THE GOVERNORSHIP AND HIGH COMMISSIONERSHIP

OF

SIR HERCULES ROBINSON,

1881-1889

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C O N T E N T S

INTRODUCTION

In August 1880, Sir Hercules George Robert Robinson, then Governor of New Zealand, was informed that he had been appointed to the dual posts of Governor of the Cape Colony and Her Majesty's High Commissioner for South Africa. This position, because of its dual nature, involving responsibility to the Cape Colonial Government in one capacity, and to the Imperial Government in the other, and also because of the rather explosive state of affairs throughout the greater part of South Africa, was one of the most difficult in the whole of the British Empire, requiring a man of more than average administrative abilities, tact and patience. Sir Bartle Frere, the man he was to replace, had done his best, without much success, in a very difficult situation; and, in September 1880, returned to England complaining bitterly about the summary dismissal he had received from the new Liberal Government of Gladstone, to which he was repugnant. The question now was, could Robinson carry out the difficult task he was faced with?

Robinson's career up to that point had been one that augured well for the future. The second son of Admiral Hercules Robinson, he was born on the 19th of December 1824. He was educated at Sandhurst, and joined the army as a second lieutenant in 1843. In 1846 he retired from the army with the rank of first lieutenant, having meantime married a daughter of Viscount Valentia, and took up an appointment under the commissioners of public works for Ireland. He later served under the poor law board, doing good work during the Irish famine of 1848, and in 1852 he was chief commissioner of a board of inquiry into Ireland's fairs and markets.

In March 1854, he received the appointment of president of Montserrat, in the West Indies, at this time regarded as a nursery for colonial governors. In the following year he was promoted to the lieutenant-governorship of the neighbouring St Christopher Island, where, among other things, he played a large part in the introduction of Chinese labourers into the

island. In 1859, he graduated to the position of governor of Hong Kong, a position he retained until 1865. It was during his governorship that the war of 1860-1861 with China was fought, and he subsequently negotiated with China for the cession of Kowloon, and arranged the details of its annexation. In 1863, he was a member of a commission of inquiry into the financial position of the Straits Settlement.

In 1865, he became governor of Ceylon, where he reorganized the public works department, making it one of the most efficient in the entire British Empire. By 1872, he had become governor of the very important Colony of New South Wales, a sure proof of the high regard in which he had come to be held. Here, his chief contribution was to negotiate, in September 1874, the cession of the Fiji Islands. He also gained much useful knowledge in how a governor can best act in order to facilitate the smooth running of a colony with Responsible Government. His firmness and tact won him high praise from leading New South Wales politicians.

He left New South Wales to take over the governorship of New Zealand in March 1879, and in August 1880, he left to take up his appointment in South Africa, where he arrived on January 21st 1881, having first returned to England, where he received detailed instructions as to how he was to act in the difficult situations which would confront him on his arrival at the Cape.

Robinson had therefore had considerable experience in both colonial administration and negotiation with foreign powers before he came to South Africa. Cautious, businesslike, dignified, something of an orator, a kindly man, although somewhat inclined to irritability if his orders were not carried out in every detail, a liberal-minded, frank man, a great believer in his own abilities as arbitrator and negotiator, he was sworn in as Cape Governor and South African High Commissioner at noon on the afternoon of January 22nd, 1881, and immediately plunged into the enormous task of trying to settle the numerous wars and differences of opinion that existed throughout the country.(1)

(1) For Robinson's career, see the Dictionary of National Biography, Supplement, Volume III, pp. 300-303.

The situation into which Robinson came was a rather grim one. As far as his position as Governor of the Cape was concerned, there was some cause for worry. The recently-formed Afrikaner Bond, which was later to raise many problems for him, was as yet in its early stages, but Sprigg's government was becoming increasingly unpopular, and was due to fall in May, while the problem of Basutoland was also of concern to him in his capacity as Cape Governor, as well as causing him headaches in his capacity as High Commissioner. Further reasons for the unrest in the Cape were to be found in affairs in the rest of South Africa, which Robinson would deal with in his capacity as High Commissioner.

At the end of September 1880, as a result largely of some rather high-handed action by the Cape Government, the Basutos rose, and successfully defied all attempts to suppress them. The trouble spread to Griqualand East, and East Pondoland, although both these areas, helped by friendly tribes, the colonial troops were fairly soon able to restore peace.

Then, in the middle of December, the Transvaalers, long resentful of their annexation to the Crown in 1877, suddenly rose and declared a Republic once again. Kruger, Pretorius and Joubert were named as a Triumvirate to take charge of Transvaal interests, and on December 16, the War of Independence started, a war carried on between two parties, neither of whom was well-equipped or well-trained, nor very numerous, although the Boers at least had the advantage of being able to shoot straight

By the time Robinson arrived in South Africa, the British had been defeated in several encounters, and negotiations for peace were under way. But the war and its antecedents had caused bitter antagonism on both sides, and it would require great tact and ability to negotiate a peace satisfactory to all concerned, not forgetting the Dutch of the Orange Free State and the Cape, both of which groups were at the very least seriously considering the possibility of rising against the British in sympathy with their Transvaal brothers.

The rest of South Africa was comparatively quiet, although there was always a further possibility of trouble with the Natal Zulus, the Pondos, and the Bechuana tribes, unless the situation in the Transvaal was speedily and satisfactorily cleared up.

As we have seen, Robinson first returned to England for detailed instructions before coming to South Africa. As far as the Transvaal was concerned, he does not seem to have been given any specific written instructions, but shortly after his arrival at the Cape he was instructed to proceed to the Transvaal with all speed to sit on the Commission being set up to draw up peace terms. In all other respects, however, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the Earl of Kimberley, gave Robinson detailed instructions in a despatch written on the 30th December 1880.(1)

Robinson can expect to find the situation at the Cape substantially the same as it had been in Frere's time, partly because the acting governor Sir George Strachan had been told to leave things as they were pending his arrival, and also because

> "the present military operations have necessarily occupied the attention of the Cape Government, and of the Cape generally, to so great an extent as to preclude the deliberate consideration of less pressing questions".

He is to have similar functions as Frere, that is to say, he will act on the advice of his Ministers in his capacity as Governor of the Cape, while in his capacity as High Commissioner he will act on his own, subject only to the control of the British Colonial Office, and his jurisdiction will extend over all parts of South Africa which are British possessions, with the exception of the Cape and Natal.

(1) Both the original and a printed copy of this despatch are to be found in GH 1/82.

The Governor of Natal is also High Commissioner for South East Africa, retaining the supervision of affairs in Zululand, But this is to be only a temporary arrangement, and Robinson is even now his theoretical superior.

As regards confederation, Robinson is very strongly enjoined to leave all such schemes strictly alone. Union, while desirable, is at present impracticable (Frere had tried hard to achieve it, but had been thwarted all along the line). Any scheme for confederation must come spontaneously from the Colonies,

> "from the conviction that their own political and material interests demand it".

However,

> "it might be possible to bring about at once joint action in regard to Customs duties, and such matters as Postal and Telegraphic communication".

