

SPEECH

OF

THE EARL OF DERBY



IN THE

HOUSE OF LORDS,

ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1857,

ON

THE ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HER MAJESTY'S
SPEECH FROM THE THRONE.

LONDON.

T. HATCHARD, 187 PICCADILLY.

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S P E E C H,

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MY LORDS,—I have now had upwards of thirty six years' experience of parliamentary life, and in that time I have witnessed many periods of great political excitement, many of national anxiety, and some even of national alarm and danger; but it never occurred to me at any period to enter upon a Session of Parliament under circumstances of such varied anxiety, and almost unvaried gloom, as those which surround the meeting of the Parliament which has been thus suddenly and unexpectedly called together. My Lords, upon most previous occasions there has been some one great and overwhelming subject which has absorbed the whole attention and anxiety of Parliament. In 1825, and again in 1847, it was commercial—at various other periods, agricultural distress, in 1829, the Roman Catholic Relief Bill, in 1830, and again in 1848, the state of affairs upon the Continent, and that revolutionary spirit which in those years shook the thrones of Europe, but which in this country, in the former of them, took the safer and milder form of a change of Ministers, and of a measure infusing a considerable democratic element into the Legislature, and in the second, thanks to our free constitution, brought out in signal and glorious relief the firm reliance of the country on its laws and institutions. In 1841, the change of Government which took place when the late Sir Robert Peel succeeded to office, in 1846, the great change in the commercial legislation of this country which was effected by the repeal of the Corn Laws; in the previous year, the overwhelming calamity of the Irish famine. In almost every one of the periods

of excitement and anxiety which I can remember there has been some single cause which has concentrated and fixed upon itself the attention of Parliament and the country. But now, my Lords, we have a complication of misfortunes, now we have a variety of anxieties, such as I never witnessed upon any previous occasion. We have deep and overwhelming commercial distress and disturbance at home. We have an Indian empire shaken to the very foundations abroad. It is under these circumstances that Parliament is called together, and I am therefore not surprised that the greater portion of Her Majesty's Speech should be devoted to these two overwhelming and calamitous subjects. But before I enter upon the discussion of these subjects, let me say one word upon that which my noble friend who moved the Address has with great felicity of expression called the only happy part of Her Majesty's Speech. I refer to that very short and simple part of the Speech, or that singularly cut and abrupt paragraph in which we are informed that "The nations of Europe are in the enjoyment of the blessings of peace, which not long seems likely to disturb."

I must say that, looking to the state of this country, I think it a most fortunate circumstance that such a paragraph could be introduced at the present moment into the Speech from the Throne, but I must add, that I think this fact might have been expected to have called forth some fuller expression of satisfaction on the part of the Ministers and of the Crown than is to be found in the simple announcement of this paragraph. My Lords, although I have the greatest confidence in the resolution, in the resources, in the firmness, and in the spirit of this country, I do not hesitate to say that nothing could have tried that spirit and those resources so deeply and almost so fatally as if, to the calamities of commercial distress at home, and a war of fearful magnitude in India, which compels us to strain to the utmost our military resources, there had been added the still farther calamity of a war in Europe, in which, almost of necessity, we should have taken part. Having that feeling—and it is no discredit to the country to admit that, under such circumstances, our energies would have been taxed to the utmost—I think that Her Majesty's Government might, at all events, have expressed their satisfaction that they were relieved from such a calamity as an European war, and that the countries of Europe were enjoying the blessings of profound peace. But, my Lords, the paragraph, as it is worded, is not merely cold—it

almost breathes a tone of disappointment and discontent breathes the spirit of the noble Viscount at the head of the Government. It would almost appear as if it were a duty that there is no quarrel in Europe in which he ought to take part. "The nations of Europe are at peace, which nothing seems likely to disturb." My Lords, I believe that if the noble Viscount at the head of the Government cannot disturb peace of Europe no one else can. But if Her Majesty's Government are desirous of maintaining the great blessing of peace if they are anxious to keep upon good terms with those nations with whom we are now at peace, I think it would be wise to forbear on public occasions from taunting expressions with regard to the supposed military habits of other countries, and from adopting, which, as we are told, we are friendly with all, a tone of defiance against any Power which might take advantage of our present difficulties and make war against us. That tone is, I say, unworthy of a prime minister. It was a bravado wholly uncalled for by the circumstances, and could have no effect upon any nation in the world except to give personal offence, unless, indeed, it were to excite a suspicion that such unnecessary bluster was proceeding in order to cover an innocent sense of weakness. But this is the only paragraph in which foreign affairs are in the slightest degree adverted to. Rather hard is it, my Lords, on my noble friend Lord Elgin—who is placed in a position the most ridiculous that could be imagined, if it were not also the most useful—that the affair in which he is engaged should find no mention in this document. This is the third Queen's Speech that we have had in the course of one year, and in that brief period, unless you may tell me, there have been discussions on subjects which led to the dissolution of Parliament and the formation of the present Government discussions in which it was said that the honour of the British flag was imperilled—that a single moment's hesitation, even so far as to write home for orders before signal and summary vengeance was inflicted, was a discredit and disgrace to this country. Well, how does the matter now stand? There is not a word about China in the Speech—not a syllable about Sir J. Bowring and his admission to Canton—not a hint about the signal chastisement to be visited upon the unhappy barbarians who, from that time to this, have been laughing at the impotence of England and her alleged resolve to exact reparation for the insult offered to her flag. And yet the

period is not distant when we were told that the case admitted of no delay, and when we were driven, without the slightest preparation into this absurd contest, in which we have done nothing but blockade the Canton river, and place an impediment in the way of our own commerce. But do I complain of the conduct of Her Majesty's Government in suspending the Chinese question in the midst of the great crisis in India? Not in the least. I must, however, observe, that as far as the Government were concerned, they were not aware that the Chinese force had been diverted to India until several weeks after the event had taken place. That measure was entirely owing to the resolution of my noble and unfortunate friend Lord Elgin, who took it upon himself to depart from his instructions, and assumed the great responsibility of the diversion of the force from the object for which it was specially equipped. I think my noble friend deserves every credit for having taken upon himself that responsibility; but Her Majesty's Ministers bore no part of it, and are in no way entitled to the merit of having afforded that aid to our Indian Government. I recollect that on the 10th of July, in answer to a question from a right hon. friend of mine in another place, as to whether a discretionary power was given to Lord Canning to divert the Chinese force, the right honourable gentleman the President of the Board of Control said that no instructions had been sent out to Lord Canning upon that subject, that he believed a letter had been sent by that noble Lord to Lord Elgin, for the purpose of ascertaining whether he had any objection to such a measure; but that, as far as the Government were concerned, they did not know whether the letter was received, and still less whether the suggestion it contained had been adopted. But the only notice taken in the Speech from the Throne of the state of our foreign relations is that which I have mentioned. I confess I should like to hear, as we possibly may hear, from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, that some grave questions in Europe are making satisfactory progress, that the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris, which have been long delayed, are on the point of being carried into execution, that the Powers of Europe, upon whom the fate of Wallachia and Moldavia depends, are at this moment agreed in their policy, and that there is some hope of seeing a speedy and satisfactory settlement of this matter. That there has been no actual settlement of it as yet is quite clear, otherwise my noble friend would, I am sure, have been happy to introduce it into this

