilous state, that already the majority of its inhabitants were English, and that Dr. Jameson and his band of moss-troopers had been within an ace of establishing the enemy in power in the very citadel of Afrikanderdom. For the moment Mr. Rhodes' manœuvre had been scotched, but the danger still remained. There were ugly signs, too, that Mr. Chamberlain and the British people were awakening to the anomalous state of affairs in South Africa, and would try and compel the Transvaal to sacrifice its whole nationalist mission by admitting to political power men who had no sympathy with the ideal of freeing South Africa from the British supremacy. Once the magnitude of the issue and the imminence of the danger became clear, the bulk of the Afrikander party became one with President Kruger in his resolve to keep the Uitlanders from power, whatever the cost. It is in this sense that active disloyalty among British subjects can be said to have begun with the Raid. Before that the Afrikander party in Cape Colony had always hoped to secure its end by constitutional means, and had even looked forward to a period of transition during which the Imperial Government, in return for its naval protection, should be allowed to retain the coaling stations of Simon's Town and Durban. The Raid was the occasion upon which Afrikanderdom first saw clearly that, but for President Kruger's suppression of the Uitlanders, normal constitutional development would inevitably give so large a share of power into the hands of the English element that the Dutch national idea would become an empty dream. No temporary constitutional success in Cape Colony could
avert such a calamity if the Imperial Government once succeeded in getting the Uitlanders' claim to a share in the State recognised by the Transvaal Government. And therefore it was essential to thwart the action of the Imperial Government—if possible by intervention on the part of the Free State and by the opposition of a constitutional majority in Cape Colony; failing that, by force of arms. Such expressed in its crudest form was the idea underlying the actions of the more extreme section of the Afrikander party, whether in the Free State or in Cape Colony. From this point of view the bitter struggle over the Cape elections, the readiness of the Free State to plunge into war, the preparations for rebellion in parts of Cape Colony, the actual rebellion and the agitation that have followed, all appear as phases of the same despairing national effort.

The Orange Free State, which had so long resisted Kruger's attempts to bring it under Transvaal hegemony, now threw itself unreservedly on his side. Some of the burghers had been mobilized to help the Transvaal immediately on receipt of the news of the Raid. In the Presidential election which followed shortly after, Mr. J. G. Fraser, the leader of what had once been President Brand's party, pleaded in vain for a policy of moderation, condemning the Raid, but declaring his belief that there must be unrest in the Transvaal as long as Kruger persisted in subjecting the population of the Rand to the existing régime of oppression and corruption. He failed hopelessly against Mr. M. T. Steyn, a thorough-going advocate of the nationalist aspiration, to whom, as to many other Afrikanders, the Raid afforded a splendid opportunity for ceaseless denunciation and for fiery exhortations to defend the threatened cause of the Afrikander nation. The new President proclaimed himself in favour of the policy of closer union with the Transvaal, and in the following year concluded a treaty with President Kruger amounting, to all intents and purposes, to an offensive and defensive alliance, and containing the groundwork for a scheme of federation to be gradually developed in a series of regular conferences. Of this federation Mr. Steyn was led to hope that he would
some day be the president, and Kruger was careful to encourage the ambitious illusions of his would-be successor. At last Kruger had succeeded in carrying into effect his policy of reducing the Free State to the status of a dependent ally, a policy as old as the negotiations of 1887 and in a sense as old as the Raid of 1857.

In Cape Colony the extreme section of the Afrikander party had for some time past been chafing under the compromise with Imperialism which had been the order of the day while the Rhodes-Schreiner-Hofmeyr coalition lasted. For these the Raid furnished magnificent opportunity for rallying the party back to the old standard of the early eighties, the standard of an exclusive nationalism and of hostility to the British Empire. The leading organ of the Bond, Ons Land, declared itself with uncompromising frankness. A brief quotation from an article appearing not long after the Raid will show the use that was to be made of that criminal blunder on Mr. Rhodes' part:—

"Afrikanderdom has awakened to a sense of earnestness and consciousness which we have not observed since the heroic war for liberty in 1881. . . . The flaccid and cowardly Imperialism that had already begun to dilute and weaken our national blood gradually turned aside before the new current which permeated our people . . . now or never the foundation of a wide-embracing nationalism must be laid . . . let us now lay the foundation-stone of a real United South Africa on the soil of a pure and all-comprehensive national sentiment."

For the moment the Raid had thrown the sentiment of all Afrikanderdom on Mr. Kruger's side, and if that sentiment could be properly worked upon the whole weight of the Afrikander party could be used to support Mr. Kruger's policy to its utmost lengths. So thought the extremists, and though many Cape Afrikanders sincerely disapproved of the misgovernment and exclusiveness of Pretoria, and though the great majority were thoroughly satisfied with British rule, it was not difficult to persuade such waverers that the only chance of preserving the peace of South Africa lay in maintaining a united front against the Imperial Government if it
endeavoured to intervene in Transvaal affairs. And so the political agitation went on steadily drifting more and more towards disloyalty, directly encouraging President Kruger to harden his heart, and thus bringing the certainty of war ever nearer. It was in vain that Mr. Rose Innes, in the debate on the Raid Inquiry in the Cape Assembly in the summer of 1896, endeavoured to persuade the Bond to accept a resolution containing a reference of the most moderate character to the mistaken policy adopted by President Kruger towards the Uitlanders. It was in vain, with each fresh proof of President Kruger's resolve to show that he had forgiven and forgotten nothing, that the Bond leaders were appealed to, and asked to stand forward and utter boldly in public the disapproval they confessed in private. Not a word was spoken in condemnation either of misgovernment in the Transvaal or of disloyal agitation in Cape Colony. Of the leaders of Colonial Afrikanderdom some frankly sympathised with the incessant agitation against the Imperial Government, others, held back by want of moral courage, or unbalanced by their indignation against Mr. Rhodes, shut their eyes to what was going on round them, or condoned it on the grounds of justifiable excitement provoked by the Raid. The Raid argument indeed, before long, became a veritable red herring drawn across the path of South African politics. The Raid was held to justify alike indefinite continuance of misgovernment in the Transvaal and steadily growing disloyalty in Cape Colony; reference to it served the purpose of argument on any and every political question. Whoever failed to take that view, from the representatives of the Imperial Government down to the editor of the pettiest news-sheet published in a Karroo village, were alike declared to have been in the plot from the first or to have been directly bought by Mr. Rhodes to subserve his infernal machinations. The bitterness of personal hatred felt for Mr. Rhodes by the party with which he had so long been allied was another element which kept the agitation alive. That hatred derived its intensity with the rank and file of the Afrikander party, not so much from the natural indignation excited by the character of Mr. Rhodes' conspiracy as from a deep resentment at
the thought that they had been for years hoodwinked and outwitted, that the man whom they believed they had been using for their own ends had been using them for his, and had been working in secret to crush their cherished national aspiration.

