CHAPTER VII

THE PROGRESS TOWARDS SELF-GOVERNMENT

The attitude of the new administration towards those over whom it ruled was no less remarkable than the actual work which it achieved. Even during the war the British authorities, military as well as civil, never forgot that their enemies were to be their fellow-citizens. They fed the Boer women and educated the Boer children. No sooner was peace declared than the Government devoted all its energies, as well as millions of money, to the task of repairing the destruction rendered inevitable by the guerilla war. From the very outset the conquered Boers found themselves in the enjoyment, if not of every political right, yet of practically every political liberty. Freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of public meeting, freedom of the press—in all these respects England straightway gave her stubborn enemies privileges that, even to-day, are not granted to its citizens by every European Government. By the very terms of peace the Boers were invited to cooperate in the work of restoration. Their leaders were from the first in constant consultation and contact with the authorities. They were offered a voice in the control of legislation, and, even after they refused to accept the responsibility, the Government, while appointing others to take their place on the councils, was at all times ready to listen to them as the recognized spokesmen of the majority of their people. In the towns the Boers received complete municipal self-government within eighteen months of the peace; and if they had wished it could have had an equal degree of local self-government in the country districts. Farmers' associations, local committees for enforcing measures against cattle disease,
educational committees, every form, in fact, of public activity, short of the actual election of the Government, was directly encouraged. From Chamberlain and Milner down to the resident magistrates in the districts the representatives of the conquering power treated the Boers as fellow-citizens whose interests they wished to forward and whose views they were anxious to hear and, if possible, comply with, and not as mere subjects to be over-ridden. Every deference was shown to the sentiments and historical traditions of the Boers. A single instance is sufficient. On July 14, 1904, England's old enemy, President Kruger, breathed his last at Clarens in Switzerland. Flags were flown half-mast on all the Government buildings. In the Legislative Council a resolution of deep sympathy with his relatives was suggested by Sir A. Lawley and moved by Sir R. Solomon. When, five months later, the body was brought back to the Transvaal, British guards of honour were drawn up at the stations through which the train passed, representatives of the Imperial and Colonial Governments attended the funeral on December 14, while at the King's special request a salute of twenty-five guns was fired as the coffin was lowered into the grave. Everything was put at the disposal of the Boer leaders to enable them to lend dignity and impressiveness to the ceremony. At the same time there was not the slightest attempt to interfere with their arrangements. For the moment the governing British element deliberately effaced itself, and Kruger was buried by his own people after their own fashion, just as if he had died at the height of his power, and as if the Vierkleur were still flying over Pretoria.

Never in the course of history has a conquered people been treated with such friendly confidence, with such true magnanimity. And never, perhaps, has it accepted the verdict of war with such loyal and good-humoured acquiescence. Within eighteen months of the peace a Boer critic of the Government declared to a Boer meeting that freedom of criticism was no indication of irreconcilable hostility to British rule. "There has been no case of sedition since the peace . . . no instance has been heard of in which a Boer
has uttered an insult either to his new flag or to his king. We have not exactly wrapped Union Jacks round ourselves, but could any sane man expect that?" Substantially the boast was justified.* From the very first the relations between the Boers and the local representatives of the British authority, magistrates or constabulary, were of the friendliest. There was no sulking, still less any false pride as to making use of the services of the Government. Everywhere the British officials were received with courtesy, often with apologies for the inadequate hospitality which a ruined homestead afforded. In the towns differences of social habits to some extent contributed to keep Boer and British apart. But at the club and elsewhere the men met on a perfectly friendly footing. The atmosphere of impotent hatred, so intense in Italy under Austrian rule, or in the Southern States of America after the Civil War, was entirely absent, except, perhaps, among a few of the narrower-minded ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church.

Real bitterness was displayed only towards the National Scouts, and even here its maintenance was due largely to the predikants, who, in the Transvaal, imposed a ban of excommunication upon them, and refused to admit them to church unless they made a public confession of guilt. The National Scouts retorted by starting churches of their own in districts where they were most numerous. The recognition of this new religious community by the Government, and its receipt of a proportion of the grants given to the Dutch Reformed Church, seriously alarmed the bigots on the Transvaal synod.