Speech. Having briefly noticed what I think a light mode of treating that serious subject—the general peace of Europe—I proceed to the two most important questions which occupy the principal portion of the Speech. The noble Lord who succeeded the Address, who seems to be one of those happy spirits that in early youth can draw consolation from what fails to cheer mature and more experienced minds like that of the noble Lord who preceded him, says it is matter for congratulation that India affairs were not in so serious a state as to render it necessary, on that account, to call Parliament together. That is certainly a very slight and infinitesimal subject for congratulation. But we are told that we are summoned at this early period simply to pass a Bill of Indemnity for Her Majesty's Government for the violation, in 1857, of the law of 1844, which it was found necessary, under special circumstances, to violate in 1847. Only a short time previous to the issue of the notice summoning us to meet here to-day, an Order in Council was published, proroguing Parliament till the 17th of December, and without the usual intimation that it was then to meet for the despatch of business; and if I rightly construe the intentions of Her Majesty's Government, it is to enjoin that no business should be transacted by Parliament at this extraordinary Session, with the single exception of giving them a Bill of Indemnity. My Lords, I do not mean to say that, under the circumstances, the Government were not justified in taking the step they did, or that therefore they have not a fair claim to the Act of Indemnity which they seek. But, before pronouncing my opinion on whether or not they were so justified, I should like to hear from themselves the grounds upon which they acted, and the persons whom they consulted previously to taking that step. I should like to hear that it was taken, not only on the sole responsibility of Her Majesty's Government, but with the concurrence and full consent of the Governor and Directors of the Bank of England. I should like to know, in point of fact, whether they received any application from the Bank of England, calling upon them to suspend the existing Act, and also whether any such application came from any of the leading bankers and commercial firms of London. I do not, I repeat, wish to express any opinion now upon the general question. I only wish to intimate that, in my judgment, before we grant an indemnity, we ought to have a full explanation from Her Majesty's Ministers of the circumstances which influ-

need their policy, and of the considerations which induced them to think that the course which they were about to pursue was calculated to meet the difficulties under which the country was at the time labouring. For my part, I believe, with the Committee which your Lordships appointed in the year 1848, that although the Act of 1844 had no share in causing the calamities to which we were then, as we are now, subjected, yet that Act had a very strong and very important influence in aggravating the monetary difficulties when they once arose. I believe the case to be this—that whatever may be, in other respects, the merits or the demerits of the Act of 1844, there is no doubt but that when people see, by the publication of the Bank returns, that the Bank is approaching that limit at which it would be necessary for them to contract their circulation on account of the drain of bullion all other bankers and all other commercial firms feel it necessary to take precautions for the purpose of securing themselves against the danger which they foresee, and begin to hoard quantities of notes and coin. The result is, that a large portion of the circulating medium of the country, whether in gold or in notes, ceases to be in active circulation; and although there is the same amount issued by the Bank, there is not the same real circulation, or the same activity given to the currency. The consequence, therefore, is, that a panic arises which leads to a hoarding, which still further diminishes the active circulation, that diminution increases the pressure upon the Bank, and imposes the necessity of further restriction. Such restriction aggravates the panic, and thus panic and restriction act and re-act on each other, until the country is brought, with abundance of money of all descriptions, to the verge of bankruptcy and insolvency. That, I believe, is a correct statement of the operation of the Act of 1844, and of the way in which it works in times of commercial panic. If that be so, then I think an Act that does away for a time with that restriction on the Bank has a natural tendency to diminish the panic, to encourage the pouring forth of hidden stores of money into active circulation, and thereby, as in 1847, without any violation of the law, to enable the Bank to resume the ordinary course of proceeding, and replenish its coffers with bullion. Supposing, for the moment, that the restrictions of the Act of 1844 are judicious under ordinary circumstances, I think, when the state of things which I have described arises, it is absolutely necessary that those restrictions should not be en-

forced on the Bank. And this, I presume was the motive which led Her Majesty's Government in 1857, as in 1847, to take on their own responsibility the important step of setting aside the provisions of an Act of Parliament. But let me ask whether the conditions are the same in 1857 as they were in 1847? In the latter year the foreign exchanges were eminently available to us, bullion was rapidly flowing into the Bank vaults, and therefore, although at that time the bullion in the Bank had fallen below the amount which would enable them to give the requisite accommodation without violating the Act, yet there was the reassuring circumstance that events were in progress by which, in a short time, the equilibrium would be restored. Therefore the suspension of the Act of 1844 was not actually carried into effect in 1847. I believe it was the late Mr. Gurney who stated before the Committee which sat in 1848, "What we wanted was not money, but to know that we could have money if we wanted it." The result upon that occasion was that the panic and hoarding ceased at once. But on the present occasion, when Her Majesty's Ministers took this step, the foreign exchanges were still unfavourable to us, the drain of bullion was still continuing. I will not decide whether to that cause alone is to be attributed the fact that the same step which in 1847 produced immediate relief has not been attended with the like happy results, to the same extent, in the year 1857. But to come to another part of the question, if it be the opinion of Her Majesty's Ministers that in times of commercial difficulty and pressure the Act of 1844 has the effect, I will not say of creating these dangerous symptoms, but of aggravating them when they do occur, then I ask Her Majesty's Government to give upon this subject a clear and categorical answer to this question, whether when they bring forward their Bill of Indemnity they intend to adhere to the Act of 1844? I can perfectly understand the Government asking for a Bill of Indemnity for a violation of an Act when they feel it necessary to amend, but I do not understand them asking for the second time within ten years for an Act of Indemnity on account of the *violation of an Act which, when a strain comes, is found to be unequal to bear it; and at the same time asking us to continue the permanent operation of that very Act which they themselves have found it necessary to suspend. I say, if that Act be perfectly sound, but that at certain times and under certain circumstances

it be necessary to dispense with the pressure of its too stringent provisions, then that power should be contained in the Act itself. There should be a relaxing and dispensing power vested somewhere, and that power should be vested by the Act itself. I believe that was the intention of the Committee of 1848, which has been said to have made many recommendations, but to have proposed no legislation, the duty of a Committee being, in my judgment, to make recommendations. It was a most able, pains-taking and valuable Committee. It made a most useful Report, but its recommendations have been completely neglected. I hope the Government will make a frank and explicit statement upon that point, and I do trust they will do so without proposing any further reference to Parliamentary Committees. We have had before us all the materials for our consideration *ad nauseam*. Last year a most extraordinary step was taken by Her Majesty's Government. In this House your Lordships did not think it necessary, with reference to the renewal of the Bank Charter Act, to appoint any Committee; but in the other House the Chancellor of the Exchequer thought it was advisable to appoint a Committee, but at the same time to take away from that Committee the slightest utility of which it could be capable, except the production of a vast blue book which no one would read. The Chancellor of the Exchequer protested, on behalf of the Government, *seriatim*, against every possible alteration in the law which could be suggested, and declared that the Government was prepared to stand by the existing law. I think, under these circumstances, we have a right to ask the Government that they shall take an open and candid course, without any further inquiry or reference to Committees, and tell us frankly and plainly—for they must have made up their minds—whether, after all that has passed, they are still prepared to adhere to their position of last year, and to maintain inviolate and in its integrity the Act of 1844? I make this reasonable request without any desire—as I am sure there is no desire on this side of the House—to throw any impediment in the way of, or to offer any vexatious opposition to, Her Majesty's Government. The Queen's Speech then proceeds to state that Her Majesty has observed "with great regret, that the disturbed state of commercial transactions in general has occasioned a diminution of employment in the manufacturing districts, which she feared could not fail to be attended with much local distress." I regret to say, my