The hatred against Mr. Rhodes became still more intense when he openly turned round and threw himself into the arms of the Progressive or English party. Mr. Rhodes had never sympathised much with the views of the English mercantile and town population of South Africa on questions of internal politics, nor entirely even with their views as to the relation of the Colony to the mother country, and they on their side had always regarded him with a certain degree of mistrust. Strictly speaking, there had been no English or Progressive party before the Raid; there had always been a Government party, consisting of the Bond together with the personal or local following of the politicians who, for the time being, were allied with the Bond, and a miscellaneous remainder in opposition. The English element in the population had been growing steadily ever since the development of the north and was rapidly becoming equal to the Dutch, which it had long ago swamped in the towns. But it had no political organisation. Imperialist sentiment had been growing gradually among the English in South Africa, as all over the world, after having reached its nadir in the early eighties, and had been strengthened by the conquest of Rhodesia, and the somewhat firmer attitude taken up by the Imperial Government towards the Transvaal. To this sentiment the Drifts controversy, the Uitlander agitation, the Raid, with its resultant outbreak of anti-English and anti-Imperial feeling among the Dutch, had given an enormous impulse. Whatever the merits of the Raid controversy, the mass of Englishmen in Cape Colony came to look upon Mr. Rhodes as the champion of Imperial interests against Transvaal intrigues with European powers and against disloyal agitation in the Colony. Mr. Rhodes' intention had been to abandon colonial politics for some years after the Raid fiasco, and to devote himself to the development of Rhodesia. But the demonstrations of frantic enthusiasm with which he was
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE CECIL JOHN RHODES,
PRIME MINISTER OF CAPE COLONY, 1890-1896.

From a Photograph by W. & D. Downey.
greeted in the big seaport towns on his return in July, 1897, from England, where he had been called as a witness before the South Africa Committee, tempted him to reconsider his position, and he decided to continue with colonial politics as the real head, though not the official leader, of a Progressive Imperialist party. That decision undoubtedly did much to increase the bitterness of party conflict and temporarily secured for the agitation of the extreme Afrikander party the acquiescence of men like Mr. Schreiner and Mr. Solomon, whose moderation and sincere loyalty have since been fully vindicated by their conduct in circumstances of exceptional difficulty.

In England and in the British colonies the effect of the Raid was hardly less striking than in South Africa. The Raid advertised the condition of the Transvaal to the British public, and roused it from the complacent self-satisfaction with which it had hitherto ignored South African affairs to a more active and intelligent interest. And if the realisation of the South African position, as revealed by the Raid, had filled the Afrikander party with a despairing terror, it was no less disquieting to British Imperialists. The German Emperor's telegram cast a flood of light over the whole series of underground machinations that had been carried on between Kruger and the German Foreign Office in violation of the whole spirit, if not of the letter, of Art. IV. of the London Convention. President Kruger's defiant and irreconcilable attitude, the rumours of large purchases made for military armaments, the agitation in the Free State and in Cape Colony, were all signs that the situation brought about by Kruger's policy, and complicated by the folly of the Raid, was more serious than the British public had ever dreamed, and that the utmost firmness would be necessary to preserve British supremacy in South Africa.

One of the results of the increased attention paid to South African affairs was the need felt for the appointment of a statesman of commanding ability and of moderate views to the difficult post of High Commissioner. Sir Hercules Robinson, who had been made Lord Rosmead in July, 1896, an excellent constitutional governor of Cape Colony in

Sir Alfred Milner appointed High Commissioner, 1897.
ordinary times, had neither the physical health nor the strength of character necessary for the exceptional task of setting the relationships of the Imperial Government and the Transvaal Republic on a permanent and satisfactory footing. On his retirement early in 1897, Mr. Chamberlain selected as his successor Sir Alfred Milner, at that time head of the Inland Revenue. The new High Commissioner was a young and comparatively unknown man; but he had already made himself a name, among those who were competent to judge, as an able administrator in Egypt and at home, and the high conception of Imperial duty set forth in his book on England's Work in Egypt had marked him out for a leading position among English statesmen. His name was not then, as it has since become, a household word, but there were few public men so universally liked and esteemed by their colleagues and associates. An advanced Liberal before the Home Rule split, and withal a genuine Imperialist, as a man known equally for the firmness of his character as for his extreme moderation and unfailing tact, he was alike acceptable to both parties in the State. His appointment was everywhere applauded as an indication that Mr. Chamberlain, in spite of the difficulties he had met in dealing with the Transvaal, was determined to pursue a patient and conciliatory policy, maintaining only those rights under the Conventions which were vital to the maintenance of British supremacy, and leaving aside all those minor claims which the Imperial Government could justly press, whether under the Conventions or on general grounds, but which it would have been bad policy to press, till the effect of the Raid, and the race antagonism aroused by it, had been given a fair time to subside. At the remarkable gathering which met on March 28 to bid Sir A. Milner farewell, Mr. Asquith, who took the chair, declared that "no appointment of our time has been received with a larger measure, both of the appreciation of experienced men and of the applause of the public." There was a universal belief that the new High Commissioner would, before taking up any definite line of policy, quietly and patiently study the whole South African problem, neither allowing himself to be biassed by natural
sentiment against the Raid, nor forcing on a crisis prematurely from over-eagerness to assert the supremacy of the Imperial power. And by the result of that study, men of the most varying shades of political opinion declared their readiness to abide. It is this unhesitating personal confidence in Sir A. Milner's wisdom and judgment, felt by those who knew him, and soon translated into the minds of the whole nation, that accounts in no small measure for the steadfast support received by the Government in carrying through Sir A. Milner's policy through all the stress of months of difficult and delicate negotiations, and through a long and exhausting war.