* The one exception was in the Lydenburg district, where subsequently, in April, 1904, one Durand and half-a-dozen others were arrested on a charge of treason. Durand had used the names of the Boer leaders to try and get together a gang for objects at least as much criminal as political, and the Government showed its confidence in the loyalty of the Boer leaders by bringing Botha, Schalk Burger, and Kemp forward as Crown witnesses. The only other attempt at sedition after the war was in Cape Colony, when in November, 1906, an ex-rebel, Ferreira, who had taken refuge in German territory, crossed the border of the colony with ten men, proclaimed a general rising, and succeeded in dragging a few reluctant by-owners with him. After a ten days' hunt the rebel "commando" was dispersed or taken prisoner by a party of Cape Mounted Rifles and Cape Police.
The ban against the National Scouts was soon waived in practice, though never formally withdrawn. In some cases, however, a perfunctory expression of regret in private was still insisted on. The new church, having no further reason for its existence, and finding great difficulty in securing satisfactory ministers, speedily dissolved.

The attitude of the Boer leaders immediately after the surrender and during the negotiations with Chamberlain has already been fully dealt with. Once they realized that it was useless to attempt to secure any alteration of the terms of peace their line of policy was perfectly clear and consistent. They were prepared to accept the situation, but they were determined to make the very most of it consistent with that acceptance. Refusing to give the administration the benefit of their counsel, for fear of sharing the responsibility for its actions, they confined themselves wholly to the field of irresponsible criticism, to consolidating their influence over their countrymen, and to building up the framework of a political machine on racial lines, with a view to the inevitable advent of self-government. They played the part of a political opposition with a will, with no over-scrupulous regard for accuracy, and with decided success. Their conduct may often have seemed ungrateful and ungenerous. But could gratitude and generosity really have been expected in greater measure from men still smarting under defeat, and determined to retrieve through the ballot-box some part, at least, of the power they had lost in the field? After all, what they had promised at Vereeniging was to accept the British flag and the British constitutional system, and that promise they were ready to fulfil. They were under no obligation to make a bed of roses for the administration, or to subordinate their racial interests to the general welfare. At the worst their misrepresentations were venial compared with those indulged in, with infinitely less justification, by the Opposition in England.

In its relations with the British population of the new colonies the administration was a Crown colony government in form only; its spirit was the spirit of self-government and not of bureaucracy. Discussion and consultation were
the very life-breath of the Milner régime, whether in the Legislative Councils, on the Inter-Colonial Council, at conferences, at public banquets, at private interviews, or in the columns of the press. In many respects, indeed, the administration was far more susceptible to the influence of public opinion than a party government bound by rash promises made in opposition and pledged to the principle of cabinet solidarity. That Milner’s personality dominated everything, that his will prevailed on every important issue, was true. But it was a feature of the situation for which the man, and not the constitutional system, was responsible. Nor was Milner content only with consultation. From the very outset he invoked the interest and help of all who were willing to lend their time or their experience to the work of reconstruction. That help was given in abundant measure. Men like Sir G. Farrar or Sir P. FitzPatrick in the Transvaal, or Sir J. Fraser in the Orange River Colony—to mention only the most prominent—were not mere casual advisers, but became integral and responsible elements in the administration. By thus enlisting their services Milner could hope to give the future leaders of the British community the experience which would enable them to govern with success, to inspire them with his ideals, and to leave them as the executors of his policy.

No term of abuse was applied more persistently to Lord Milner throughout all this period by his English detractors than that of “bureaucrat.” The term seemed to find justification for the ignorant in the facts of his previous official career. Yet no description could have been more fantastically untrue. It was not only the mere absence of the formalism, of the love of administrative machinery, of the dogmatic temper which mark the true bureaucrat, which made it absurd. It was that the whole essence of his mind was not bureaucratic, but political. His thoughts were constantly focussed on the political conflict of the future. The work of reconstruction was never, in his eyes, an object in itself, but only a means. The object was always the triumph, under self-government, of British political ideals in the Transvaal, and in a united South Africa. And it was to the British...
community in the Transvaal, to its prosperity, to its increase, to its unity, that he looked for the force which was to make those ideals prevail. He had been its champion and defender against Kruger and against its detractors in England. Its welfare in the present, its political effectiveness in the near future, were throughout his chief concern. His one anxiety was lest it should fail through its own internal weakness and want of coherence.