Lords, being connected with the manufacturing districts myself, and I shall be borne out, I am sure, by other noble Lords similarly connected, that this phrase in the Royal Speech but feebly depicts the amount of difficulty and suffering which prevails. I hope that the good sense of the operatives will preserve them from senseless and unnecessary outbreaks, but I do assure the Government that not only the operatives, but the manufacturers, are at this moment placed in circumstances of the deepest pain and difficulty. I have had to day a return from Manchester, which has been published in the journals, from which I find that there are in that city 233 mills and other large establishments, employing huge masses of men under one roof, giving occupation in ordinary times to 45,391 operatives. If it be remembered that many of those operatives are married men, with wives and children dependent upon them, that number may be doubled, or perhaps trebled, in order to arrive at a correct statement of the individuals whose livelihood depends directly upon the welfare of those manufacturing establishments. Of these 233 mills, only 73 are working full time—the remaining 160 either working short time, three or four days a-week, or are wholly closed. The number of operatives in those mills now in full work is 16,861, while those partially or wholly unemployed number 28,530. That is as far as Manchester alone is concerned; but I believe I could bring similar statements from Bradford, from Preston, from Bury, from Macclesfield, and other places. But that is a state of things to which justice is not done by the paragraph in the Royal Speech, which states that “diminution of employment in the manufacturing districts cannot fail to be attended with much local distress.” If under these circumstances, as I take it they will, the operatives have the good sense and judgment to abstain from conduct which can do them no good, but must inflict upon them and their employers immense mischief—if they maintain a peaceful and respectful demeanour under the difficult circumstances of the time, then I say, all honour to them, to their good sense, and to their loyalty. But, my Lords, I think the Government might have gone further, and told us the causes—the real source of this disturbance of all commercial transactions. For years past we have heard continual laudations of the enormous extension of our commercial transactions. We have been told that if we only ceased to clip the wings of commerce and to leave it free

as the winds of heaven, there would be no limit to our prosperity. I remember seeing an article in a morning newspaper *The Times* no long ago than last April or May, in which it was said, that to speak of the commerce of England was only to repeat the cry of "Prosperity! prosperity! prosperity!" I remember it was said in that paper and in other places, over and over again, that the magnitude of our exports was the surest of all possible tests of our commercial prosperity. I have also heard it said again and again, "Take care of your imports, and your exports will take care of themselves." Now, in ten months of 1855, our exports amounted to 78,087,131*l.* That was a considerable amount of commercial business, but in 1857, during the same space of time—ten months—your exports, that unvarying test of national prosperity, by which we are to measure the happiness and welfare of the manufacturing community, have increased to 106,000,000*l.*, being an increase of 28,000,000*l.* within two years in the single item of exports. Has there been a corresponding increase in the happiness and comfort of the operatives, in the wealth of the manufacturers, in the well-being of all persons engaged in those branches? We are told, that with this increasing amount of exports there has been a constantly increasing and almost overwhelming amount of distress. Large as our exports have been, yet they have not kept pace with our imports. In the course of three years our exports have been 308,000,000*l.*, while our imports have been no less than 468,000,000*l.*, showing a balance of 159,000,000*l.* against us in those three years. Well, we are told, if your imports have exceeded your exports, you must have been driving a very profitable trade, and must have the advantage of having about 159,000,000*l.* in your pockets. But has the trade been so profitable as you seem to imagine? Let me, in the first place, ask you whether all your imports have been paid for? We have, in the course of the period to which I have referred, in consequence of the inequality which prevailed between the amount of our exports and our imports, sent out of the country something like 84,000,000*l.* in the shape of bullion, and if we happen at this moment to be in a state of indebtedness it is because, though the amount of our exports has been so large, yet our imports, encouraged as they have been by the Legislature, are out of all proportion to our exports. If that be not the cause of the commercial distress which now prevails, I should wish to know from Her Majesty's Ministers to what, in their

opinion, that distress is to be attributed, and what it is which has rendered necessary the immediate interference of the Legislature in order to restore confidence to the public. Now, my Lords, I approach another subject, and one even more serious than that to which I have just adverted, one too, to the magnitude of the danger connected with which I should were it not for the melancholy experience of the last few months hardly deem that Her Majesty's Ministers were even yet sufficiently alive. In the Speech which has this day been read from the Throne, Her Majesty is made "to deplore the severe sufferings to which many of her subjects in India have been exposed," and, while expressing her grief for "the extensive bereavements and sorrow which it has caused," is made to declare that she has derived "the greatest satisfaction from the distinguished successes which have attended the heroic exertions of the comparatively small forces which have been opposed to superior numbers, without the aid of the powerful reinforcements despatched from this country to their assistance." Now, my Lords, far be it from me to give utterance to a single word which could lead you to suppose that I thought lightly of those private sorrows and afflictions which have cast a gloom over so many hearths in England. They have been deeply and painfully felt, and some of them have been accompanied by circumstances of which it is not even possible to speak. But, while I feel that the expression of her sympathy with such sorrows and such afflictions cannot but fall gracefully from the lips of the Sovereign, yet I must express my surprise that the advisers of Her Majesty have not thought proper to make some mention in the Royal Message of that political ruin and that public danger by which the country was so lately surrounded. Individuals may suffer—as many have done—from an inundation, an earthquake, or any other calamity. Men are born to die on the battle-field as well as upon the bed of sickness. Such events are matters of constant occurrence, but the mutiny of your Indian army is an event of a different order. The whole framework of your empire in that country has been rudely shaken—the preminence of British rule has been imperilled—nay, for the moment, your empire has been lost, and remains to be restored, yet the expression of the Sovereign's regret for a public calamity so great finds no place in the message from the Throne. I should be sorry, indeed, my Lords, to suppose that the latter part of the paragraph in the