On the Basutoland problem, Kimberley reiterates what he has previously told Frere, that Imperial troops will not be used in Basutoland. Basutoland was made part of the Cape in 1871, and therefore the Cape Ministers are responsible for advising the Governor on its administration. The British Government felt that the time and manner of the disarmament of the Basutos (the chief cause of the Basuto war still raging) were badly chosen, but will not intervene on either side.

With regard to British possessions beyond the borders of the Cape, such as [illegible] Walvis Bay, Kimberley states that

> "the High Commissioner is alone empowered to deal with the Native tribes and territories beyond the border".

The Cape Government has been exercising jurisdiction over these territories, advising the High Commissioner on them, but it has no right whatsoever to exercise such jurisdiction, and such exercise must stop at once.

Finally, Robinson is under no circumstances to extend the existing boundaries. (Throughout all these instructions,

the dilemma of the Liberal Party can be clearly seen. They were anxious that the interests of the natives in Britain's overseas possessions be safeguarded, but at the same time they were afraid to adopt too strong a policy towards aggressors against this ideal, because - unlike the Conservatives, who were developing an aggressive policy of Imperial expansion - they were anxious as far as possible to avoid taking on new commitments which might lead to the necessity to annex more territory, and also because they were anxious to avoid undue expendigure of money or lives. They were thus also not averse to giving the Transvaal a modified form of independence, as this would reduce the costs of administration, and also ~~its~~ their responsibilities, but such independence would be given only if adequate safeguards for the native tribes could be given.)

Armed with these instructions, his administrative and diplomatic experience, and his Liberal approach, Robinson embarked, on his arrival at the Cape, at the age of 55, on a period of eight and a half strenuous years as Governor and High Commissioner for the Imperial Government in South Africa.

CHAPTER I

THE TRANSVAAL TO 1884

By the time that Robinson arrived at the Cape, negotiations for peace were already well under way between the Transvaal and the British Government. The war had not been prosecuted very aggressively by either side, since both were anxious not to further aggravate the trouble with the Basutos, or cause by their fighting further trouble with the natives. In addition, the British Government was very keen to end the fighting, for it was confronted at home with trouble in Ireland, as well as the possibility of the Orange Free State and Cape Boers rising in support of the Transvaal. Negotiations therefore soon began, and Kimberley offered internal freedom to the Boers, with certain checks on external affairs, provided that they would first lay down their arms. Kruger returned a counter-proposal that he would accept the appointment of a Commission to draw up a Convention for Transvaal independence, provided that Britain first withdrew her troops. Kimberley rejected this, but ordered General Colley to try and arrange an armistice. For the British to withdraw completely would have been a severe blow to British prestige in the eyes of both White and Black. Further, a large portion of Gladstone's Government would not countenance withdrawal, and could only with difficulty be persuaded to agree to Suzerainty.

On February 27th, before an answer could be received to his armistice proposal, Colley was killed at Majuba. However, Kruger replied favourably in due course, and on March 21st 1881, an armistice was arranged, with President Brand's help. Kimberley insisted that safeguards to natives be included in the final settlement, and the Boers accepted Suzerainty, on the understanding that it was to mean that

> "the country has entire self-government as regards its own interior affairs, but that it cannot take action against or with an outside Power without the permission

of the Suzerain".(1)

All other questions were to be decided by the Commission.

Robinson had had little to do with these peace negotiations, being kept busy with trying to help the Cape out of the trouble it had got itself into with the Basutos, but he was kept informed of the situation by Sir Henry de Villiers, who was in constant correspondence with Brand, both of them constantly urging the cessation of hostilities and the appointment of a Commission to settle the problems of Transvaal independence.(2) However, on the armistice being agreed upon, Kimberley proposed as members of the Commission, Sir Evelyn Wood (Colley's successor), who would have preferred to first crush the Boers, then give them lenient peace terms, Sir Henry de Villiers, and Robinson (as President). This the Boers agreed to, and Robinson was instructed to get in touch with Wood and arrange a time and place for the Commission to meet, "which should be immediate", Natal being suggested as the probable meeting place.(3)

In two telegrams dated March 26 and March 28, Wood gave Robinson full details of the task that lay before the Commission.(4) The Commission was to consider the problem of giving the Transvaal internal self-government, but with foreign relations being guided by Britain as Suzerain. The transfer to the new government should be completed within six months at the most. Until the transfer, the Transvaal would be under British rule. Her Majesty's Government would after that be represented by a British Resident sitting at Pretoria. The Commission would have to make very careful provision for the protection of Native interests, and would have to determine the northern boundary between the Transvaal and the various tribes stretching from the Bechuanas to the Swazis. Further, all claims by either side for damages not justified by the necessities of war, were to be decided by

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(1) C.3114, pp. 51-52, quoted in Walker, History, pp. 389-390.
(2) Walker, De Villiers, pp. 151-154.
(3) Telegram (copy), Kimberley to Robinson, 23/3/1881, in GH.7/1.
(4) GH 35/1, Nos 149 and 155.

the Commission. There would be a general indemnity, but the Boers would have to co-operate in bringing to justice those who committed, or were responsible for, acts contrary to the rules of civilized warfare. Finally, Wood urged Robinson to come up to Natal at once, as the work must be done as soon as possible, for the situation in the Transvaal must be cleared up immediately.

Unfortunately, Robinson was unable to leave the Cape yet, as he was busy with his proposals for a Basutoland Award, and could not get away until they were accepted by the Basutos. In addition, the Sprigg Ministry was tottering (it fell in May), thus adding to his troubles. However, he realized that, while these considerations were of the utmost importance, yet the work of the Commission must be begun without delay. Wood was getting impatient, and was still clamouring to be allowed to march his troops into the Transvaal for his cherished military victory. Robinson therefore fell in with De Villiers's suggestion that he (De Villiers) and Wood open proceedings without him, and that he himself would come up as soon as he had settled his other problems. This was done, and on April 29th, the same day as Robinson gave his Basutoland Award, Wood and De Villiers opened the proceedings of the Royal Commission at Newcastle.

Before Robinson arrived (on May 10), Wood and De Villiers had already made some progress in the matter of trials for Boers accused of breaches of the rules of civilized warfare. De Villiers stated, (and Robinson when he arrived agreed with him) that the setting up of the special tribunal proposed by Wood would only result in making the Boers distrustful, thus jeopardizing the success of the Commission.[1] Of all the cases brought to its notice, the Commission decided that only three were clear cases of murder, and these three were sent before the ordinary courts, and, under the circumstances, were naturally all dismissed.

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(1) This account of the activities of the Royal Commission is based largely on Walker, De Villiers, pp. 157-165, while full details of its proceedings may be found in GH 21/9 - GH 21/16.

Now that Robinson had arrived, the Commission got down to serious work, marred to some extent by the fact that they did not get on too well together.

> "Wood frankly hated his work, and hankered to the last for a route-march in force through the Transvaal as a warning to all whom it might concern. He differed on many points from Robinson and on most from De Villiers, whom he suspected of a desire to whittle away British paramountcy to the uttermost."(1)

They were constantly at loggerheads, and both Wood and De Villiers more than once considered resigning. De Villiers and Robinson, on the other hand, got on rather well together, both trying their best to be impartial, trying to perform the tremendous task of satisfying both Boer and Briton. Neither was very successful, but they did at least become good friends during the course of the sitting of the Commission.