The new High Commissioner exactly fulfilled the predictions of his friends. Towards the Transvaal he adopted a patient and conciliatory attitude, pressing the representations of the Imperial Government as gently as possible, and avoiding carefully all subjects that might give rise to fresh disputes. In the meantime he devoted himself with remarkable energy to acquainting himself with South African affairs, and more especially with the affairs of Cape Colony. He travelled through the colony from end to end, coming in close contact with every section of colonial opinion. He studied Dutch in order to bring himself nearer to the Dutch farmers. He was accessible to all, and the frankness of his character and the simplicity of his manner endeared him to all who came in contact with him. Never had there been a governor so universally popular. In spite of the captious criticisms of a few extremists, who instinctively felt that a man of such ability must be dangerous, the Dutch colonists regarded him with favour, and everywhere on his tours received him with enthusiasm.

Shortly before Sir A. Milner's appointment, in August, 1896, Sir Jacobus de Wet was succeeded as British Agent at Pretoria by Mr. (now Sir) Conyngham Greene, an experienced diplomatist, who, through an extremely difficult period, did much to preserve tolerable relations with the Transvaal, and who deserves the credit of having brought the negotiations to a more hopeful point in August, 1899, than they were at any period before the outbreak of war.
During the summer of 1897 the long-awaited Parliamentary inquiry into the circumstances of the Raid took place. It had been promised in the Queen's Speech of the previous year, but it was impossible that it should commence until the criminal proceedings against Dr. Jameson and his associates were finished. On July 28 sentence was given by the Lord Chief Justice, and the principal leaders of the Raid condemned to various periods of imprisonment for offences committed under the Foreign Enlistment Act. On July 30, 1896, Mr. Chamberlain moved for the promised Committee—

"to inquire into the origin and circumstances of the incursion into the South African Republic by an armed force, and into the administration of the British South Africa Company, and to report thereon, and further to report what alterations are desirable in the government of the territories under the control of the Company."

He added that, while he would personally have preferred that the inquiry should be held by a Commission as a more judicial body, he recognised that there was a general desire in the House to make the reference a wide one, covering general questions of policy, and therefore suitable for a Committee rather than a Commission. Sir William Harcourt concurred strongly in this view.

A Committee was accordingly nominated, but in consequence of the end of the session took no action. At the beginning of the next session Mr. Chamberlain again moved for a Committee in the same terms.* In doing so he dwelt upon the grievances of the Uitlander population and the inadequate attempts that had been made to satisfy them:

"The Raid is indissolubly connected with the discontent in Johannesburg. The discontent in Johannesburg is founded upon the grievances of the Uitlanders. No inquiry into the origin of the Raid would therefore be complete—it would be a sham—unless it went carefully into this question of grievances, and unless it determined how far those grievances afforded a justification for that discontent and agitation in Johannesburg which, as I have said, made the Raid possible."

* Hansard, January 28 and 29, 1897.
The Committee, composed of Mr. Chamberlain, Sir M. Hicks-Beach, Sir W. Harcourt, Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, Mr. Cripps, Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Blake and others, met on February 16, and, after taking an enormous mass of evidence, finally reported on July 13. The following summary contains the result of their inquiry:

I. Great discontent had, for some time previous to the incursion, existed in Johannesburg, arising from the grievances of the Uitlanders.

II. Mr. Rhodes occupied a great position in South Africa; he was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony, and, beyond all other persons, should have been careful to abstain from such a course of action as that which he adopted. As Managing Director of the British South Africa Company, as Director of the De Beers Consolidated Mines and the Gold Fields of South Africa, Mr. Rhodes controlled a great combination of interests; he used his position and those interests to promote and assist his policy.

Whatever justification there might have been for action on the part of the people of Johannesburg, there was none for the conduct of a person in Mr. Rhodes' position, in subsidising, organising, and stimulating an armed insurrection against the Government of the South African Republic, and employing the forces and resources of the Chartered Company to support such a revolution. He seriously embarrassed both the Imperial and Colonial Governments, and his proceedings resulted in the invasion of the territory of a State which was in friendly relations with Her Majesty, in breach of the obligation to respect the right to self-government of the South African Republic under the Conventions between Her Majesty and that state. Although Dr. Jameson "went in" without Mr. Rhodes' authority, it was always part of the plan that these forces should be used in the Transvaal in support of an insurrection. Nothing could justify such a use of such a force, and Mr. Rhodes' heavy responsibility remains, although Dr. Jameson at the last moment invaded the Transvaal without his direct sanction.

III. Such a policy once embarked upon inevitably involved Mr. Rhodes in grave breaches of duty to those to whom he owed allegiance. He deceived the High Commissioner representing the Imperial Government, he concealed his views from his colleagues in the Colonial Ministry, and from the board of the
British South Africa Company, and led his subordinates to believe that his plans were approved by his superiors.