Royal Speech, to which I have just drawn your attention, could have been written by Her Majesty herself. I should be sorry to think that Her Majesty should be guilty of such English as is contained in this most ungraceful paragraph. But, my Lords, when I proceed to the next paragraph, in which the Sovereign gives utterance to her warm approbation "of the gallantry of the troops employed against the mutineers, their courage in action, their endurance under privation, fatigue, and the effects of climate, the high spirit and self-devotion of the officers, and the ability, skill, and persevering energy of the commanders;" I sympathise most entirely with every syllable of that paragraph; and as I am glad to know it has fallen from the lips, so I am proud to believe it has come from the heart, of the Sovereign. No words which I could use could do justice to the gallantry, the perseverance, the intrepidity, the Herculean labours of that small but devoted band, to whose hands the salvation of our Indian empire has been confided. They have contended—surprised as they have been, and having but too much reason to fear that they were abandoned by their country—not only against overwhelming numbers, but against the difficulties which the climate of India presents at a period of the year when all former experience would lead us to suppose that all operations in the open field in that country were impossible. They were, moreover, scattered here and there, in small bodies, throughout a vast extent of hostile territory, yet, under all these disadvantages, they have struggled, they have died, and they have triumphed in a manner which reflects immortal honour upon themselves, and which, I trust, will ultimately lead to the salvation of our Indian empire. For men who have done such deeds, no praise can be too high, no reward which a grateful country can bestow too great. My Lords, I am loth to single out even an individual name for special mention from that bright throng to whom England owes so much, lest, in doing so, I might seem to do injustice to some gallant spirit who, placed in similar circumstances, would have earned for himself a similar immortality. But, my Lords, among the long list of those who have not only fought, but fallen in their country's cause, there are names which, at such a time as this, it is not possible to pass over in silence—Barnard, Lawrence, Nicholson, Neill, Banks, young Willoughby, the devoted Salkeld, the gallant Home—all these have died a soldier's death, and they have not died in vain. The laurel with

which we would fain have encreased their brows must now be exchanged for a funeral wreath to lay upon their early graves. But, my Lords, among those who have achieved such glorious exploits in India there are some still living, and from the number, even at the risk of seeming to take upon myself an invidious task, I may be allowed to select for especial notice two names — that of General Havelock and that of Colonel Gcreathed. Those two gallant officers have, as your Lordships are aware, performed two wonderful marches under the greatest difficulties. Gcreathed was a young officer in a subordinate situation, and from the specimen of military ability which he and others have displayed I draw the highest augury of the skill and talent which the young officers in the army will be found to exhibit whenever the opportunity for the display of those qualities is afforded. Of General Havelock it is needless to speak. His achievements are too well known to your Lordships and to the country to require any mention of mine. My Lords, General Havelock and his gallant companions still live — at least, I trust they still live — to reap the reward of their glorious deeds. I trust that they still exist, and that with that heroic garrison, whose sufferings they have attempted, and partially succeeded, in relieving, they are now enjoying some repose from their long period of labour and endurance. I trust that that noble band may yet survive, and with them their gallant Commander, on whom, in addition to the anxieties which have so long pressed upon him as chief of that much enduring garrison, have fallen the still deeper and dearer anxieties connected with the position of a husband and a father. God grant, my Lords, that they may still be safe; but I must say that we shall look forward to the arrival of the next accounts from Lucknow with anxious, but trembling hope. Our force there has been left in a state of extreme peril. For some time the communications between different portions of it have been altogether broken off. They have been surrounded, and there are no means of communication between the portion which is at Alumbay and the portion which is at Lucknow. They are not only separated, but they are surrounded by an overwhelming force, and we learn that one attempt to relieve them has unfortunately failed. I do hope that that relief, whenever it may arrive for them, may not be altogether too late. Hitherto India has been saved by the gallantry and by the perseverance of our military officers and soldiers. By their own stout hearts and strong arms, and with

their own good swords, have they won the positions they now occupy, and to them alone, if India be preserved to us, is its preservation to be ascribed. My Lords, I say it in all sincerity, I wish it were in my power to extend the same meed of praise to those by whom they have been employed. Turning to that topic, I may first observe that my noble friend who moved the Address in answer to the Royal Speech has deprecated any attack being made upon the conduct of the Governor General of India, or any charge being brought against him in connexion with the recent proceedings in that country. Now, my noble friend has advanced to Lord Canning, I may state that of that nobleman I should be disposed to speak with all tenderness and all consideration, not only on account of the sincere regard which I entertain for him personally, and the respect which I have for his talents, but also because he has been placed in circumstances of such unparalleled difficulty, that if he has not been found to be in all points equal to his post, perhaps not one man in ten thousand would have been able to cope with it with success. It was, I think, about the close of 1856 that Lord Canning entered upon the administration of the affairs of our Indian empire, and it now appears that long before he set foot in that country — nay, for months before that time — certain secret negotiations had been going on for the purpose of tampering with the Bengal army. My noble friend the mover of the Address, adverting to certain circumstances which had taken place in his own country, drew from them an argument to show that the Sepoys were influenced by certain superstitions, and that they believed the time had arrived when the dominion of England might be shaken off. I believe that supposition to be correct. I believe that various prophecies and old sayings were circulated throughout India, the purport of which was that at the expiration of a period of 100 years of British rule the Sepoys would be enabled to drive them from the country and to regain their ancient supremacy. But if it be true, as my noble friend says, that that belief prevailed generally throughout India, and that the circumstance was known, does not that fact furnish the strongest possible additional reason why every precaution should be taken to prevent a rising of the Sepoys, and why the Government, as well as every officer and civilian throughout the land, should have their eyes wide awake to the slightest symptom of incipient disaffection? Now, the papers before us prove that no such precautions were taken.

Lord PORLAND denied having stated that anything was known to the Government as to the existence of disaffection, for he had no information on the subject, and only argued from circumstances which had come to his own knowledge in reference to his own part of the country in England.

The Earl of DERBY. The printed papers show that for two or three years past old prophecies have been circulated among the population of India, that the British rule would come to an end 100 years after it had begun to exist, and as 1857 was the centenary of the battle of Plassey, this was the period fixed on by the superstitious among the population of India (who comprise, I imagine, no small part of it), for carrying out the conspiracy. Now, what happened? Let us look calmly and deliberately at the events which occurred. I will make charges against no man; but let us see whether the authorities in India have been sufficiently alive at any time since disaffection began to show itself to the danger which existed. On the 23d of January, 1857, General Hearsey reported the existence of great jealousy among the men at Dumdum on the subject of these greased cartridges. On the following day the Telegraph-Office at Barrackpore was burnt down. Several other incendiary fires took place, and of their incendiary character there could be no doubt, because in some cases lighted arrows were found in the thatch of the bungalows. On the 8th of February, General Hearsey again reports to the Government that the Sepoys are being tampered with. He had ascertained that emissaries of the deposed King of Oude and of the *sor-disant* King of Delhi were endeavouring to shake the fidelity of the troops. He reports this on the 8th. On the 9th he persuaded the men, explained to them the circumstances connected with the greased cartridges, and had, as he hoped, undeceived their minds for the time; but he writes to the Government on the 11th, "We have at Barrackpore been dwelling upon a mine ready for explosion." At the same time he reports the existence of formidable symptoms of mutiny in the 34th Regiment. Again, on the 21st of February, the 19th Infantry at Berhampore were visited by the 34th, and two days afterwards they broke out into open mutiny, to such an extent that Colonel Mitchell (whether discreetly or not I will not stay to inquire), doubtful of his own force, felt himself compelled to temporise with these men, and consented to move away the artillery and cavalry marched against them, if they would return to