The Commission, despite De Villiers's opposition, went rather beyond the Boer interpretation of the peace terms by accepting, as part of the definition of Suzerainty, the right of Britain to conclude treaties and conduct diplomatic intercourse with foreign powers in the name of the Transvaal, but the Boers finally accepted it. That apart, the Commission gave to the Transvaal the complete self-government, subject to British suzerainty, promised to it by the peace terms, including complete internal self-government.

The question of boundaries next came up. The Transvaal was given definite frontiers for the first time. In the West, large tracts of native lands were removed from the control of the Transvaal government, while in the East, in the interests of the Natives, certain changes were made. Swaziland was to be independent, while for the rest, while the Transvaal would retain the territory she had previously held, the British Resident would get fuller powers, a Native Location Commission would be set up, which would decide what lands natives would hold,

(1) Walker, De Villiers, p.158.

and finally, the Queen would have the veto of all laws affecting Natives.

In the middle of June, the Commission went up to Pretoria, where De Villiers drafted the Convention, while Robinson corresponded daily with Kimberley, to make sure that the Convention would be acceptable to the British Government. When finally ready, the Pretoria Convention included 36 clauses (altered to 33 just before being signed on August 3, by the omission of clauses repugnant to the Boers). In addition to those points already mentioned, the Convention embodied clauses prohibiting slavery and the slave-trade, assured equal civil rights for all, and laid a heavy financial burden on the Transvaal State by saddling it with a large proportion of the debts incurred during the period of annexation. One thing it did not include, despite a warning by Wood, was any provision for safeguarding the franchise. This, and the provision removing much of its western marches from the Transvaal, were to cause considerable trouble in the future, the latter almost immediately, the former somewhat later.

The Boer delegates were prepared to accept about 20 of the clauses without any cavil. They also accepted the anti-slavery clause when its wording was softened. The financial settlement gave rise to much displeasure. A joint sub-commission was set up to deal with all claims, while the British Government advanced large sums of money to help tide the nearly bankrupt country over till it got on its feet again. The Boers could never pay the huge sums of money demanded from them annually, and eventually these were reduced considerably, while the clauses on pensions and compensation for displaced officials, which displeased the Boers, were cut out entirely.

The problem of who was to ratify the Convention on the Boer side caused considerable vexation. The old Volksraad was defunct, and a new one could hardly be called while the country remained under British rule.

"It was therefore arranged that the civil government should be handed over to the Triumvirate as soon as the Convention was signed, and the Volksraad elected to ratify the Convention within three months. Then, and then only, would the troops march out."(1)

This was rather unpopular among the Boers, but it was the only way out, and so it was accepted, and finally, on August 3rd 1881, after further fruitless attempts by the Triumvirate to get the Commission to change the clauses on Imperial control over foreign affairs, and the powers of the Resident, the Triumvirate signed the Pretoria Convention.

On the following day, Robinson read the Proclamation to the people, and on the 5th, the three Commissioners left for home.

"They left behind them the troops in the garrison towns and three harassed gentlemen faced with an empty treasury, an overdraft, and the grim prospect of presenting a most unpalatable convention to the new Volksraad."(2)

Throughout the proceedings, Robinson had acted with considerable tact in many difficult situations. He did his best to smooth over the bitterness felt between the Boers and the British, and also the resentment the British in South Africa felt towards what they considered Britain's abandonment of the Transvaal and all the Britishers in it. He seems to have been himself at heart even at that stage rather anti-Boer, largely because of their native attitude, but concealed it quite well, only occasionally becoming a trifle too frank for comfort. This can be seen particularly when the subject under discussion was the native problem. In fact, after his address to the natives of the Transvaal on August 4th, when he explained the relevant sections of the new Convention to them, he noted that

"the Chiefs are much dissatisfied and distressed at the country being returned, and say that, after

(1) Walker, De Villiers, p.162.
(2) Walker, De Villiers, p.164.

experiencing British rule for four years, they cannot live under the Boers again. They have returned to their homes, as they say, with heavy hearts, and no hope for the future. Mr Shepstone does not anticipate any immediate trouble, but thinks that if the Boers revert to old harsh treatment, natives will not again quietly submit. Before signing Convention yesterday, I earnestly warned the leaders that, in our opinion, the greatest danger the future Government had to contend with was the native difficulty. I told them frankly that, in the opinion of the Commission, the treatment of the natives by their people in the past had often been harsh and cruel; and I urged them to employ all the moral influence they possessed, and all the legal power they could exercise, to secure for the natives, who had no voice in the change now brought about, kind and considerate treatment in the future. The leaders assured me that they would do their best to comply with our last word of parting advice."(1)

Back in Cape Town, Robinson and De Villiers busied themselves with completing the Report of the Commission, being in constant telegraphic communication with Wood in Natal. Meanwhile, in the Transvaal, things were not going too well. On September 21st, the new Volksraad met. Early in the month, it had appeared that the Convention might be ratified with ease,(2) but when the Volksraad finally met, the Convention was bitterly criticised on all sides. Those articles which aroused the bitterest criticism were the articles dealing with British control of the Transvaal's diplomatic relations with

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(1) Telegram (copy), Robinson to Kimberley, 4/8/1881, in GH 7/1.

(2) Telegram (copy), Robinson to Kimberley, 7/9/1881, in GH 7/1.

foreign states, the natives, and the financial settlement.[1]

On the 5th of October Robinson, in two telegrams to Kimberley, gave his reading of the situation, which proved to be substantially vindicated, and also gave his opinion on what course to follow.[2] Her Majesty's Government would have to choose between the complete Convention on the one hand, and the return of the Transvaal to virtual independence, on the other. He felt that the Volksraad was trying to see whether it could not perhaps extract further concessions before November 3rd (the day by which the Convention was to be ratified), and that if Her Majesty's Government held firm, the Convention would be ratified by that date. (In this respect, Robinson does not seem to have realized just how deeply the Boers believed that their grievances were completely legitimate.) He suggested that Hudson (the British Resident in the Transvaal) be told to inform the Transvaal leaders that, as they had entered into the peace conference, and had undertaken to ratify the Convention within three months, they could not expect her Majesty's Government to

> "entertain any proposals for a modification of the Convention, until after it has been ratified and its practical working fairly tested".[3]

Further, the troops should remain where they were, and nothing further should be done or said until after November 3rd.

With regard to specific Boer complaints, Robinson stated that, in the first place, control of the foreign affairs of the Transvaal would be totally impracticable unless Britain had the power to conduct these affairs. Next, the Native Locations Commission, and the veto on legislation concerning natives, were made necessary by the fact that Britain had abandoned much of the territory, in the East of the Transvaal, which she could have annexed. She must therefore protect the inte-

(1) Telegram (copy), Robinson to Kimberley, 29/9/1881, in GH 7/1.
(2) (Copies), GH 35/2, pp. 76-79.
(3) p. 77.

rests of the half a million natives resident in these areas. He also pointed out that, in regard to complaints about the heavy debt the Transvaal had to pay off, £500,000 had been struck out, and they could hardly expect more.