IV. Your Committee have heard the evidence of all the Directors of the British South Africa Company, with the exception of Lord Grey. Of those who were examined, Mr. Beit and Mr. Maguire alone had cognisance of Mr. Rhodes' plans. Mr. Beit played a prominent part in the negotiations with the Reform Union; he contributed large sums of money to the revolutionary movement, and must share full responsibility for the consequences.

V. There is not the slightest evidence that the late High Commissioner in South Africa, Lord Rosmead, was made acquainted with Mr. Rhodes' plans. The evidence, on the contrary, shows that there was a conspiracy to keep all information on the subject from him. The Committee must, however, express a strong opinion upon the conduct of Sir Graham Bower, who was guilty of a grave dereliction of duty in not communicating to the High Commissioner the information which had come to his knowledge. Mr. Newton failed in his duty in a like manner.

VI. Neither the Secretary of State for the Colonies nor any of the officials of the Colonial Office received any information which made them, or should have made them or any of them, aware of the plot during its development.

VII. Finally, your Committee desire to put on record an absolute and unqualified condemnation of the Raid and of the plans which made it possible. The result caused for the time being grave injury to British influence in South Africa. Public confidence was shaken, race feeling embittered, and serious difficulties were created with neighbouring States.

The report dismissed with a brief statement of fact the political questions concerned with the Uitlander grievances and the whole policy of the Transvaal, which were suggested by the terms of the reference and by the light of which Mr. Chamberlain had insisted that the question of the Raid could alone be discussed. It confined itself mainly to the judicial question of responsibility for the Raid, a kind of investigation for which a Parliamentary committee is not particularly well-fitted. The findings of the Committee added very little to the facts that had already been produced at the Cape inquiry, and though the proceedings were followed with great interest in the country, the report fell rather flat. A
small section of Mr. Chamberlain's political opponents had convinced themselves, both that he was directly implicated in the Raid and that the Raid itself had been undertaken from purely stock-jobbing motives. The complete failure of their attempts to prove anything of the sort from the evidence was a disappointment to them. A great deal has since been made of the fact that the Committee did not insist on the production of certain telegrams which passed between Mr. Rhodes and some of his friends in England before the Raid, and which Mr. Rhodes refused to produce. The Committee, however, attached little importance to these, and did not think it necessary to delay their report until Mr. Rhodes could be compelled to produce them. They had a sufficient sample of the kind of information cabled to Mr. Rhodes,* and believed, with Mr. Labouchere, that his friends probably "did send Mr. Rhodes cablegrams utterly inconsistent with the facts they purported to relate, and designed to convey the impression to all to whom Mr. Rhodes might show them that the Colonial Office was more or less privy to his designs." †

With this belief as to the probable contents of the telegrams, the Committee had no hesitation in coming to their conclusion. Their position was stated by Sir William Harcourt in the House of Commons (26th July, 1897).

"If you got these telegrams to-morrow, and if they contained all that the most malignant mind can suggest: if I found that Dr. Harris had telegraphed to Mr. Rhodes saying, 'I went yesterday to Mr. Chamberlain: I told him all about it and he approved of it altogether,' and if the Colonial Secretary and Lord Selborne said that nothing of the kind took place—I, who have seen the witnesses, would believe the Colonial Secretary and Lord Selborne."

The question of the administration of the Chartered Company was, owing to the termination of the session, indefinitely postponed.

† Mr. Labouchere's Draft Report, p. liii.
Meanwhile the main controversy proceeded in a leisurely manner. The Volksraad, under pressure of Mr. Chamberlain's ultimatum, had repealed the Aliens Immigration Law, and shortly after passed a resolution (never carried into effect) for amending the Aliens Expulsion Act by giving an appeal to a court of law. For the moment, therefore, the pressure was relieved, but the principles at issue remained to be dealt with. The whole position of the South African Republic, as stated in its despatch of May 7, 1897,* was based on general principles of international law applied to ordinary treaties between independent Powers, and on precedents derived from the actual or proposed legislation of other nations. The demand that all points in dispute should be settled by an arbitrator appointed by a foreign authority assumed that there was no distinction between the relations arising out of the Conventions of 1881 and 1884 and those from an ordinary treaty between two independent Powers. These were claims which, when formally put forward, could not be passed over in silence, even though the immediate point under discussion was satisfactorily settled. After an interval of nearly five months Mr. Chamberlain replied in a despatch dated October 16, 1897.† He stated that the Convention of London was not, in the view of Her Majesty's Government, a treaty between two states on an equal footing, but "a declaration by the Queen of the conditions upon which she accorded complete self-government to the South African Republic, subject to her suzerainty, these conditions having been accepted by the delegates of the South African Republic and subsequently ratified by the Volksraad." The South African Republic was bound to adhere strictly to the terms of those conditions, and was not entitled to import into them any qualifications based on rights of nations which were not bound by similar obligations arising out of similar circumstances. After stating his contention that the Convention of London merely substituted its articles for the articles of the Convention of Pretoria, the preamble of the

* C. 8721, p. 6.  † C. 8721, p. 18.
latter being still maintained, he asserted his position in regard to arbitration as follows:

"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, and it would be incompatible with that position to submit to arbitration the construction of the conditions on which she accorded self-government to the Republic."

To this despatch the Transvaal replied after an interval of seven months in a despatch dated April 16, 1898, and covering twelve pages of blue-book.* The main part of this despatch is occupied with the question whether the relations of Great Britain to the Transvaal could be properly described as suzerainty. This, as Sir A. Milner pointed out, was rather an etymological than a political question, since it was of course common ground that those relations, whatever called, were expressed in the articles of the London Convention. The substantial points contended for were:

"The present independence of the South African Republic derives its formal acknowledgment by the British Crown—in no sense, however, its real origin—from an international agreement, acknowledged as being equally binding on both parties."

"A right to constitute itself the sole judge of a document between two parties, and affecting two parties, to which it is one of the parties, has not been reserved to the British Government either in the Pretoria Convention of 1881 or in that of London of 1884.