That anxiety was fully justified. The misrule of the Kruger oligarchy and the intense emotion of the war had temporarily united the Uitlander community. For three years and more it had displayed a unity, a courage, and a patience which deserved all praise. But it was essentially an unorganized aggregation, barely in process of acquiring a real collective sentiment, and entirely unschooled by political experience. The great mass of it lived concentrated upon the Rand, wholly occupied with its own affairs, and in a purely British atmosphere. As long as the armed "Zarp" swaggered through its streets, as long as the commandos held the field, it could not help being reminded of the need of unity. The moment the war was over it began to forget the very existence of the Boer; the return of the old domination seemed to it inconceivable; the inherent British instinct towards political division began to assert itself. From the very first, signs of impatience with the Government began to manifest themselves. The good sense of the community was still strong enough immediately after the peace to suppress the campaign of the Transvaal Political Association. But nothing could check the inherent tendency to criticize. At first, the critics in full chorus denounced the ridiculous slowness and timidity of an unenterprising bureaucracy which did not dare to rise to the height of its great opportunity. When the depression came they veered round and blamed the administration for its reckless extravagance and headstrong optimism. Ruined speculators and over-stocked shop-keepers bitterly blamed the Government for their own miscalculations. The long struggle over the Chinese introduced another dividing line, and threw the opponents of Chinese labour into the ranks of the critics. Of leaders the
growing opposition had no lack. There were not a few who had hoped for office, or at least for a place on the Legislative Council, and whose disappointment vented itself in denunciation of an "unsympathetic imported bureaucracy," or of "capitalist influences." Others, again, were genuine fanatics of self-government, to whom considerations of Imperial security or even of the future success of self-government itself were nothing compared to immediate compliance with their shibboleth. By the beginning of 1904 the feeling of impatience was increasing perceptibly among the British in the Transvaal. What was even more serious, they were rapidly approaching a condition of political disintegration.

Milner realized that some definite step would have to be taken, and taken speedily. Such a step was essential, not merely as a means of allaying discontent, but even more in order to discipline the British community by contact with practical problems, more especially with the practical problem of the Boer vote. He confided his views at length to Lyttelton in a secret dispatch sent on May 2, 1904. Though the agitation for self-government had not yet taken an aggressive and organized form, it would inevitably do so, he urged, unless something were done. Once openly launched, the agitation would spread rapidly among the British, and even those who realized the dangers involved would find it difficult to oppose the movement. Immediate acceptance of the demand for self-government in its entirety involved the danger of placing a still unreconciled Boer majority in power. Prolonged delay, on the other hand, would inevitably throw many of the British on the Boer side, and create an anti-Imperial majority all the more formidable because largely composed of British elements.

"It should be our policy to try to defer responsible government until the Boers, or at least a large proportion of them, had learned to acquiesce—it must needs be many years before they rejoice—in membership of the British Empire, or until the British element is so strengthened as to make separation impracticable. But while recognizing the necessity of deferring responsible government, I also feel, and every day that passes impresses on me more and more, the extreme undesirability of
deferring it too long, especially in the case of the Transvaal. There is no white population more impatient of control, or more lacking in the political experience and training which self-government is best calculated to teach, than the people of that Colony, and in particular the British inhabitants. . . . No British population in the world would be more benefited by being forced to realize to the full the meaning of the responsibility which they are so anxious to assume, if only the experiment were not so fearfully dangerous.”

To abandon all safeguards forthwith was unwise. But it was essential to take some step in the direction of complete self-government without delay. And Milner was convinced that the step should be as bold a one as was compatible with the reasonable protection of Imperial interests. It was not enough to substitute an elected, in place of a nominated, element in the legislature; it was essential to give that element a substantial majority and real power. To quote Milner's own language in a subsequent despatch:

“I am quite satisfied that it is wise to adopt a liberal measure of representation. . . . The representatives of the people must be numerous enough not only to voice popular opinion, but to determine the character of the laws, and, except where vital Imperial interests are concerned, practically to direct the policy of the administration.”

In the same spirit he urged that the property qualification for the new legislature should be low, “just sufficient to exclude the absolutely indigent,” and suggested that the elected members might be eligible for appointment as members of the Executive Council in order to provide for an easy way of transition to complete self-government.