While Robinson was vindicating the reasonableness of the British attitude to the situation, the Boers in the Transvaal were still holding out against ratification. However, after pressure from Kruger, who pointed out that failure to ratify the Convention would result in the renewal of the war, and faced with native complications on the Western and Eastern borders, the Volksraad, at noon on October 25th, 1881, ratified the Convention.

The ratification of the Convention, however, did not mean the end of the troubles with the Transvaal. In fact, the next three years are largely the story of Transvaal transgressions against the Convention they had so reluctantly signed, these difficulties leading eventually to the rather more satisfactory London Convention, signed on February 27th 1884.

From the very beginning, one of the chief sources of trouble was the Western boundary with Bechuanaland. Boers crossing over the boundary and helping some tribes in their wars against other, pro-British tribes, caused relations between Britain and the Transvaal to become somewhat strained. These disturbances will be dealt with in detail in the following chapter, for, while they caused strained relations to arise between the British and the Transvaal, their chief effect was on the peace and stability of the area which later became the Bechuanaland Protectorate.

This, however, was not the only cause of friction between the Transvaal and Great Britain over the next few years. In fact, no sooner had the Convention been ratified than the British were faced with the problem of whether to recognise it. The ratification had taken the form of a resolution of the Volksraad, which had said in effect that, while deferring

to the wishes of Her Majesty's Government in the matter of signing the Convention, they still felt that their objections, set out at great length, were sound and solid ones, that is to say, that, while they accepted the Convention because the British desired it, they had no intention of ceasing to urge further concessions at the least opportunity.

Robinson at this time was busy with the twofold job of completing the actual Report, and conferring with Kimberley as to whether the Resolution could be accepted as a ratification.(1) They eventually came to the conclusion that, despite its ifs and buts, the Volksraad Resolution could probably be construed as an unconditional acceptance of the Convention on the part of the Transvaal, but that, although the troops should be withdrawn, an attempt should be made to keep the telegraph between the Cape and the Transvaal open, just in case.

The results of their deliberations were embodied in Kimberley's despatch to Robinson, dated December 19th, 1881,(2) announcing Her Majesty's Government's final acceptance of the ratification, and asking Robinson to tell Hudson to send the despatch to the Transvaal Government. He regards the statements and objections which precede the statement of ratification as not "affecting in any manner the ratification which is unconditional". Further, the statement that the Raad is "provisionally submitting the Articles of Convention to a practical test" cannot be applicable to the ratification, and must therefore merely be a repetition of the earlier statement that, by experience, the Convention may have to be modified by common consent. However, the Raad's implication that changes will of necessity be immediately implemented is not quite accurate, for the Imperial Government has merely said that it would be possible to implement changes that were mutually agreed on, but does not in any way admit that the Convention requires modification. Also, the Boer claim that they had been misled

(1) GH 35/2, pp. 150-200.
(2) Transvaal State No. 26, in GH 2/4.

by the original peace negotiations to expect different terms was so much nonsense, as the Convention is in substantial agreement with Wood's peace with the Boer leaders, and that, in fact, the Boers got a substantial concession, being allowed to retain the Eastern part of the Transvaal, contrary to the peace terms. Finally, Kimberley says that, while disappointed that the Boers thought fit to enter all those objections before their unconditional ratification of the Convention, he appreciates their motives for so doing, and will notify all foreign governments of the Convention and the Transvaal's ratification of it.

Kimberley and Robinson were apparently satisfied that the last word had been said on the subject, but the Transvaal was not to be put off by mere words from trying their utmost to alter what they considered the unfair terms they had been forced by the necessities of the moment to accept. Trouble almost immediately broke out on the Western borders, and continued unabated for several years, while other, less flagrant signs soon became apparent. For example, little pin-pricks of insults, like drinking toasts to the Transvaal, the Volksraad, and the Triumvirate before that to the Queen, and the public reception by the Transvaal authorities of addresses criticising the British Government, in the presence of the Resident,[1] became quite common.

In February, Robinson was informed by Kimberley[2] that all three Commissioners had been honoured for their part in the Convention. Robinson himself became a Privy Councillor (he had been knighted in 1859, had become a K.C.M.G. in 1869, and a G.C.M.G. in 1875), while Wood was made a knight Grand Cross of St Michael and St George, and De Villiers became a Knight Commander of the same order.

Meanwhile, affairs in the Transvaal were gradually being worked out. The sub-commission finally finished making its awards and claims, £12,800 against the British Government,

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(1) Hudson to Robinson, in Despatch Transvaal State (Confidential), Robinson to Kimberley, 21/1/1882, in GH 25/4, pp.37-38.
(2) Despatch (Honours), 23/2/1882, in GH 1/85.

£132,000 against the Boer Government. The latter, unable to pay, asked for an advance, which was granted. Also, other, more personal claims were gradually being worked out, more or less satisfactorily.

In July, the Transvaal Government demanded that the Minutes of the Meetings of the Transvaal Executive Council under British Rule be handed over to them, a demand which Robinson opposed strongly on the grounds that, judging from the type of subject probably discussed at these meetings,

> "it is easy to perceive the consequences which might arise from the surrender to the present Government of the records desired".(1)

At the same time, he sent Kimberley a strongly-worded despatch(2) in which he condemned the Transvaal's insistence that the term "South African Republic" be used to describe the Transvaal State, as of old, a name repugnant to the British Government. The Transvaal had said that there had been no agreement about what the name of the state should be, but, says Robinson, the British Government openly assumed a change of name, and

> "an agreement need not necessarily be expressed, it may be implied. If when two parties are negotiating, the one openly assumes that the other will act in a particular manner, and that other does not say one word to correct such an assumption, silence constitutes in honour a consent which should be as binding as a specific agreement".

In the Convention, although it had nowhere been stated that the term "Transvaal State" was to be the official designation of the Transvaal, yet the term had been widely used in the wording of the Convention, and had the Triumvirate stated their objection to the term during the negotiations, the matter

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(1) Despatch, Transvaal State No. 126, Robinson to Kimberley, 6/7/1882, in GH 25/4, p.98.
(2) Despatch, Transvaal State No. 128, 6/7/1882, in GH 25/4, pp. 111-114.

could have been deferred to the Imperial Government for decision. But, by concealing their objections, and then assuming another name on the country being handed back to them, the Triumvirate had

> "laid themselves open to charges of disingenuousness, and of violation of an honourable understanding".

However, each side continued to use its own designation, until the London Convention agreed to the term "South African Republic".

At the end of the year, Robinson received from Bulwer, the Natal Governor, a complaint of Transvaal Boer encroachments on Zulu territory. In a despatch to Hudson,(1) he told him to inform the Transvaal Government of this letter, and at the same time to point out that, the Zulus being disarmed and prevented from organizing any form of military force, since the war of 1879,

> "the neighbouring governments are under a special obligation to restrain their subjects from any encroachments on the just rights of the Zulu people".

By these and other similar statements did Robinson during this period attempt to get the Transvaalers to stick to their treaty obligations. Needless to say, they had little or no effect, but they do show Robinson's intense sense of honour, his tendency to stand on his dignity when an action offended him, or when he could not get his own way, and his gradually more and more outspoken dislike of the Transvaal Boers.