then duty. This outbreak seems in the first instance rather to have alarmed the Government of Calcutta, and on the 6th of March they sent off to Rangoon for the 84th Regiment, which arrived on the 20th. Throughout the whole of this period, from the beginning of February to the 20th of March, no single step, as far as I can find, was taken on the part of the Government, either to disabuse the minds of the Sepoys on the subject of these greased cartridges, or to ascertain their probable intentions and the extent of the disaffection prevailing among them. No additional precautions were taken, and during the whole of that time the Government never dreamed of the gross folly of leaving the important city of Delhi, with its stores of ammunition and artillery, without one single European soldier in it, and guarded by native troops alone, although then they had notice from one of their most intelligent officers that foreign emissaries were at work. I hope your Lordships will excuse me for entering into these details; but I want to show that we have reason for saying that the Indian Government did not exert themselves early enough to put a stop to these incipient symptoms. On the 28th of February broke out the mutiny of the 34th. An officer in front of his ranks was cut down by a Sepoy half-maddened by drink. This man kept walking backwards and forwards before the ranks, no one attempting to arrest him, until the news was brought to General Hearsy. General Hearsy felt that there was not a single moment to be lost. He mounted his horse, rode to the spot, ordered the guard to seize the Sepoy, the guard hesitated and refused. What did General Hearsy do? Tenpaise? No. Like a true-hearted British officer and gentleman he rode in at the man himself; with his own hand he seized him and dragged him from before the ranks; whereupon the man attempted to shoot him, but stumbling, inflicted a wound upon himself, and was handed over into custody by the General himself. In this he was supported by a single native non-commissioned officer. This officer, General Hearsy took on himself the responsibility of promoting on the spot; and in his report to Government asked that the names of two officers, whom he mentioned, might be inserted in general orders. What was the reply to his letter? Certainly he received thanks for what he had done; these could not be withheld; but he actually got a reprimand for having taken upon himself to promote the Sepoy without reference to the authorities at Calcutta, who also refused to insert

in general orders the names of the officers he had recommended for that honour. What followed? The Government seemed to have taken courage from the conduct of General Hensley. The 19th Regiment having, on the 27th of February, broken into open mutiny, the Government on the 30th of March, — five weeks afterwards, — determined to inflict a signal punishment. They accordingly assembled the regiment; and what was the signal punishment? The only penalty for an act of the grossest mutiny was, that they were paid their wages and disbanded! At that very moment the emissaries of the Court of Oude had promised them increased pay, yet the Government merely give them what is due to them and disband them, and conceive that that is a punishment which will put an end to the mutiny for the future. It was an act of madness. When that general order reached Sir H. Lawrence at Lucknow, he felt so strongly its impolicy and the encouragement it would give to the disaffected, that he refused to read it. All this time the 34th Regiment, a soldier of which had shot his officer — an act in which the whole regiment had passively shared, some of the men also having actually struck two European officers with the butts of their muskets, was still supposed by the Government, in its insanity, to be perfectly faithful and trustworthy, and they permitted it to do duty to the end of April. Nay, such was their misapprehension that they actually meditated, and the order, I believe, was issued, the sending back the 34th to Rangoon, leaving themselves under the sole protection of native troops. Fortunately for them there broke out, or would have broken out but for the energy and foresight of Sir H. Lawrence, the mutiny at Lucknow. Sir H. Lawrence, like General Hensley, was equal to the occasion. He anticipated the mutineers, surrounded them with an imposing force, excited a panic among them in the midst of their treasonable conspiracy, and although his force was composed in a great part of men treasonably inclined he completely overpowered and overawed them. But not one of the men who knocked down their officers with the butt ends of their muskets was brought to punishment. The 34th were simply disbanded, and sent to swell the ranks of the mutineers. I ask whether in the whole course of these proceedings Lord Canning's advisers — and Lord Canning must to a great degree have been in the hands of his advisers — exhibited foresight, vigour, or any of those qualifications which it is most important

should be shown by men who are to conduct the Government of India at such a moment? I come then to Her Majesty's Government at home, and I must confess I do not think they have exhibited much more foresight, promptitude, or vigilance, than their colleagues in India. They refused from first to last to believe in the serious character of the mutiny. My noble friend the Earl of Ellenborough, whose knowledge of India and the deep interest he has taken in its welfare qualify him better than any man to speak on this subject, and who appears throughout to have had an intuitive perception of what was going to be done and what ought to be done, never ceased during the whole course of the last Session to press upon the Ministry the necessity of taking the earliest and the most prompt and vigorous measures for repressing that which he represented as a dangerous conspiracy. But my noble friend was the Cassandra of the House. His prophecies were disregarded, and that disregard has cost many a valuable British life, and has well-nigh lost India. On the 19th of May Lord Ellenborough called the attention of the Government to the subject, and urged the necessity of immediate reinforcements. He was told by Lord Panmure that the intelligence was not such as to create any apprehension for the safety of India, but that as the Chinese expedition would comprise four regiments which would otherwise have gone to India, four other regiments would be ordered to proceed to that country in the course of the next five weeks, and that if (of which, however, he had not the least apprehension) affairs in India should be serious, the regiments which they were intended to relieve might be detained there. On the 9th of June my noble friend again called attention to the state of India, and especially to the religious aspect of the question, which has been referred to by my noble friend opposite, and upon which I shall have to say a few words. On the 11th of June the President of the Board of Control (Mr. Vernon Smith) expressed his hope that no alarm would be felt by the public with regard to Indian affairs, and stated that, owing to the promptitude and vigour displayed by the authorities in India, the disaffection which had existed among the troops in that country had been suppressed, and that any future manifestation of such a feeling would be met by similar decisive measures. On the 23rd of June Mr. V. Smith stated that the 19th Regiment of Native Infantry had been disbanded, but that it was not the intention of the Government to

disband any other regiments unless (which he had no reason to suppose) any should manifest a similar mutinous disposition. Well, my Lords, on the 29th of June, my noble friend, after intelligence had been received of the calamities which had occurred in India, again pressed upon the Government the necessity of sending out with the utmost speed other and larger reinforcements to the army, and he suggested, as it would be necessary to despatch all our available military force in this country to India, that their place should be supplied by the immediate embodiment of the militia. Your Lordships will probably recollect with what cool indifference these suggestions were received. The noble President of the Council assured us that the disaffection was not so extensive as was supposed; that the native princes were most cordially co-operating with the British authorities, that Lord Canning expected that General Anson would shortly be before Delhi; that four more regiments had been ordered out; and that the calling out of the militia would appear to indicate difficulties, and would lower this country in the eyes of the world. Your Lordships may remember that an Order in Council had been issued on the 25th of June, directing that the militia should not be called out; and on the 16th of July Lord Palmerston, being asked whether, under the altered circumstances, and considering the state of affairs in India, the Government would not revoke that order, replied, "Oh, no; the Indian affair is a mere nothing; it does not in the slightest degree alter the views of the Government, and the militia will not be called out." Within a very short time afterwards, however, the suggestions of my noble friend were partially adopted and I cannot help thinking that then, as on some former occasions, it would have been as well had they been adopted a little sooner. If the reinforcements which were ultimately sent out had been despatched—as my noble friend urged that they should be—in the month of June, and if they had been sent by the shortest route, I venture to say that not one-tenth of the disasters and difficulties which have occurred would have been experienced by those gallant men who were unnecessarily left to struggle on without sufficient support, and from whom I have seen letters expressing the bitterness of their hearts at the delay of succour, although their spirits and energies remained unconquered and indomitable. On the 29th of June the President of the Board of Control delivered a speech, which showed such an utter and