As a matter of fact, even before Milner wrote, the question was actively exercising Lyttelton's mind. The general arguments which weighed with the Colonial Secretary in favour of some definite step towards self-government were, moreover, confirmed by practical considerations of a somewhat different character. At that moment it seemed very doubtful to the Unionist leaders whether they could stay in office beyond the spring of 1905. That being the case it was very
desirable that they should, as far as possible, complete the task they had undertaken in South Africa by putting affairs in the new colonies on a footing which would give least excuse for any ill-considered change of policy on the part of their successors. A carefully regulated advance towards self-government in the Transvaal, which, without endangering Imperial interests, gave substantial representation to public opinion, would both serve as a strong argument against immediate further change, and yet, at the same time, provide the incoming Liberal administration with a sufficient buffer against the pressure of its own supporters. On April 26 Lyttelton stated this aspect of the position to Milner briefly but comprehensively:

"When the other side come in they will be confronted with their dishonest and insincere utterances about Chinese labour by the ignorant and sincere of their followers, and I am convinced that they will extricate themselves from a painful dilemma by granting self-government to the new Colonies sans phrase. Under these circumstances I should very much like to know whether you think it in any way desirable that we should make a cautious move in that direction. . . . The question is whether it would not be better that the first steps should be taken under your and our guidance than under that of men who seem very reckless of the essential interests of South Africa."

Further correspondence followed, and on July 4 Milner telegraphed suggesting the urgency of some public declaration of policy to appease the growing restlessness which was already manifesting itself in a vigorous press discussion. On July 21 Lyttelton announced to the House of Commons that the time had arrived in the opinion of the Government for giving effect to the pledge contained in the Vereeniging terms by granting elective representative institutions to the Transvaal. This announcement was again endorsed in the King's speech at the prorogation of Parliament on August 15.

The announcement undoubtedly had the effect upon the British community which Milner hoped. From vague general criticisms of the administration the mind of the public was now turned to a keen discussion of the form which the new constitution should assume. But the announcement also
served to bring out the extent to which the process of political disintegration had already gone. A very definite party cleavage showed itself from the very outset between those whose chief anxiety was to safeguard the results of the war, namely, the British flag and the principle of political equality, and the malcontents with whom British ideals, though not disavowed, were yet subordinate to minor divergences of opinion, personal grievances, or mere impatience of all real or fancied restraint. The former, an avowedly British and Imperialist party, were comparatively indifferent to the actual extent of the constitutional change introduced, and were quite content that the Milner administration should, for some years to come, continue its work of developing the country and paving the way for a large British immigration. Their one concern was that, in establishing a new elective system in the Transvaal, the British Government should do nothing which could diminish the legitimate influence either of the existing British population, or of future immigrants; nothing which could whittle away the principle of "equal rights" for which they had contended in the past, or which could afford an opening for the revival, in however attenuated a form, of the old distinction between "burgher" and "uitlander." To secure this end two points were in their opinion essential: an equal distribution of seats according to voters, and automatic redistribution.* The "voters' basis," as it was called, is the only strictly logical method of maintaining the principle of "one vote, one value." The ordinary rule, indeed, has been to distribute seats in proportion to population, simply because in most communities the proportion of voters to population is practically the same in different constituencies. In the Transvaal, however, such a distribution would have defeated the principle, because, owing to the excess of unmarried men, the proportion of voters, whether under a high or a low franchise, was much higher on the Rand than in the rest of the country. The census taken in April, 1904, indicated that while out of a total white population of 290,000 the

* It is interesting to note that these two demands had been formulated by them even before the war.
Rand only contained 115,000, it held over 40,000 out of a total of 90,000 adult males. A population basis would thus have been a decided handicap to the British, already severely handicapped by the fact that under any ordinary system the considerable British element scattered throughout the country towns would be unable to exercise any effective vote.* On pure grounds of expediency there was thus a strong case, other things being equal, for selecting the basis of distribution which would give the British element its proper weight under the peculiar circumstances of the colony. But the case was all the stronger when the proposed basis was so simple, logical and equitable that, once established, it was bound to be permanent, and to assert itself, not only in the Transvaal, but in the neighbouring colonies. In concentrating their whole energy upon the principle of "equal rights" the leaders of the British party displayed a political sagacity destined to have an important influence on the whole future political development of South Africa.