He did realize, however, that his efforts and those of others like him were having little or no effect on the course of events, and, always sensitive to the interests of the natives, he soon began to urge the abrogation of the Convention, for, as he said to the Earl of Derby,(2) who had recently succeeded Kimberley as Secretary of State for the Colonies,

> "the main purpose of the Convention was whilst restoring to the Burghers complete local self-government,

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(1) (Copy), 18/12/1882, Transvaal State No. 299, in GH 31/3.
(2) Despatch Transvaal State No. 10, 22/1/1883, in GH 25/4, p.198.

to secure at the same time justice and fair treatment for the Natives in and around the Transvaal. If the Convention fails in effecting this object it will be better that it should be formally abrogated rather than allowed to remain a delusion to the Natives, and a fruitless source of altercation and irritation between the two governments".

In April 1883, Robinson left for England on leave, and he was still there when Kruger and two others arrived in London in November for talks with Derby, talks which led eventually to the abrogation of the Pretoria Convention, and its supercession by the London Convention. By this Convention,

"native legislation was freed from the Queen's veto, the powers of the Resident were cut down to those of a consul, and the debt reduced by a third. On the other hand, all Europeans were to be entitled to full civil rights and equal taxation; there were to be no vindictive tariffs nor prohibitions on the importation of British goods, and, sole remnant of the substance of suzerainty, the Transvaal was to conclude no treaty with states other than the Free State nor with tribes to the east or west without the approval of H.M. Government. Kruger fought hard [against this clause]...., but the High Commissioner and Scanlen [the Cape Prime Minister] were present to stiffen Derby's back and insist that there must be a compromise. Finally the Transvaal was given a line which included part only of Stellaland and Goshen [two independent Boer republics set up in Bechuanaland in 1882] and, in recompense for the exclusion of the Road, saw all mention of the hated suzerainty dropped out of the Convention."(1)

Kruger had great difficulty in getting his Volksraad to ratify this Convention before August, but he was eventually

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(1) Walker, History, p.404.

successful, despite some premature action by the Reverend John MacKenzie, the new British Commissioner for Bechuanaland, in raising the British flag in Vryburg, and the Transvaal now settled down to a comparatively quiet period, at any rate in so far as its relations with the rest of South Africa were concerned.

CHAPTER II

BECHUANALAND TO 1884

The problem of Bechuanaland proved a considerable headache for both the Boers and the British. The former, worried by internal native disturbances, could not be expected to view with equanimity the presence just over their borders of constantly warring tribes, and in any case, they felt that much of the land there really belonged to them. The British, on the other hand, were not too much concerned by native wars as such, but became very upset whenever they learned that one or other tribe was being assisted by groups of Whites from the Transvaal, and also other places, like the Free State, to a much lesser extent, who received in payment for their services, gifts of cattle and land wrested from the defeated enemy.

This situation had been causing trouble for some time on the Western border of the Transvaal.

> "Even before the Royal Commission of 1881 had fixed the new boundary in the Keate Award Area, Montsioa, the 'pro-British' Baralong chief of Sehuba, had fallen upon his 'pro-Boer' kinsman, Machabi of Polfontein. The Pretoria Convention line, a compromise between the Keate line and that desired by the Transvaalers, ran right through the lands of the chiefs who had been in alliance with Burgers, and while the ratification of the Convention hung in the balance, Moshette, the Baralong chief of Kunwana, avenged Machabi by driving Montsioa away to Mafeking. Further south on the Griqualand West border Mankoroane, ruler of Batlapin Taungs, attacked the 'pro-Boer' David Massouw, the Korana of Mamusa, who had assisted Moshette."(1)

This series of wars were in full swing by October 1881, and Robinson lost no time in trying to procure peace. He ap-

(1) Walker, History, p.401.

proved Hudson's plan of sending Captain Nourse to Montsioa and Moshette to attempt to get them to make peace. At the same time, he told Hudson to urge the Triumvirate to prevent the use of Transvaal territory by Moshette as a base for his war against Montsioa.(1) This was only the first of many similar communications on this subject addressed by Robinson to the Transvaalers, and had no effect whatsoever.

Meanwhile, the war continued unabated, Montsioa and Mankoroane being at somewhat of a disadvantage against Massouw and Moshette, who continued to receive considerable support from groups of Boers. On October 22nd, a Proclamation had been issued by the Transvaal Government forbidding its citizens from interfering in the civil war in Bechuanaland, but it had had little or no effect. The Boers continued to aid the pro-Boer Bechuanas against the pro-British Bechuanas.

On the 10th of February 1882, Robinson reported to Kimberley the substance of Nourse's report on the Bechuana situation.(2) The Report was to the effect that Moshette had overpowered Montsioa and laid waste his territories. He was using the Transvaal as a base, and was getting arms from the Transvaal burghers. He also had a group of 80 Boer Volunteers helping him, with the promise of more to come, the prize being half of all the booty they took, and all of Montsioa's land. The Transvaal border guards, put there as a result of the October Proclamation, were in sympathy with the Volunteers, and would not work against them.

Commenting on this Report, Robinson told Kimberley that Montsioa and Mankoroane had asked to be allowed to raise their own Volunteer forces, and to buy ammunition from the Cape. These had been refused them, because of a Neutrality Proclamation issued by Robinson on the advice of his Ministers, proclaiming Cape neutrality in the civil war in Bechuanaland, and rather strictly enforced in all respects. It was difficult to

(1) Telegram (copy), Robinson to Hudson, 25/10/1881, in GH 35/2, p.144.
(2) Telegram (copy), in GH 35/2, pp. 351-353.

see what to do. The Transvaal government was obviously powerless to restrain its burghers, and so, as things stood, Montsioa and Mankoroane were in danger of extermination.

An official protest was sent to the Transvaal about this violation on their part of Article 19 of the Convention. The Transvaal Government immediately replied that a modification of the South Western border was necessary. If they were allowed to re-annex all those native territories they had previously held, as well as those whose chiefs desired annexation to the Transvaal, peace would soon be restored. Robinson replied, in a telegram to Kimberley, dated March 19th, that he felt that

> "quarrels between independent Native Tribes outside afford no sufficient ground for annexation. There will always be liability to Native troubles outside any line on that side, which stops short of the Atlantic. This Colony is similarly circumstanced on the South of the present disturbed area, and in my opinion the best policy for both Cape and Transvaal to pursue is to protect a well-defined boundary line, punish promptly and severely any inroads, and leave independent Native Tribes outside to settle for themselves their own differences; intervention on our part being strictly limited to friendly mediation when practicable,"(1)

a plan which met with the Secretary of State's complete approval.

On the very next day, in a despatch to Kimberley, Robinson vindicates the Commission's decision on the boundary question.(2) Apart from being a grave injustice to the pro-British chiefs, allowing the Transvaal to take over much of Bechuanaland, far from bringing about the peace the Transvaalers asserted it would do, would in fact have produced troubles "greater and more lasting than those which have now arisen".

The following month, Mankoroane complained that he was being ruined for taking the English side in the Griqualand West

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(1) (Copy), in GH 35/2, p.441.

(2) Despatch, Transvaal State No. 60, 20/3/1882, in GH 25/4, pp. 62-63.