hopeless ignorance of the whole question with which he had to deal, and of the arrangements of his department, as I not only never saw equalled, but, as I believe, never could be equalled, still, after all the disastrous intelligence received by the Government, treating the condition of India as a matter of no pressing importance. "By the middle of next month," said Mr. Vernon Smith, "14,000 men, partly recruits, partly trained rebels, will sail for India. I hope this House will not exaggerate the danger because we send out those troops. It is as a measure of security alone that we despatch them. Our Indian empire is not in danger, and I hope that in a short time the mutiny will be effectually suppressed by the force already in that country." Referring to the outbreak which had taken place at Delhi, the President of the Board of Control stated, in reply to a question from Mr. Disraeli, that "everything that can be done is being done in India, and troops have been already marched up to surround what the right honourable gentleman (Mr. Disraeli) is pleased to call the ancient capital of the Moguls, the city of Delhi." Then, Mr. Vernon Smith went on to show his intimate knowledge of the city of Delhi, by saying, "Luckily, the outrage has taken place there, because it is notorious that Delhi may be easily surrounded." Surrounded! "I have no doubt," continued the President of the Board of Control, "that it will be reduced by force immediately that a man of the well-known vigour of action of my gallant friend, General Anson, who now commands the army of the North, appears before the walls of Delhi." Why, the huge force which General Anson was able to take with him was somewhere about 2000 men, if they had all arrived. "It is notorious," said the President of the Board of Control, "that Delhi may be easily surrounded, so that if we could not reduce the place by force we could by famine." Was there ever such an instance of utter ignorance? Mr. Vernon Smith went on to say, "and if my noble friends opposite have the slightest idea that I am misrepresenting him, I beg to refer them to the debate in the House of Commons on the 29th of June, last Session,—" "Unfortunately, the mail left on the 18th ult., and I cannot therefore apprise the House that the fort of Delhi has been razed to the ground; but I hope that by the next mail we shall receive intelligence that ample retribution has by this time been inflicted on the mutineers who occupy that city." Such was the eminent foresight and knowledge displayed

by the Minister entrusted with the conduct of Indian affairs! My Lords, when intelligence was received in Europe of the fearful calamities which had occurred in India, and of the occupation of Delhi by the Mogul, it elicited the warmest sympathy on the part of almost every European state. Early in July the Sultan, without hesitation, upon the application of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, granted his firman for the passage of British troops across the Isthmus of Suez. The Pasha of Egypt voluntarily, and without any application being made to him wrote to the agent of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, stating that if the British Government wished, through their agency, to send troops across his territory to the Red Sea, he would afford such troops every facility of transit, whether they were in or out of uniform, by hundreds or by thousands, and that they should have the use of his horses, carriages, and the same means of conveyance as if they were his own troops. It is not, I believe, very generally known — though it is right it should be, as it is the highest compliment that could be paid to this country, and shows how wide and general was the sympathy entertained towards us by the most powerful monarchs in Europe — that the Emperor of the French, of his own accord, informed the British Government that if it would be any convenience to them to send the body of troops they were despatching to India across France, they had his full and free leave to traverse his territory, and that every facility should be afforded for their conveyance. Now, will it be believed that the firman of the Sultan, the offer of the Pasha, the promise of the Emperor of the French, were alike disregarded and declined, and that from that time up to the 1st of October no single soldier ever took advantage of the route across the Isthmus? It was said, when it was determined that troops should be sent round by the Cape, and when a considerable number were despatched by sailing-vessels in preference to steamers, that there would be difficulty with regard to transport by the overland route when the troops arrived on the other side the Isthmus upon the shores of the Red Sea. It has been stated — I don't know whether truly or not, but I have not seen it contradicted — that, at the commencement of the outbreak, Lord Elphinstone, to whom I should do injustice if I did not say that his exertions deserve the warmest acknowledgments — made an offer by telegraph to Lord Canning to send out a rapid steamer to catch the mail with the news of the mutiny, and that Lord Can-

ning's reply was, that such a step was unnecessary, and there was no hurry. It is said, also, that Lord Elphinstone volunteered, if Lord Canning thought fit, to send steamers from Bombay to the Red Sea for the purpose of meeting any troops which the British Government might despatch by that route. But, more than this,—the Peninsular and Oriental Company* offered to the Government in July or August to make arrangements for the passage of troops from Alexandria across the Isthmus, by which they could have been transported from ship to ship within twenty four hours, and they offered the use of their steamers, which, they stated, were capable of carrying 500 men at each trip. If troops had been conveyed by that route across the Isthmus, they would have arrived at Bombay or Calcutta in six or seven weeks, and, consequently, troops despatched from this country at the end of June or the beginning of July would have reached India by the middle of August. The Government, however, declined all these propositions. They refused to avail themselves of the offers of the Sultan, of the Pasha, of the Emperor of the French, and of the Peninsular and Oriental Company—they relied upon their own means and resources, and what happened? After a time, matters became more serious, and in the first week of September, application was made by the Government to the East India Directors, who had from the first been anxious to forward troops by the overland route, to arrange with the Peninsular and Oriental Company the very bargain which a month before Her Majesty's Government had declined. The East India Directors, in concert with the War Office and the illustrious Duke (the Duke of Cambridge), who, I am sure, was from the first anxious to provide for the despatch of reinforcements, undertook the arrangement. Really, my Lords, what I am going to say sounds so incredible, that I hardly expect to be believed, but I ask to be contradicted by the Government if they are able to contradict me; and should they do so, I promise to bring forward incontrovertible evidence to prove it. Some considerable time after the arrangements to which I have referred had been made, the right hon gentleman the President of the Board of Control somewhat surprised the agent of the Peninsular and Oriental Company by a letter, in which he asked him if some plan could not be arranged by which troops could be sent to India by means of the steamers of the Com-