"The British Government can therefore have no such power even under suzerainty."

On this ground, and on account of "the growing tendency among all states of European descent," the Transvaal continued to press for arbitration as "an independent pronouncement on the extent of its rights and obligations as against the Government of Her Britannic Majesty."

* C. 9507, p. 7.
The despatch, which was based on an opinion by Dr. M. J. Farrelly, a lawyer at the time resident in the Transvaal, contrasted favourably, both as regards the character and the tone of its argument, with the majority of the declarations of the Transvaal Government. The "etymological" question is certainly one open to controversy, and eminent English international lawyers, such as Professor Westlake, have been inclined to agree with that part of the Transvaal despatch which refers to it. Nor was it a point which Mr. Chamberlain particularly endeavoured to press. But the argument put forward in the first sentence quoted above was one the British Government has never accepted. It is the argument on which, at bottom, the whole conflict between the Transvaal and the British Government was based. The Transvaal always regarded the annexation as a mere usurpation. The Conventions were, in its view, merely treaties of an ordinary kind, concluded with the late usurpers, but of so unpleasant a character that it was the primary duty of the State, by all means in its power, to get rid of them. The British Government has consistently maintained that the independence of the Transvaal was by grant, and that its liberties were contained in certain charters. From 1852 onwards the Sand River Convention defined the independence granted to the Transvaal Boers. In 1877 direct sovereignty was renewed, and the Boers reverted to the status of British subjects, to be restored to a qualified independence by the Convention of 1881, subsequently modified by that of 1884. Taking into account all the facts connected with the Sand River Convention, the annexation and the retrocession, there can be no doubt that, historically, the British claim was absolutely justified. Whether after Lord Derby's action the word "suzerainty" was appropriate or not, the substance conveyed by it remained: viz., that the independence of the Transvaal was of a special and limited character, not known to ordinary international law.

In a reply dated December 15, Mr. Chamberlain pointed out that since the Government of the South African Republic declared themselves prepared in every respect to abide by
the stipulations of the Convention of 1884, there was no controversy as to the essential point in the relations between the two Governments. He again asserted suzerainty as defined by the terms of the Convention of 1884, and in view of this position and of the determination of Great Britain not to permit the interference of any foreign Power, he again refused to submit to the arbitration of a foreign Power questions relating to the interpretations of the Conventions. A side issue in the discussion had been the question of the submission of treaties under Art. IV. of the London Convention. In regard to this Mr. Chamberlain now took up a peremptory attitude and declared that unless an agreement were come to upon this point it would be necessary to refuse approval of any treaty or engagement not submitted before conclusion. After a further delay of five months a reply was received dated May 9, 1899.* Dr. Leyds had in the interval been succeeded as State Secretary by Mr. Reitz. The crisis which ultimately led to war had then already begun. Nevertheless, Mr. Reitz recklessly provoked further difficulty by the uncompromising aggressiveness with which he now stated the theory that had throughout underlain the Transvaal policy—"that the now existing right of absolute self-government of this Republic is not derived from either the Convention of 1881 or that of 1884, but simply and solely follows from the inherent right of this Republic as a sovereign international state." With regard to Mr. Chamberlain's demand that treaties between the Transvaal and other States should be accompanied by a notification of the conditions of Art. IV., Mr. Reitz expressed regret at Mr. Chamberlain's peremptory tone, but agreed to comply with his requirements. In a final reply, dated July 13, 1899,† Mr. Chamberlain intimated that the British Government had no intention of continuing to discuss this question with the Government of the Republic, whose contention that the South African Republic was a sovereign international state was not in their opinion warranted either by law or history and was wholly inadmissible. With a brief summary

C. 9507, p. 31.  † C. 9507, p. 33.
of the intentions and opinions of Lord Derby and Lord Kimberley the despatch terminates.

It has been argued that Mr. Chamberlain resuscitated the word suzerainty and made difficulties with the Transvaal by insisting on a phrase. Neither of these points can be maintained. Mr. Chamberlain was repeating the contention of successive secretaries of state in almost the very words of his predecessor.* The controversy was not one of phrases but of substance. The word suzerainty was vigorously resisted by the Transvaal, not from any over-nice sense of dignity but because, as appeared clearly before the end of the discussion, it resented and contested the existence of the peculiar relationship created by the Convention. That the use of the word caused no undue or unnecessary friction is sufficiently shown by the dates of the successive despatches in this leisurely controversy which spread over two years and a half, and only ripened to the final joining of issue when events were hurrying to the inevitable conflict.

Yet another issue of controversy between the Imperial Government and the Transvaal was the dynamite monopoly. The original monopoly, which in practice meant simply privileged importation by one firm, was a flagrant violation of the Convention and was cancelled in 1892. The new contract, though nominally a State agency, was, in the opinion of the Uitlanders, just as much a violation of the Convention, as practically the whole of the dynamite was imported in a completely, or almost completely, manufactured form, for which importation the company enjoyed preferential rights, while the profits of the undertaking went mainly to the agents—who were none other than the original concessionaires of 1887—and not to the State. In this view, apart

* Mr. S. Buxton, the Under-Secretary for the Colonies, in answer to a question of Sir G. Baden-Powell on July 2, 1894, said as follows:—

"Of course, I do not know what the intention of the Government of 1884 may have been; but, taking the two Conventions, that of 1881 and that of 1884, the hon. member will see that that of 1884 affects the Articles of the Convention of 1881, but does not affect the preamble, and it is the preamble that has reference to the question of suzerainty."— 26 Hansard, 686.
of course from the conventional question, the Transvaal Industrial Commission of 1897 fully coincided. When in 1898 the Government, in its desire to shield the company from the continuous attacks made upon it, gave up its own royalty of five shillings per case, retaining nothing but a somewhat problematical twenty per cent. of net profits, the purely private character of the monopoly became still more evident. Accordingly, when at the end of 1898 it became known that Kruger's Executive, in defiance of the express wishes of the majority of the Volksraad, intended prolonging the dynamite contract for another fifteen years in exchange for a further reduction of five shillings per case, Mr. Chamberlain considered it advisable to intervene. In a despatch of January 13, 1899, he stated the argument given above against the legality of the concession under the Convention, and declared that if the contract were extended Her Majesty's Government reserved the right to renew its protest, and in no way acknowledged the legality of the contract. Mr. Reitz answered on March 9 to the effect that the Transvaal Government knew well enough what was in its own interest, and that Mr. Chamberlain had no ground for interfering in the matter.