War, but received scant sympathy from Robinson, who declared categorically that he had brought his troubles on himself, by interposing unnecessarily in the quarrel between Moshette and Massouw on the one side, and Montsioa on the other, by attacking Massouw, during the previous October.(1)

With Bareké, chief of the Batlaros, Robinson had more sympathy. The chief requested Her Majesty's Government to intervene on his behalf. Robinson told Kimberley(2) that Bareké seemed to seriously desire to live in peace with his neighbours, but was being constantly plagued by Transvaal freebooters who plundered for cattle, and tried to appropriate his lands. He said that if the existing Proclamations against intervention in Bechuanaland were properly enforced, this type of thing would soon die out, but that unfortunately the Transvaal Government, which professed itself anxious to put an end to the participation of its Burghers in such raids, either would not or could not prevent the evasion of the Proclamation. This made things difficult for chiefs loyal to the British, but there was nothing that could be done for them, much as one might desire to help them, unless their territory were to be annexed or a British Protectorate established over it. As, on the one hand, Cape public opinion was at present against any extension of its borders, or the assumption of any responsibility beyond them, and as, on the other hand, Her Majesty's Government were not prepared to accept a Protectorate over Bechuanaland, owing to the fact that such Protectorate would involve the constant protection of the Native tribes in the area by means of Imperial troops, it was therefore regrettably necessary to hold out no hope to people like Bareké of any intervention by force on the part of either the Imperial or Cape Governments. This meant, in effect, that, because the British were unwilling to use force to protect these people, they would have to be left to the mercy of their Boer-assisted opponents.

(1) Despatch, Robinson to Kimberley, 1/4/1882, in GH 23/38, pp. 83-84.
(2) Despatch, Transvaal State No. 120, 24/6/1882, in GH 25/4, pp. 92-94.

However, Robinson was not content with mere vain regrets that he could not help the Bechuanas. Genuinely concerned that those Bechuanas loyal to the British should be thus victimized, and in fact be in imminent danger of extermination, and finding that his pleas to the Transvaal Government to put an end to Boer encroachments into Bechuanaland met with no success, he finally hit upon a plan which he hoped might solve the problem. In essence, this plan[1] involved the setting-up of a four-power (Cape, Transvaal, Orange Free State, and Imperial) police force, consisting of about 50 mounted police from each, whose job it would be to patrol the Keate Award Territory and arrest all deserters and violaters of the various neutrality proclamations. The cost would be negligible, and the results of such a system almost certain to be very satisfactory. In the interests of avoiding jealousy and friction, it was necessary that the plan should be initiated, and participated in, by the Imperial Government.

This plan had much to commend it, but both the Transvaal and the Orange Free State Governments refused to have anything to do with it, the former merely repeating its original statements to the effect that, if the boundary lines were revised in their favour, that would be the end of all the trouble, a thesis which Robinson found himself even more in disagreement with than he had been in the beginning. As he angrily expressed himself in a despatch to the British Resident at Pretoria, he did not see

> "how a mere extension of the existing boundary can check this brigandage for the future, unless indeed it is proposed to adopt some line beyond which there are no native cattle to be stolen, no lands that are worth appriating".[2]

After further vain efforts to persuade the Transvaal to alter its opinion, by expanding on his plan, which the Trans-

(1) Expounded in a Cypher Telegram to Kimberley, 9/7/1882, in GH 35/2, pp. 568-569.
(2) Despatch (Copy), Transvaal State No. 220, 25/8/1882, in GH 31/3.

vaal government seems to have misunderstood, Robinson regretfully abandoned it, and went back to gloomily refusing every request for help from the Bechuana tribes, holding that, while he deeply regretted the difficulties the anti-Boer and neutral tribes were faced with, he could not, in view of his many attempts to persuade the Transvaal Government to enforce neutrality on its subjects, permit that the Cape or any other part of South Africa under his control depart in any way from the attitude of strict neutrality they had proclaimed and adopted.

In January, Robinson, in desperation, and disgruntled at the helplessness of his position, suggested to Derby, as we have seen above,(1) that, the Convention having apparently failed in its object of protecting the Natives in and around the Transvaal, it might just as well be abandoned altogether, when it would cease to be a delusion to the natives, and would also cease to be a source of disruption between Boer and Briton. Such action was to come just a year later, but meanwhile matters dragged on unsatisfactorily. Robinson did not give up hope of finding some solution, but no satisfactory solution presented itself. The Imperial and Cape Governments still steadfastly refused to undertake any further commitments, and Robinson would not for one moment consider the possibility of permitting the annexation by the Transvaal of any part of the territory, for that would simply mean further border troubles, and the eventual annexation by the Transvaal of the entire country.

In fact, he gradually came to believe that the only way to save the friendly Bechuana tribes (and, indeed, the pro-Boer ones as well, for he believed that, once incorporated in the Transvaal, these tribes would lose much of their best lands and cattle) would be to raise an armed force and drive the freebooters out of Bechuanaland.(2) However, he hesitated to advise such a course of action to the Imperial Government because of the danger that the Transvaal people might join

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(1) See pp. 19-20 above.
(2) See, in particular, Transvaal State (Confidential), Robinson to Derby, 1/3/1883, in GH 25/4, pp. 213-214.

their freebooting friends. If, however, things were allowed to go on as they were, the result must inevitably be that the Transvaal would in due course absorb the whole of Bechuanaland, and the Convention would become nothing more than a dead letter.

The dilemma remained unresolved. An attempt to get the Cape Government to agree to the settling in the Cape of Montsioa's and Mankoroane's people met with the reply that it was doubtful whether Parliament would sanction the entry into the Cape of more natives, even supposing that there had been any land available on which to settle them. Further, it was not even possible to withhold from the Transvaal and Orange Free State, the large quantities of arms and armaments they bought annually, for Cape public opinion would not stand for such action merely because of the depredations in Bechuanaland of a few hundreds of the Burghers of these states.

Thus matters stood when, on April 24th 1883, Robinson left for England on leave of absence, to return late the following March, shortly after the London Convention had been drawn up, which was to have such far-reaching effects in Bechuanaland, as well as the rest of South Africa. During his absence little of note in Bechuana affairs occurred, although in June, Mankoroane asked for, and was refused, annexation to the Cape Colony. This followed closely on the familiar pattern begun by Montsioa when, in October 1881, he requested, and was refused, British protection, although, this time, the first signs of a change in policy were to be seen, for the Cape Government, instead of refusing outright, said that they would be prepared to consider such protection if Basutoland was taken out of their hands (which was to happen the following year), and if they could arrange a satisfactory boundary with the Transvaal.[1] Nothing came of this, however, and the whole matter was left in abeyance for the time being.

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(1) Despatch, Smyth (acting Governor) to Derby, 4/5/1883, in GH 23/38, pp. 299-300.