* This offer, it appears was made not by the Peninsular and Oriental, but by the American and European Company

pany. Well, my Lords, the gentleman to whom the letter was addressed read it over, and then examined the seal and scrutinised the signature to see if it could possibly be a hoax, but finding that it was a genuine production he wrote back to say,* "You ask if it can be done, why, it is being done, and has been done for a considerable time, under the authority of the Government."† I ask your Lordships if it is not inconceivable that the President of the Board of Control, himself a member of the Cabinet, should write and ask if it was possible to organise a scheme, having the most important bearing on the business of his own department, when that scheme had been in full operation for a considerable period under the sanction of the Government? You may well laugh, but I ask you if, with such instances, the country may not reasonably distrust the vigour, the intelligence, and the energies of those by whom the efforts of her gallant army in the East are directed? Now, my Lords, if the advice of my noble friend (Lord Ellenborough) had been adopted, the offers of the Pasha of Egypt accepted, and troops sent through Egypt in the beginning of June, they might have arrived in Calcutta towards the middle of August; while, as it was, the first reinforcement which did arrive in India, with the exception of the troops detached from China and a small number from the Mauritius, was part of a regiment which was sent out in the "Golden Pleece," a remarkably quick ship, and which made the passage in the extraordinary short space of 68 days, but which did not arrive until the latter end of October. Now, my Lords, look to the circumstances of that garrison upon which the interest of all is painfully fixed, look at the position of Lucknow and the position of the relieving force, and tell me what would have been the effect if those troops which arrived in October had arrived at the beginning, the middle, or even the latter end of September. If they had so arrived the movements of Sir H. Havelock would have been perfectly safe and secure, and not the slightest risk would have been run by the garrison of Lucknow, with all its helpless women and children, of falling into the hands of their brutal and barbarous enemies; but if, from the delays of the Government in sending out

* The passage is printed as it was delivered but it is due to Mr. Vernon Smith to say that the statement is positively denied on his part and it would soon although made upon what appeared incontrovertible evidence to have originated in some misapprehension, at present wholly inexplicable, in the absence from England of the gentleman referred to.

troops, that town should fall, upon them will rest the guilt and the shame of such a fearful calamity. I hope, however, that the Government will not think that because I have felt it my duty freely to criticise their conduct, their oversight, and their delays, that I and those who sit with me are disposed to give them one whit less cordial assistance, and to devote our energies and every means at our command to carry out their views without the slightest diminution of the zeal we should have felt if we had been perfectly satisfied of the vigour and capacity of those by whom these means were to be wielded. This is a crisis when the men in power, who are happy enough to enjoy the confidence of the Sovereign and the country, and are responsible for the administration of affairs, must be supported by every man who has the interest of his country warmly and cordially at heart. At present, my Lords, the task before us is to reconquer an empire, and to that end our whole attention and energy must be directed. We must first re-establish our power, and then we may take into consideration that most important subject—a better organisation of our Indian empire. There is, however, connected with this subject, one painful circumstance to which I must allude. We have all read, my Lords, in this country, details of those fearful crimes and inhuman butcheries, of barbarities the narration of which, even at this distance, caused the blood of every man to curdle in his veins and his very flesh to quiver with indignation and abhorrence, and, therefore, I can well believe since, as we know, —

‘ Segnis mutant minos de ussi per anem
Qua i quæ oculis su jecta fidelibus et quæ
Ipse sibi tradit spectat’

Therefore I say I can well believe, that if we at this distance are so moved, the men who have witnessed these scenes of bloodshed—who, perhaps, had amongst the victims those dearest and most dependent upon them—whose feelings of manliness must have been shocked and horrified by the scenes that they witnessed, that those who came when the bloodshed and the murder was still fresh in the shamble house of Cawnpore, and saw the mutilated remains of women and children torn and mangled—— But, my Lords, I will not go on. That those who witnessed such scenes as these should be transported to a degree of frenzy which partakes somewhat of the demoniac character of those by whom those deeds were perpetrated; that coming fresh to the scene, and seeing

the dishonoured bodies of their countrywomen and their children, the most helpless and inoffensive of their race, they should be inspired with a sort of tiger thirst for blood, is not wonderful. That their passions should exceed the possibility of control; that for the moment they should become as savage for vengeance as those upon whom vengeance is about so fearfully to fall—is not to be wondered at. And, my Lords, vengeance, or rather, I would say, a righteous retribution, must fall heavy upon those who did those deeds. For the good of society, for the vindication of every sound and righteous principle, for the security of your own rule, for the restoration of the preponderance of your own power, you must exact a stern and severe account. For those who simply deserted their colours from fear, or whatever may be the excuse, there may be a minor punishment. But for those who fought against us, or who traitorously joined the ranks of our opponents, whether soldiers or not,—for them, if taken in arms against us, there is but one righteous penalty, and that is death. But for those miscreants, who perpetrated upon the bodies of our women and children atrocities and horrors over which human nature sickens, and the veil of decency must be drawn, who have been guilty of unimaginable atrocities against human nature, for them death is too slight a punishment. What punishment, what terror can death inflict upon them, when a man about to be blown from a cannon's mouth, believing that a short and sudden death would put an end to his sufferings, tells you that he dies rejoicing in this, that with his own hand he slaughtered three or four of your countrymen and countrywomen? For such men death is no punishment. They should have the heavier doom inflicted upon them of protracted life, of life with the brand of Cain upon their brow, denoting their offence, lest any man slay them. Severe, degrading, painful corporal punishment should be their lot. Hopeless, constant slavery should be their fate. Condemned to the most degrading occupations, be they Brahmans of the highest caste they should be the slaves of the lowest pariah; and in chains and in hopeless bondage they should drag out an existence to which death itself would be a relief they should vainly pray for, a terror to those who may be tempted to share in their guilt, an object of contemptuous execration to those whose feelings in the tenderest points they have outraged. I hope in what I have said I have shown no desire of vengeance for vengeance sake. I desire stern

and retributive justice for the sake of justice, and in order to inflict for the future a salutary terror on those who are disposed to rebel. But that which I do desire should be controlled by every moral persuasion possible, is a feeling of hostility and hatred on the part of the European population so widely spread as to extend to the whole native population. That the soldiers in the capture of Delhi, in the heat of the assault, and in the first flush of successful vengeance, may have sacrificed some innocent lives, is not to be too harshly blamed; but I have seen letters which would favour the notion that every man with a white face may treat every man with a black face as his enemy, to be shot down without provocation or upon the slightest provocation. That is a spirit which cannot be allowed to prevail. It must be restrained, if not by the principles of Christianity, by those of sound policy. If such a state of things continues, away with all idea of ever ruling India otherwise than by force of arms. You must convince the native much more than he is yet convinced of your unconquerable and indisputable superiority. You must show him, and make him feel, that England is his master; but having done so, you must make him feel also that Englishmen, notwithstanding all that has happened, notwithstanding the ingratitude that has been displayed towards them, and the provocation they have received, retain their dominion over the country, not for love of dominion, but for his own benefit. He must be your servant, but you must be his benefactor. You will probably have to govern India more or less by the sword during the lives of every one now present; but you must not hope to govern by the sword alone, without the moral influence that should accompany your government. One word more, and I will quit this most important subject, into which I have been led at greater length than I anticipated. My noble friend adverted to the paragraph in the Speech which, in mysterious terms, states that the affairs of Her Majesty's East Indian dominions will require the serious attention of Parliament, and that Her Majesty recommends them to its earnest attention. This paragraph may mean a great deal or nothing at all; and, having listened to the speech of my noble friend, I have not been much enlightened as to the views of the Government on this subject. No doubt some one of Her Majesty's Ministers will address the House in the course of this debate, and I shall have the opportunity of receiving from him a distinct explanation of the meaning of that passage in