Meantime the attention of England was directed elsewhere. In the summer of 1897 the celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee made manifest to the whole world the profound change which the relations between the great self-governing colonies and the mother country had undergone since the great reaction which followed upon the Home Rule crisis—a change in the developing of which Mr. Chamberlain played no unimportant part. The Jubilee of 1887 had been chiefly used as an occasion to welcome the representatives of foreign powers to London. The Jubilee of 1897 was a domestic gathering of the subjects of the Queen from all parts of the world, which brought together the constituent elements of the British Empire with an enthusiasm never felt before. In the autumn of that year the Tirah campaign had occupied a considerable part of our force, and the action of Russia in the Far East had brought us within measurable distance of war. In the spring of 1898 the
war between the United States and Spain had aroused our sympathy, and the grave risk of international complications had made it expedient that our hands should be free. In the autumn of 1898 came the Soudan Expedition, winding up with a situation in which a war with France seemed for a while inevitable over the challenge of Fashoda.

In South Africa the position of affairs showed no signs of improvement during the two years following Sir A. Milner's arrival. Many difficulties arose with the Boers out of their conduct of affairs in Swaziland, where we had lately admitted their rule. The attempts to evade the engagement against commandeering the persons or properties of British subjects, white or coloured, were continually being repeated.* There was very grave ill-treatment of Cape coloured boys for not being provided with Kaffir badges.†

In regard to the Aliens Expulsion Law, the Volksraad went back from the resolution it had passed in July, 1897, giving a right of appeal to a court of law, and renewed the law in substantially the same terms as before.

At first Kruger's abandonment, however reluctant, of the Aliens Immigration Law and the appointment in April, 1897, of a government industrial Commission, under the chairmanship of Mr. Schalk Burger, had led Sir A. Milner to hope that the Transvaal Government was beginning to realise its mistake and was, after recovering from the shock of the Raid, slowly making the first steps on the road to reform. The report of the Commission, which was a damning indictment of Mr. Kruger's whole industrial policy, was excellent both in tone and substance, and acceptance of its recommendations would have done away with all the material, though not with the political, grievances of the mining community. But Sir A. Milner was destined to speedy disappointment. Under direct pressure from the President the proposals of the Commission were whittled away to almost nothing. In the administration one scandal followed after another. In the Legislature one law after another was passed restricting the liberties of the subject. The last safeguard went when in

* C. 9345, p. 80.  † C. 9345, p. 8.
February, 1898, Chief Justice Kotze was summarily dismissed for venturing to remind President Kruger of his promise to make some provision to secure the independence of the judiciary. Sir A. Milner began to see clearly that there was no prospect of spontaneous internal reform in the Transvaal. Not a single grievance of the Uitlanders had been redressed since the time of the Raid, and the Government of the South African Republic appeared to be becoming more arbitrary, and its attitude towards any representations of Her Majesty's Government more irreconcilable than ever. The slight improvement, in both respects, which followed the energetic action of Mr. Chamberlain in the early months of 1897 had entirely vanished, and it was becoming more and more evident that no protests or arguments were of use, unless intended to be followed by action. Meanwhile South Africa was being kept in a perpetual state of ferment, and the pro-Transvaal agitation in Cape Colony was more and more assuming a disloyal character.

After a year's quiet study the High Commissioner had by now made up his mind as to the real nature of the situation. Having done so, he resolved to speak out freely, and make it clear to all South Africa that the Imperial Government was in earnest in its determination to have reform in the Transvaal, and that the one danger to peace lay in the fear that sympathy of the Dutch in Cape Colony might encourage President Kruger to harden his heart and refuse to make any concession. It was not long before an occasion offered itself. At the opening of the railway to Graaff-Reinet on March 3, 1898, an address was somewhat unexpectedly presented to Sir A. Milner protesting against the charges of disloyalty made against the Bond and requesting him to convey to the Queen the expression of the unswerving loyalty of that organisation. Sir A. Milner took the opportunity to set forth clearly what he conceived to be the duty of British subjects of Dutch nationality in their relations towards the Imperial Government and towards the Republics. The speech was so important in its effects upon Dutch feeling and presented so admirable an exposition of the South African situation in the beginning of 1898 that

Sir A. Milner makes up his mind. Speech at Graaff-Reinet March 3, 1898.
it is worth while to quote a considerable portion of it in full:

"Of course I am glad to be assured that any section of Her Majesty's subjects are loyal, but I should be much more glad to be allowed to take that for granted. Why should I not? What reason could there be for disloyalty? . . . You live under an absolutely free system of government, protecting the rights and encouraging the pride and independence of every citizen. You have courts of law manned by men of the highest ability and integrity, and secure in the discharge of their high functions from all danger of external interference. You have, at least as regards the white races, perfect equality of citizenship, and these things have not been won from a reluctant Sovereign. They have been freely and gladly bestowed upon you because freedom and self-government, justice and equality, are the first principles of British policy—and they are secured to you by the strength of the Power that gave them, and whose Navy protects your shores from attack without your being asked to contribute one pound to that protection unless you yourselves desire it. Well, gentlemen, of course you are loyal. It would be monstrous if you were not. And now if I have one wish it is that I may never again have to deal at any length with this topic. But in order that I may put it aside with a good conscience, I wish, having been more or less compelled to deal with it, to do so honestly, and not to shut my eyes to unpleasant facts. The great bulk of the population of the colony, Dutch as well as English, are, I firmly believe, thoroughly loyal in the sense that they know they live under a good constitution and have no wish to change it, and regard with feelings of reverence and pride that august lady at the head of it. If we had only domestic questions to consider . . . the charge of disloyalty would be so obviously absurd that nobody would take it seriously. . . . What gives the sting to the charge of disloyalty in this case, what makes it stick, and what makes people wince under it, is the fact that the political controversies of this country at present unfortunately turn largely upon another question. I mean the relations of Her Majesty's Government to the South African Republic, and that wherever there is any prospect of any difference between them, a number of people in the Colony at once vehemently, and without even the semblance of impartiality, espouse the side of the Republic. Personally, I do not think they are disloyal . . . I do not take it that in this case people are
necessarily disloyal because they carry their sympathy with the
Government of the Transvaal . . . to a point which gives some
ground for the assertion that they seem to care much more for the
independence of the Transvaal than for the honour and interests
of the country to which they themselves belong. For my own
part, I believe the whole object of the people for espousing the
cause of the Transvaal is to prevent an open rupture between that
country and the British Government . . . They think that if
they can only impress upon the British Government that in case
of war with the Transvaal it would have a great number of its
own subjects at least in sympathy against it, that is a way to
prevent such a calamity. But in this they are totally wrong, for
this policy rests on the assumption that Great Britain has some
occult designs on the independence of the Transvaal . . . But
that assumption is the exact opposite of the truth . . . it is not
any aggressiveness on the part of Her Majesty's Government which
now keeps up the spirit of unrest in South Africa. It is that
unprogressiveness—I will not say retrogressiveness—of the Gov-
ernment of the Transvaal, and its deep suspicion of the intention
of Great Britain, which makes it devote its attention to imaginary
external dangers, when every impartial observer can see perfectly
well that the real dangers which threaten it are internal. Now I
wish to be perfectly fair. Therefore let me say that this suspicion,
though absolutely groundless, is not, after all that has happened,
altogether unnatural. I accept the situation that at the present
moment any advice that I could tender, or that any of your
British fellow-citizens could tender in that quarter, though it was
the best advice in the world, would be instantly rejected because
it was British. But the same does not apply to the Dutch
citizens of this colony, and especially to those who have gone so
far in the expression of their sympathy for the Transvaal as to
expose themselves to these charges of disloyalty to their own flag.
Their goodwill, at least, cannot be suspected across the border,
and if all they desire—and I believe it is what they desire—is to
preserve the South African Republic and to promote good relations
between it and the British colonies and Government, then let
them use all their influence, not in confirming the Transvaal in
unjustified suspicions, not in encouraging its Government in
obstinate resistance to all reform, but in inducing it gradually
to assimilate its institutions, and what is even more important
than institutions, the temper and spirit of its administration to
those of the free communities of South Africa, such as this colony.
or the Orange Free State. That is the direction in which a peaceful way out of these inveterate troubles, which have now plagued this country for more than thirty years, is to be found."

The speech created a tremendous sensation. Its frankness came as a complete shock to that section of the Dutch which had assumed somewhat hastily that the conciliatory and patient attitude of the High Commissioner were signs of weakness. From that moment Sir A. Milner was, in the eyes of the majority of the Afrikander party, an enemy; he very soon came to be the enemy. The British in South Africa had already recognised him as a friend; he soon became their leader, as it gradually became known that in him the Imperial Government had sent out a man who possessed both the courage to lay his finger fearlessly on the sore spot of South Africa, and the ability to bring about a solution of the South African problem. Nothing is more remarkable than the absolute and unquestioning confidence the British population of South Africa have placed in Sir A. Milner. Throughout all the delicate negotiations that preceded the outbreak of war, and through all the troubles and difficulties that have followed since, there has never been a word of criticism from British South Africans of the High Commissioner's policy.

The provisional Ministry under Sir Gordon Sprigg, which had followed upon Mr. Rhodes' resignation immediately after the Raid, was, in the beginning of 1898, in a very insecure condition. The division into a Progressive or English and pro-Imperial party, and a Bond party pledged to opposition to the Imperial Government over the Transvaal question, had by this time become quite clearly marked. Originally relying to a very considerable extent on the Dutch vote the Ministry had gradually, as the Afrikander agitation in Cape Colony increased, come to be at the head of the Progressive or English party. But as the process went on the majority at the Government's disposal had steadily dwindled down to the vanishing point. Its only hope lay in a redistribution bill which would recognise the
enormous increase of the English element in the population. Such a bill had actually passed its second reading in June, 1898, when the Ministry was overthrown on a vote of no confidence proposed by Mr. Schreiner, who had now come forward as the recognised parliamentary head of the Afrikander party. Feeling ran very high over the general election which followed. Mr. Schreiner’s object was to put the Afrikander party into power in order to oppose if possible any attempt of the Imperial Government at an intervention which he felt was only too likely to bring about war. That was the very policy that Sir A. Milner had warned his hearers at Graaff-Reinet would make war inevitable, but, in justice to Mr. Schreiner it cannot in any sense be described as a disloyal policy. There was, however, much in the Afrikander agitation and in the election contest that justified the assertion of the Progressives that there was a deliberate attempt to subvert the supremacy of the Imperial Government in South Africa. The members of the Bond in the country districts by no means confined themselves to the moderate and loyal language of Mr. Schreiner’s election manifesto, and sedition was openly preached at many public meetings.