The malcontents were a much less influential and more heterogeneous body. They represented no single definite point of view, and, as a matter of fact, endorsed the general political principles laid down by the majority, though with no great enthusiasm or clear conviction. Their real distinctive feature was just that they were malcontents. As such they felt bound to criticize adversely the policy announced by the Government and to proclaim an alternative. Hitherto they had clamoured for representative institutions, and their principal spokesman, Mr. E. P. Solomon, brother of the Attorney-General, had definitely indicated that what they wanted was an elected legislature such as Cape Colony had possessed for nearly twenty years before the grant of full responsible government. When they found that this was precisely what they were to receive, Mr. Solomon and his friends declared that it was insufficient, and that nothing less than full responsible government would be acceptable to

* This drawback might, indeed, have been obviated by the introduction of a system of proportional representation with three-member constituencies. Milner strongly favoured this personally, but the idea was too unfamiliar to enlist support from any section of Transvaal public opinion.
them or prove workable in practice. When the more cautious members of the community dwelt on the necessity of safeguarding the Imperial position, they protested that for their part they were not afraid of trusting the Boers, and deprecated all references to the British flag as unnecessary jingoism. Stripped of rhetorical generalities on the blessings of freedom the demand for immediate responsible government was, in its essence, mainly an expression of discontent, largely personal, with the administration, and with the individuals who were the recognized leaders of British public opinion. This is the key to the whole subsequent development of the political situation.

For the Boer leaders criticism and denunciation of the Government were as much a matter of deliberate policy as they were a matter of incurable instinct in a section of the British community. To object to the proposed grant of representative institutions and clamour for full responsible government was the natural and obvious thing for them to do, once the cue had been given. If the agitation failed they would be no worse off, and would probably find the British malcontents all the more eager to help them in discrediting the Government. If it succeeded there was always a chance of their being returned to power. One minor difference of attitude between them and the British malcontents is, however, characteristic. Their denunciation of the Government proposal at public meetings was based, not on its inadequacy or unworkableness—after all the system proposed was not so very unlike the old Republican constitution—but on the by now stereotyped charge that it was a violation of the terms of Vereeniging. The charge was, of course, absurd. Article VII of those terms expressly indicated that self-government would be introduced by successive steps,* and the nature of those steps was made

* "Military administration . . . will, at the earliest possible date, be succeeded by civil government, and, as soon as circumstances permit, representative institutions leading up to self-government will be introduced." By an unfortunate oversight the text of the terms given in vol. v., pp. 597-599, was taken from an inaccurate retranslation into English of the Dutch version, and there reads "tending towards autonomy" in place of "leading up to self-government."
quite clear to the Boer negotiators at the time, and by Mr. Chamberlain in the House of Commons soon after. But to have admitted that the Government was handsomely fulfilling its promises would have been bad political business, and the Boer audiences believed what they were told. In other respects, too, the Boer leaders were by no means at one with the advocates of responsible government in Johannesburg. "One vote, one value," was not a principle which appealed to them, and they were opposed to automatic redistribution and to the voters' basis, though prepared to accept a distribution of seats according to population if they could not get better terms. A further grievance and opportunity for denouncing the bad faith and mistrust shown by the Government was also found by them in the fact that representative institutions were not to be given simultaneously to the Orange River Colony.