the Queen's Speech, and of learning whether we are to infer that the Ministers contemplate bringing forward in this Session any measure whatever with respect to the Indian Government—I mean, any measure with respect to the constitution and form of government; or whether it is intended simply to call attention by way of committees of inquiry to the state of affairs in India. I hope, if the Government mean legislation at all, they mean to legislate on their own responsibility. In 1852 I moved for the appointment of a Committee to inquire into the then state of affairs in India, in connexion with the subject of the renewal of the East India Company's Charter. That Committee continued to sit during the short Session of 1852, it met again in 1853, but its deliberations were then cut short by an act of the Government which succeeded mine. They then proceeded to legislate on India, notwithstanding the remonstrances of a noble relative of mine in the other House. Having passed the Act, the Government still thought it necessary to continue the inquiry. It certainly seems to me that the more natural course would have been to continue the inquiry first and pass an Act afterwards. But the Government of that day did not think so. They did, however, continue the inquiry, and the result was to get a body of information on all the subjects on which the Government of 1852 thought it necessary to obtain it. Information of the fullest kind, and to the most ample extent, as in the case of the Bank Charter, so also in that of India, is now in the possession of the Government. They have, at all events, all which is necessary to enable them to decide whether the present double Government shall continue, or whether an alteration shall be made in the formation of that Government. But I do trust, that if it is intended that this subject should form part of the deliberations of Parliament, it may form part of those deliberations upon the responsibility of the Government. It has been intimated to us that the affairs of India would occupy our attention during the present Session. I venture to say, my Lords, that the affairs of India,—if by that is meant the whole legislation for India and the organisation of that empire,—will occupy the attention of Parliament and the Government of the time, not only for the present Session, but for the life of the youngest man amongst us. They must form, from this day forth, a subject of the most serious and deepest interest, of constant and unceasing anxiety, to which public attention will unremittingly be turned. There is only one other sub-

ject to which my noble friend adverted, on which I think it necessary to say a word, and on which I hope I shall not be misunderstood. He says that it is the duty of the Government, by all means in their power, to promote the spread of Christianity in India. No man can be more desirous than I that the blessings of Christianity should be diffused as widely as possible, and that its doctrines should be brought to exercise a wholesome influence on minds so debased, depraved, and ignorant as the population of India are at present. But the more that is my desire, the more I deprecate the interference of Government. If you intend to place an insuperable barrier between the Government and the population, you have seen in the matter of the greased cartridges with what inflammable materials you are dealing, and if you mean to render the maintenance of your rule in India impossible except by the sword, you will endeavour to convert the natives to Christianity by the influence and authority of Government. I do not mean to say that you should put the slightest check in the way of missionary enterprise in India. I doubt whether those efforts are likely to be very successful, but I do not find that they have provoked the slightest hostility to the Government, or that the presence of missionaries as private missionaries had exercised the least unfavourable influence upon the minds of the natives. Give to the missionaries who are sent out to India all protection, all protection they require, but, whatever you do in the administration of your government, show that the Government stands aloof as between the two religions, and will exercise neither force nor influence to secure the conversion of one single Hindoo. We cannot now, we shall not for years, be able to trust either Mahomedans or Hindoos to the degree in which we have trusted them, and desired to trust them. We are bound not to pay homage to their slavish superstitions, nor to conceal our personal attachment to Christianity. We are bound to show in our conduct the superiority of our faith to theirs. But we are 'bound', also, to abstain in the most careful manner from any the slightest interference, by force or authority, with their religion or superstition, however base, degrading, and revolting we may consider it. God prosper the work of the missionaries in India. But if it is to prosper at all, it must prosper, notwithstanding the apparent indifference to its progress which must be manifested by Government. Government patronage to missionary effort will be an impediment, and a most serious one, to its success.

There is only one other subject to which I need advert—I mean, of course, the long-delayed subject of Parliamentary Reform, which is introduced in Her Majesty's Speech in terms of great moderation, and which was touched on with still greater moderation by my noble friend. Indeed, on this subject he “*rejoiced like any sucking dove*.” The new measure of Reform is, according to my noble friend, merely to correct some trifling defects or blemishes in the Reform Act, to which that, like all other human laws, is subject. If the new measure is to do anything more than that, my noble friend knows nothing of it, and is not answerable for it. Had he known it, nothing would have induced him to move the Address to-night. Well, my Lords, be the proposed alterations of the Reform Act large or small, I say for myself, and for those with whom I have the honour of acting, we are ready, if in the judgment of the Government this is a convenient and suitable time for introducing a measure of Reform, to give it the most deliberate, impartial, and dispassionate consideration. If it remove blemishes in our present system, so much the better. I will be it from me to contend that our system of Parliamentary representation, as it stands, is free from blemishes. If it introduce improvements, we will support them by all the means in our power. But they must be what we think improvements. It is, however, advisable that the Ministers should give Parliament some reasonable time to take into consideration the proposed measure of Reform, be it more or less extensive. The Bill has been promised for the last two years, and, but for peculiar circumstances, would have been brought forward last year. It must, therefore, be drawn. That it is drawn, I cannot have the slightest doubt. I have not the least doubt, therefore, that the Government are prepared at once to redeem the promise held out in the Speech from the Throne. None of your Lordships can imagine for a moment that the Government have been dealing so unfavourably with Parliament and the country, as for two years to have been dangling before our eyes the prospect of a Bill which is not in existence. I am sure the Bill is ready, and when it comes before us we shall have to deal with it as the calm and deliberate expression of the opinion of Ministers. (Hear, hear, from Lord GRANVILLE.) Being the work of a united Cabinet, and, as I have said, ready to be laid before Parliament (Lord GRANVILLE dissented), I do hope the Government will lose no time in producing it. Independent

the particular business for which we have been called together at the present time, some advantage will have been gained by this short Session before Christmas, if the Government take the opportunity which it affords of laying before us—not with the view of proceeding at once to its discussion—the measure of Parliamentary Reform which they have announced, so that all parties, both those who would prefer a small measure, and those who desire an extensive one, may see how far the views of Ministers coincide with their own, and may be able during the recess to consider what course they ought to pursue when Parliament re-assembles in February. We shall then be in a condition to take the Bill into consideration early in the Session, and to express our opinions upon it. I hope therefore, that if the Government do really mean to bring forward a measure of the kind indicated in the Speech from the Throne, they will give such notice as will enable Parliament to come deliberately to the discussion of a question which is of much or little importance according to the manner in which they propose to deal with it. Although my Lords, I have thought it my duty, I fear at unusual length, to offer some comments upon the Speech from the Throne, and to ask some questions relative to two or three of the points with which it deals, yet I am happy to say, that I do not find in the language of it anything calling for amendment on our part. The Speech does not require us to express any opinion upon the important questions to which it adverts, it merely indicates some of the topics which must come under the consideration of Parliament in the present Session, and the language in which it is couched does not seem to render it necessary for us to offer any opposition to the Government upon this occasion. One word more and I have done. As I understand it, the Government wish that we should confine ourselves in the meantime to the special subject which has led to the present meeting of Parliament, and in these circumstances I have no hesitation in saying, not only for myself, but also for those who act with me, that we shall be ready to give every facility for the despatch of public business, so as to enable the Government to adjourn Parliament at the earliest possible moment.