By this time, the small independent Republics of Stellaland and Goshen had begun to loom large in the field of South African politics. Stellaland, founded in July 1882 by J. G. van Niekerk on land given up by Mankoroane and Massouw, developed peacefully, and soon became fairly prosperous. Goshen, on the other hand, had a rougher time. It was to the north of the area occupied by Stellaland, and there some very fierce fighting took place, for many of the Border boers had hated Montsioa intensely for some years, and were eager to get their own back. They were encouraged by Moshette, who desired Montsioa's throne. His land was laid waste by Gey van Pittius, an agent of Moshette's, and Montsioa, to save himself from ruin, became a vassal of the Transvaal, and was forced to give up all the best of his land. It was on this land that, in October 1882, Van Pittius founded Goshen.

In the ordinary course of events, it could be safely predicted that these two little republics would in due course be incorporated in the Transvaal. This was a prospect viewed with something approaching alarm by both the Cape and Imperial Governments, for the republics straddled across the "Missionary Road", the Cape's gateway to her trading grounds in the North, and the Transvaal, following her natural bent, and in revenge for the Cape's selfish past tariff policy, was levying heavy duties on Cape goods. If, therefore, the Republics were incorporated in the Transvaal, the Cape's trade to the north would be severely restricted.

Probably the first man to see the danger these two republics represented was Cecil John Rhodes, who, when Mankoroane begged for annexation to the Cape in the middle of 1883, unsuccessfully urged the reluctant Scanlen to accept the offer, or at least to buy from Mankoroane the farms he offered for sale to the Cape just beyond the Griqualand border. Scanlen having refused, nothing more could be done to prevent the closing of the bottle-neck, if the Transvaal were to annex the Republics, who, near the end of 1883, became united provisionally, and asked for Transvaal protection. Whether or not this would be

granted, would depend on the results of Kruger's talks with Derby, begun in November, 1883.

Kruger's talks with Derby resulted, as we saw in the last chapter, in the London Convention, which, among other things, gave the Transvaal part only of Stellaland and Goshen, while the rest of Bechuanaland was to become a British Protectorate, on some sort of vague understanding that it was, in due course, to be annexed to the Cape. Further, all those, not being criminals, in actual and peaceful occupation of land, would not be disturbed, on either side of the new border. This settlement came into effect when, in August 1884, the Convention was reluctantly accepted by the Transvaal Volksraad, but, as we shall see in a future chapter, it did not by any manner of means prove to be an immediate and unqualified success.

CHAPTER III

BASUTOLAND TO 1884

The problem of how to end the war with Basutoland was the paramount problem at the Cape when Robinson arrived there to take over the Governorship and High Commissionership, at the end of January 1881. This war, known as the "War of Disarmament", had been brought about largely through the somewhat short-sighted and stupid insistence of Frere and Sprigg that the Basutos be forced to hand in their guns. Sprigg had in 1879 issued orders that all Basuto guns were to be handed in (their owners to be compensated for their loss on a not very lavish scale), and at the same time had doubled the hut tax and threatened to take part of Quthing as payment for the expenses of the recent war against Morosi. The Basutos, stunned by this "reward" for their assistance to the Cape during the wars against Langalibalele and Morosi, and being by that time thoroughly sick of magisterial control, petitioned the Queen. This protest was of no avail, for the Cape had since 1871 administered Basutoland, and Britain, having agreed to the annexation of Basutoland to the Cape in that year, had no intention of interfering now in what was a matter for the Cape. However, the Imperial Government made it quite plain that they disapproved of the venture, both as to the time and the manner of the disarmament, and disclaimed all responsibility.

Sprigg, however, went on with his plan. He issued instructions that all guns were to be handed in by April 1880. In April, Moroko died, and his sons began to fight out the succession. The Paramount Chief of the Basutos, Letsie, decided that he would comply with Sprigg's demands, as did Jonathan, son of Molapo, but men like Lerothodi, Masupho, and Joel Molapo, refused, and when in September they drove out those who were prepared to obey the law, Sprigg sent up the Colonial police and troops, and the War of Disarmament had begun, spreading to Griqualand East and [redacted], where, however, it was quickly stamped out, thanks to the

assistance the Colonial troops received from friendly tribes. In Basutoland, however, the inconclusive, and to the Cape, face-destroying, war dragged on.

Immediately on his arrival, Robinson plunged into the problem of how to end this war. His Instructions had included a repetition by Kimberley of his earlier statement, to Frere, that the Imperial Government, while disapproving of the Cape's handling of the situation, would not use Imperial troops in Basutoland, nor take any part at all in what was a matter concerning the Cape alone, on which the Cape Ministers alone could advise the Governor. He therefore began to look around for some means of ending the war which would not require outside intervention.

On January 27th, he received from Sauer (an opposition M.L.A.) a petition, dated January 10th, signed by Lerothodi, Letsie and Joel, which he laid before the Ministers. They decided that this petition could not be a genuine expression of the real desires of those who had signed it, for it had not come through the usual channels, but had been communicated by an opposition member to Robinson, and was thus probably merely a trick to embarrass the Government and stir up public feeling for the rebels. Robinson managed to persuade the Ministers, in the interests of a peaceful solution, to assume that the petition was genuine, for a while at least, and answer it in that light, despite its ambiguous wording, which could indicate either unconditional surrender or a simple request to be allowed to retain their arms and country without further molestation, and the withdrawal of the troops.

Robinson decided not to enter the question of terms, but to offer himself as arbitrator, promising the Basutos generous terms. In so doing, he took the chance, in the interests of peace and with the consent of Ministers and of Kimberley, of perhaps being at variance with the Government and the country. However, Colonel Griffiths, the Governor's Agent in Basutoland,

discovered that the petition had been presented by Sauer to the chiefs, and was thus not spontaneous. The Basutos, far from feeling beaten, were, he felt, elated, and said that it was the Cape Government, not themselves, who was suing for peace. They would refuse to give up their arms.

Between February 18th and 24th, there was an armistice to enable the Basutos to consult with one another. From "well-informed and trustworthy" sources, the Cape Ministers received the information that the Basutos would not desist unless they could retain their arms, and were just using the armistice for gathering in their crops. When the harvest was removed to secure hiding-places, they would recommence hostilities indefinitely.

On the 21st, the chiefs told Robinson that they would not desist until they knew the actual terms to be offered to them. Robinson wanted to force the Basutos to accept his arbitration by telling them that unless they accepted his offer, the war would recommence, with less chance of getting good terms in the future. However, the Ministers, fearing that unless they offered the Basutos terms, public opinion would turn against them, determined to offer terms. To this Robinson had to acquiesce, feeling that, under the circumstances, the action taken in the matter should be such as Ministers would be prepared to be responsible for to Parliament and the country.

Accordingly, on February 22nd, terms were offered to the rebels. They were fairly lenient, involving the sparing of all lives, no confiscations, free pardons for all except three people, and the surrender of arms. The Ministers regarded these as neither vindictive nor mercenary, not a punishment, but merely a deterrent and guarantee for the future.(1) They were the most lenient terms that would both satisfy Parliament and secure the peaceful settlement of the country.

However, although Griffiths allowed Lerothodi five days to reply, no answer was given to the terms, the Basutos merely

(1) Minute 335, Sprigg to Robinson, 1/3/1881; enclosure to Robinson to Kimberley, 1/3/1881; in GH 28/109.

employing the time profitably by gathering in the crops, removing them to safe places, and strengthening their fortified positions. It was therefore clear that the Basutos would not as yet be prepared to accept any terms which did not include the retention of their arms, which the Cape Government could not permit, such retention being tantamount to submission on their part.