More mischievous than the seditious vapourings of ignorant and irresponsible persons was the acquiescence in them of the leaders of the party. These men realised perfectly clearly the intolerable character of Transvaal misgovernment; they commented on it freely in private, but when it came to public utterance not one of them had the courage of his convictions, or could talk of anything but the unjustifiableness of Imperial intervention and the need for opposing it with the whole moral force of Afrikanderdom. On March 11, 1898, just a week after Sir A. Milner’s Graaff-Reinet speech, Mr. Merriman wrote to President Steyn:

“One cannot conceal the fact that the greatest danger to the future lies in the attitude of President Kruger and his vain hope of building up a State on a foundation of a narrow, unenlightened minority, and his obstinate rejection of all prospect of using the materials which lie ready to hand to establish a true Republic on a broad liberal basis. The report of recent discussions in the
Volksraad on his promises and their mismanagement fill one with apprehension. Such a state of affairs cannot last, it must break down from inherent rottenness, and it will be well if the fall does not sweep away the freedom of all of us. I write in no hostility to Republics; my own feelings are all in the opposite direction. . . . Humanly speaking, the advice and goodwill of the Free State is the only thing that stands between the South African Republic and a catastrophe."

These facts, which according to Mr. Merriman could not be concealed, were yet the very things he and his political colleagues did sedulously conceal from the Dutch electorate. Had he published them, had he made them the text of his election addresses a few months later, his constituents might have been less prone to engage in rebellion. Knowing Kruger's character and knowing the temper of the British Government the Afrikander leaders yet persisted in the hope that they could stay the hand of the one by agitation in Cape Colony, or reform the other by confidential outpourings to Mr. Steyn. The "advice and goodwill" of the Free State and the "moral resistance" of the Cape Dutch were the very things that helped to precipitate the catastrophe Mr. Merriman dreaded.

After a bitter and keenly-contested election the Afrikaner party secured a majority of one (though it polled a very considerable minority of the total vote), with which it faced Parliament in September. The Afrikander party is remarkably homogeneous in its composition, but the Ministry at the head of it comprised men of widely different political views and antecedents, whose chief political bond was a common dislike and suspicion of Mr. Rhodes, and a belief that Mr. Rhodes was, through the Progressive party and through the English press of South Africa, trying to bring about intervention in the Transvaal. Only Messrs. Schreiner, Herholdt, and Te Water (the latter the parliamentary mouthpiece of Mr. Hofmeyr, the real leader of the party) had in former years been regularly associated with the Bond. Messrs. Sauer and Merriman had been free-lances of pronounced radical and republican tendencies, but by no means in other ways believers in the Bond
policy. The latter indeed, one of the most interesting men and most uncertain politicians in South Africa, had in the past been one of the bitterest opponents of the Dutch nationalist ideal, and had even, just before the Raid, expressed his sympathy with the desire of the Uitlanders to rise and put an end to Kruger's oligarchy. Mr. Solomon, the new Attorney-General, was a moderate who had thrown in his lot with Mr. Schreiner from a distrust of Mr. Rhodes' policy, but had in no sense definitely identified himself with the party with which he was thus temporarily allied. With so small a majority the new Government found itself quite unable to resist the demand of the Opposition for redistribution. But it was successful enough to secure the assent of the Opposition to a compromise which gave a slight measure of redistribution, and which was so well engineered that the partial elections which followed in the spring of 1899, so far from throwing out the Government, actually increased its majority to eight.

On November 2 Sir A. Milner left South Africa for a visit to England, from which he did not return till the middle of February. During his absence the duties of the High Commissionership were filled for a few weeks by Major-General Cox, until the arrival at the Cape of Lieutenant-General Sir W. Butler, who had been selected to fill the chief military command in South Africa, left vacant by the sudden death of Sir W. Goodenough. The arrival of the new acting High Commissioner coincided with the sudden recrudescence of the Transvaal crisis provoked by the Edgar case and the first petition to the Queen. The excitement in the Transvaal at once communicated itself to Cape Colony. The petition was a direct demand for intervention; if it was accepted the whole effort of the Afrikander party was jeopardised. For the moment, however, the Afrikander party was secure. Sir W. Butler had thrown himself completely into their arms the moment he had landed, and had straightway convinced himself that the English population of the Transvaal had no real grievances, and were only striving to make mischief. He was persuaded to reject the petition. He plainly gave those Uitlanders who
met him to understand that he disapproved of any agitation in the Transvaal, and was quite content, as far as he was concerned, to let the Kruger régime continue indefinitely.

The close of the year in Cape Colony was marked by one incident of special interest. On December 2 Mr. Schreiner in an eloquent and patriotic speech proposed a measure by which the colony should contribute the sum of £30,000 annually towards the expenses of the Imperial Navy, thus redeeming the promise made by Sir G. Sprigg during the Jubilee. The measure was supported alike by Dutch and English members of the Assembly. It should always be remembered that, as far as the majority of the Dutch subjects of the Queen in South Africa is concerned, there has never been any disloyalty except on one point only—the relationship of the Imperial Government to the Republics. Unfortunately, the misguided policy of President Kruger made that one point the vital issue of South African politics. The hostility to the British Empire which had been awakened by the war of 1881 was revived in 1896 by the Raid, and kept alive by the conflict between President Kruger and the Imperial Government which culminated in the late war. The war fanned it into a fierce flame. But apart from the Transvaal question, apart from the irritation created by the Transvaal policy, and the ambitions fostered by it, the natural tendency of the Dutch is to be loyal, or at any rate to acquiesce in the advantages of British citizenship. Even in the excitement of the Raid Mr. Hofmeyr strongly repudiated the German Emperor's telegram in the name of his co-nationalists. Of course it is no doubt true that some of the members who voted for the Navy Bill did so only because it would please Mr. Schreiner and take in the British public at home, and with no other feeling towards the Imperial connexion than the desire to be quit of it. But those were not the sentiments of the majority. The majority voted because they knew that the British fleet protected their shores, and because they knew that under British rule they enjoyed the fullest freedom, justice, and equality.