Towards the end of the year political discussion rapidly crystallized into political organization. Among the British, indeed, the former element continued to predominate, and organization remained very rudimentary almost to the end. On November 22, the "Transvaal Progressive Association" took the field with a manifesto embodying a definite party programme in six clauses, of which the maintenance of the British flag and the recognition of equal political rights for all voters formed the really important items. The immediate introduction of representative government, followed, at as early a date as might be expedient, by responsible government, a firm and just native and Asiatic policy according to South African ideas, the support of every measure tending to make the Transvaal a white man's home, and the opposing of interference in Transvaal affairs by party politicians elsewhere, completed the list. The last clause expressed the general indignation of the British community with the campaign of misrepresentation carried on by Liberal politicians in England, and their determination in case of a change of government, to resist any interference with the Labour Ordinance. On November 25, the opposition took definite shape in a "Responsible Government Association" whose programme consisted of a declaration that political
stability and contentment could only be assured by letting the wishes and interests of the people prevail, and that the growth of a vigorous and independent spirit in political life would inevitably be retarded by the establishment of any system short of complete responsible government. Both sides during the next few months were busy holding meetings and enrolling adherents. The Progressives, who subsequently selected Sir G. Farrar as their leader, were from the first very much the larger and more effective body. They embraced most of the keenest spirits of the old Reform Committee and of the Imperial Light Horse. They had with them most of the big mining firms, which were afraid of violent political changes, as well as the great bulk of the industrial middle class. In the broad strategy of politics they had the advantage of a definite and consistent policy. In minor tactics, however, all the advantage for the moment lay with the "Responsibles," who had an easy theme for platform eloquence in the virtues of free government, and in the unwisdom of "flag-wagging" and distrust of the Boers. Political cooperation with the Boers was, indeed, from the outset one of their declared objects. The personnel of the party was very miscellaneous. It included what may be called the "Afrikanders," those who resented the importation of British officials and the influence of the British-born element in the general population. Of these Mr. Solomon and Mr. Hull, the leaders of the party, were the ablest and most typical representatives. Besides these were opponents of Chinese Labour, like Messrs. Creswell and Wybergh, Labour leaders,* miscellaneous capitalists, all and sundry in fact who were discontented with the existing situation. Last, but not least, in Pretoria and in the smaller towns, many Englishmen also tended to drift into association with the "Responsibles" from jealousy of Johannesburg and fear of its predominance.

While the British were discussing, the Boers concentrated Organization of Het Volk, Jan. 1905.

* The formation of a small Labour Party, or rather of several labour groups, though of interest in view of possible future developments on the Rand, was not of sufficient effect upon the situation in the period covered by these chapters to require separate treatment.
their attention upon organization. The process really began as far back as April, 1904, with the preparations for a Boer congress which met at the end of May, and discussed the grievances of the Boers against the Government both among themselves and with Sir A. Lawley. At the close of the Congress a small committee, consisting of Messrs. Botha, Schalk Burger, De la Rey, Beyers, Esselen, Smuts, and A. D. Wolmarans, was appointed to draw up an organization. The work went on quietly and without fuss for the next few months, but no occasion was neglected for working up the national sentiment of the Boers. For this purpose no event could have lent itself better than President Kruger's funeral. The solemn and impressive ceremony, the sermons and addresses delivered, all contributed to raise the spirits of the Boers and to give new life to their national consciousness. A last letter from Kruger, warning his countrymen of the danger of division, and urging them to continue the work he had begun, and with unity of mind to build up that which had been thrown down, only gave solemn emphasis to aims which already animated the assembly. The growing political agitation had already been quickened by a conference of the Orange River Colony Boers just before, at which the Government had been vigorously denounced, and responsible government demanded. But it was not till the end of January, 1905, that "Het Volk" was formally constituted at a large meeting at Pretoria. The name, "the people," indicated sufficiently the character of the new organization. It was not a political party in the British sense, based on the advocacy of certain principles, but the organization of a specific population for political purposes. Characteristically the statutes recommended by the select committee, and endorsed without question, contained no programme beyond an opening clause referring to harmony, co-operation and progress. On the other hand there was a complete and elaborate organization in ward and district committees, culminating in an absolutely autocratic head committee, empowered to dissolve any committees which in its opinion were "subject to hostile influences," and apparently the sole exponent of the rules and obligations which all members
were bound faithfully to obey. The select committee, without more ado, declared itself to be the first head committee, and as only two members, at most, could be changed by the annual congress of the party there was practically no danger of the control passing out of the hands of the original holders. In addressing the meeting Botha declared that the question of the flag was settled for all time. The Boers would abide loyally by their acceptance of the British flag, and if the Imperial Government only showed its trust in them he was assured they would make an honourable response. But representative government was not trusting the people—it was a shadow without a substance, and he could not advise them to accept it. The peace treaty had promised responsible government and they stood by its terms. Resolutions were passed declaring that if a change were necessary no other form than complete self-government should be established, and that it should be established in both colonies simultaneously. After a most successful opening meeting the Head Committee at once divided its forces, and for two months its members were busy all over the country forming branches of “Het Volk,” addressing meetings and passing resolutions identical with those passed at Pretoria. Botha’s speeches consistently followed the line he had laid down at Pretoria, and displayed alike his astuteness as a party leader in working up the racial feelings of his hearers, while at the same time skilfully angling for the support of the British malcontents, and his underlying statesmanship in insisting firmly upon his final and irrevocable acceptance of the British flag and of British institutions. Other speakers, more particularly General Beyers, showed less discretion and less judgment as to where to draw the line between party criticism and sedition, and had to be vigorously disclaimed in public and rebuked in private by their leader.

All through this period, meanwhile, interviews had been going on between Milner and the representatives of the different parties who were anxious to urge their views upon him, while frequent communications passed backwards and forwards between Milner and Lyttelton. It was not till the

The campaign in the country, Feb.–March, 1905.

The Lyttelton Constitution, March, 1905.
end of March that the new constitution drafted by Lyttelton was embodied in Letters Patent and sent out to South Africa. On the question of the form of government it was decided that the whole of the Legislature, except the Executive officers, should be elected, the Assembly to consist of some thirty to thirty-five elected members and some six to nine officials. The franchise was a low one, excluding practically only the casual labourer and the poorest class of bywoner. As a special concession, moreover, all ex-burghers over 21 whose names were on the voting lists under the Republic were to have the right to vote irrespective of any pecuniary qualification. Seats were to be distributed on a voters' basis, and an automatic redistribution was to be held every four years. A special commission was to be appointed to mark out the districts, giving due consideration to existing divisions, and being allowed a margin of ten per cent. on the normal quota of votes for this purpose. In his covering despatch, Lyttelton announced that the British Government had wisely decided to leave the question of the war contribution loan to the new legislature, "in the assured belief that they will do what is right and just," and also indicated that a short period would intervene before similar institutions were granted to the Orange River Colony.

The framework of the Lyttelton constitution was laid on broad and statesmanlike lines. The franchise was liberal, and at the same time fair between the two races. The principle of equal rights was consistently and logically applied in the distribution of the seats. Though not granting complete self-government, the Constitution yet marked an advance which, considering the circumstances, was both bold and generous. To use Milner's words, it was the greatest single stride in the march towards full responsible government. As such the Constitution was in accordance not only with the specific undertakings of the British Government in the case of the Transvaal, but with its settled practice in the case of every other colony. That it contained possibilities of deadlock, and the certainty of eventual breakdown and supersession was obvious from its form and from previous experience. But neither the
example of other colonies nor the indications afforded by the experience of the existing nominated Council, warranted the fear that it would prove unworkable from the start, or engender serious and lasting friction between the people of the colony and the Imperial authorities. As a permanent settlement it would, no doubt, have been a failure. But then it was not meant to be permanent. Its whole object was to gain a certain limited time, three or four years at the most, for certain specific purposes. It was to set political life in motion in the colony without emphasizing and stereotyping the racial division by making it the basis of an immediate struggle for the prize of administrative power. It was intended, in Lyttelton's words, "to be a school for self-government, a means of bringing citizens together in political co-operation, and a sphere for the natural selection of the men most fit to lead and ultimately to undertake the responsibility of administration." And in the interval, during the precious years gained, the work of administrative consolidation and economic development was to continue, while a steady increase of the British population would insure that, however much that population might subsequently be divided on local issues, its latent strength might always be relied upon to thwart any policy which deliberately aimed at separation from the Empire.

The completion and despatch of the Letters Patent had been held back intentionally so that they should not reach the Transvaal till after Milner's departure. That departure had been discussed between Milner and Lyttelton from the middle of 1904 onwards. The economic difficulty had been solved; the work of the administrative development could now proceed unhindered on the lines Milner had laid down; the constitutional question was on the way to settlement. The task for which Milner had returned to South Africa was accomplished, and he could at last with a clear conscience claim relief from the immense burden of work and anxiety which he had borne for so many years. To find a successor to carry on the work in his own spirit was not easy. His own choice would have been Lyttelton. But it was hopeless to expect that a Liberal Government would
retain him. Eventually Lord Selborne was persuaded to take the post. His experience as former Under-Secretary in the Colonial Office and his high position as First Lord of the Admiralty, added to his personal gifts of moderation and good sense, made him equally acceptable to Milner and to the South African public, while his recent absorption in a sphere removed from party controversy gave good reason for hoping that his appointment would not be affected by a change of government. The closing months of Milner's High Commissionership were marked by few incidents but by little relaxation of the pressure of work. At last the welcome hour of relief came. Under the frequent disappointments and continuous controversy of the last two years his once immense popularity with the British community in the Transvaal had been gradually ebbing away, as he had always foreseen it would. At the very end it surged up again in a wave of profound emotion. Men forgot their grievances and differences; they only remembered what they owed to the man who had fought their battle, and laid, solid and true, the foundations of their national life. What they felt is well summed up in a few sentences from "a nobody's tribute" in one of the papers:

"To us he has brought uprightness, erectness. From being Outlanders we have become of the land and of its folk—no longer pilgrims in political tents, but dwellers in a city which hath foundations... From the Milner minimum of demand to the Milner maximum of political power and achievement, how great our growth, how comparatively assured our future national life!... We have had two great poets—makers—in South Africa in our time. Both men dreamed dreams. Both half realized them. Both at least have compelled other men to go on realizing the other half."

Milner's farewell to the Transvaal was given in three speeches, delivered at Germiston, Pretoria and Johannesburg on the eve of his departure. The first two were a review of the work accomplished. The third was a confession of political faith, and an appeal to those who had looked to him for guidance in the past to continue his work in the
future—an appeal strangely eloquent in its simplicity and restraint. Only a few sentences and the concluding passage need be quoted here:

"I shall live in the memories of men in this country, if I live at all, in connexion with the struggle to keep it within the limits of the British Empire. And certainly I engaged in that struggle with all my might, being, from head to foot, one mass of glowing conviction of the rightness of our cause. But, however inevitable, however just, a destructive conflict of that sort is a sad business to look back upon. What I should prefer to be remembered by is the tremendous effort subsequent to the war, not only to repair its ravages, but to restart these colonies on a higher plane of civilization than they had ever previously attained. . . .

"If you believe in me defend my works when I am gone. . . . I care for that much more than I do for eulogy, or, indeed, for any personal reward. . . .

"And this I care most about of all, because it is over all and embracing all. What I pray for hardest is that those in South Africa with whom my words may carry weight should remain faithful, faithful above all in times of reaction, to the great idea of Imperial unity. The goal of all our hopes, the solution of all our difficulties, is there. Shall we ever see the fulfilment of that idea? Whether we do or not, whether we succeed or fail, I for one shall always be steadfast in that faith, though I should prefer to work quietly and in the background, in the formation of opinion, rather than in the exercise of power.

"This question, as I see it—the future of the British Empire—is a race, a close race, between the numerous influences so manifestly making for disruption and the growth of a great but still very imperfectly realized political conception. Shall we ever get ourselves understood in time? The word Empire, the word Imperial are, in some respects, unfortunate. They suggest domination, ascendency, the rule of a superior state over vassal states. But as they are the only words available, all we can do is to make the best of them, and to raise them in the scale of language by a new significance. When we, who call ourselves Imperialists, talk of the British Empire, we think of a group of states, independent of one another in their local affairs, but bound together for the defence of their common interests and the development of a common civilization, and so bound, not in an alliance—for alliances can be made and unmade, and are never
more than merely nominally lasting—but in a permanent organic union. Of such a union, we fully admit, the dominions of our Sovereign, as they exist to-day, are only the raw material. Our ideal is still distant, but we are firmly convinced that it is not visionary nor unattainable.

"And see how such a consummation would solve, and, indeed, can alone solve, the most difficult and most persistent of the problems of South Africa, how it would unite its white races as nothing else can. The Dutch can never own a perfect allegiance merely to Great Britain. The British can never, without moral injury, accept allegiance to any body politic which excludes their motherland. But British and Dutch alike could, without loss of dignity, without any sacrifice of their several traditions, unite in loyal devotion to an empire-state, in which Great Britain and South Africa would be partners, and could work cordially together for the good of South Africa as a member of that great whole. And so you see the true Imperialist is also the best South African. The road is long, the obstacles are many. The goal may not be reached in my lifetime, perhaps not in that of the youngest man in the room. You cannot hasten the slow growth of a great idea of that kind by any forcing process. But you can keep it steadily in view, lose no opportunity of working for it, resist like grim death any policy which draws you away from it. I know that to be faithful in this service requires the rarest of combinations, that of ceaseless effort with infinite patience. But then think of the greatness of the reward—the high privilege of having in any way contributed to the fulfilment of one of the noblest conceptions which have ever dawned on the political imagination of mankind."

On April 2 Milner slipped away quietly from Johannesburg to Delagoa Bay, and took the boat to Europe. A great era in South African history was over.