> "Meanwhile, Ministers are concerned to find that whilst the recent negotiations were still pending, Her Majesty's Government announced in Parliament their disapproval of the terms offered to the Basutos. Ministers fear that the public expression of this adverse opinion will prove embarrassing to them, and, what is of more importance, prejudicial to the interests of peace."(1)

On the surface, the situation was right back to where it had been when Robinson arrived in South Africa, but in actual fact some progress had been made towards the possibility of achieving a peaceful solution to the Basuto-Cape War. The Basutos still trusted the Cape Government as little as ever, but had been given an instance of Robinson's willingness to aid them, as far as he could, and they tended to look upon him more as a servant of the Queen, by whom they still desired to be ruled,(2) than as an agent of the despised and distrusted Cape Government. Therefore, although they had not trusted him sufficiently to take his word for it that he would offer them lenient terms if only they laid down their arms, they gradually lost a certain amount of their distrust as time went on.

By the beginning of April, negotiations were again in full swing between Robinson (through his agent, Griffith) and Lerothodi. On the 7th of April, Griffith informed Robinson that

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(1) Despatch, Robinson to Kimberley, 5/3/1881, in GH 23/37, p.371. The despatch as a whole, on pp. 364-371, is a reiteration of the steps thus far taken to try to secure peace with the Basutos.

(2) See, for example, Telegram, Lerothodi to Griffith, in Telegram (Copy), Griffith to Robinson, 2/4/1881, in GH 35/1.

he felt that Lerothodi had no intention of absolutely accepting his arbitration, but was merely fencing around, trying to find out what Robinson's terms were likely to be. He felt that the chiefs would not give up their arms. They knew their own strength and their opponents' weakness, and had no respect left for the Cape Government. If allowed to keep their arms, therefore, it was possible that a settlement could be arrived at, but it would be by no means a permanent one.(1)

On the 5th, Griffith had, in a letter to Letsie, emphasized that Robinson could not arbitrate unless the Basutos first laid down their arms, and placed themselves unconditionally in his hands. They must understand this well, and if they have confidence in Robinson as the Queen's representative, as they claim to have, they should not hesitate to accept his offer.(2) Letsie, in reply, reiterated that he was ready to lay down his arms, and accept the Governor's arbitration. However, laying down their arms meant, Friffith discovered, "simply a suspension of hostilities", and he felt that the chiefs were not prepared to submit unconditionally to Robinson's arbitration. The people, indeed, were ready for peace, but were too much under the chiefs' control. If, therefore, the troops could strike a severe blow, the people might put pressure on the chiefs to come to terms. As things stood, however, a suspension of hostilities would merely give the rebels a chance to once more bring in crops, and would thus serve to prolong the conflict indefinitely.(3)

Robinson, however, was rather less sceptical of the motives of the Basutos than was his agent. He ordered him to continue negotiations (with the concurrence of the Cape Ministers, who were by now desperate to find some solution to the difficulty, which was every day further discrediting them in the eyes of the Cape people, leading to their downfall early in May, which Robinson's Award came too late to prevent), and was eventually rewarded when

"after several weeks' negotiations, Lerothodi, on Sunday

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(1) Telegram (Copy), in GH 35/1.
(2) Enclosed in Telegram (Copy), Griffith to Robinson, 7/4/1881, in GH 35/1.
(3) Telegram (Copy), Griffith to Robinson, 11/4/1881, in GH 35/1.

last (the 17th of April), at Maseru, informed the Governor's Agent that he would accept my arbitration, and that he placed himself unreservedly in my hands. As proof of the sincerity of his intention to abide by my decision, he promised to order his people forthwith to lay down their arms and disperse to their homes. As soon as I hear that this has been done, I shall give my Award."(1)

Within the next few days, it became clear that, although the Basutos had not all gone home, they had at least ceased their attacks on Colonial troops, and had retured to nearby villages, "where they are peacefully awaiting the Governor's decision in their case".(2) The question now was, should he keep to the strict letter of the conditions of dispersion, or would it not perhaps be "expedient to accept the present submissive attitude of the people, and to announce the Award".

Robinson made it perfectly clear to his Ministers, in his Minute to them, that he himself preferred the latter course. In the first place, it would prove a definite test of the willingness of the Basutos to accept reasonable terms, a willingness that would not be affected by the extent of dispersion. If they were really prepared to abide by his Award, the Basutos would be given an immediate opportunity to end the "unhappy strife, which if carried on much longer, must bring ruin on their country". If, on the other hand, the Basutos were not really prepared to accept reasonable terms (as might well be the case), and were to want to repudiate the Award, "unless it in all respects meets their wishes", they would do so whether they had dispersed to their own villages or not, for they could, within 48 hours, recommence hostilities, if they so desired. In that case,

"it would be an advantage to the Colony at once to know for certain that the Basutos will not accept the

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(1) Telegram (Copy), Robinson to Kimberley, 20/4/1881; enclosed in Herbert to Robinson (Acknowledge't), 21/4/1881, in GH 7/1.
(2) Minute 226, Robinson to Miters, 27/4/1881, in GH 32/1, pp. 667 ff.; also as enclosure to Despatch 203, Robinson to Kimberley, 30/4/1881, in GH 28/110.

most favourable terms that the Colony is prepared to assent to; and to realize the necessity, if not prepared to submit, of making a vigorous and sustained effort to suppress the rebellion".

A continuation of the war would probably involve the expenditure of several millions of pounds and about 10,000, so surely "no opportunity should be neglected, which offers any reasonable prospect of bringing about an immediate and honourable peace". Insistence on the letter of the terms, essentially a side-issue, would necessarily involve the wasting of much time and money, and would make the Basutos so distrustful as to probably cause all negotiations to fall through, with the result that the war would drag on.

"in its present dispirited manner, the willingness of the Basutos to accept just and generous terms having never really been submitted to any definite test".

Sprigg, ready to accept just about anything that showed the slightest promise of saving the situation for him, simply replied to this frank Minute (which, while expressing Robinson's feelings in the matter, at the same time played, and not very subtly either, on the Cape Ministry's fear of further trouble in Basutoland), by saying that Robinson had full permission to give the Basutos any terms which he might consider just and generous, and the Ministers would abide by his decision, the one proviso being the rather important one that the terms offered must include the surrender of their arms on the part of the Basutos.(1)

Accordingly, on April 29th, 1881, Robinson gave his Award.(2) In the first place, the law regarding armaments was to remain in force, but was to be liberally applied, magistrates being empowered to "issue licenses to all who, in their opinion, can be safely entrusted with arms". He advised that, if a man wanted to keep his gun, he should take it to the magistrate,

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(1) Minute 70, Ministers to Robinson, 29/4/1881, enclosed in Despatch 203, Robinson to Kimberley, 30/4/1881, in GH 28/110.
(2) Enclosure to Despatch 203, Robinson to Kimberley, 30/4/1881, in GH 28/110.

By July 13th, writing from Pretoria, Robinson was able to tell Kimberley that

> "I learn from Basutoland about 600 guns registered, and registration proceeding satisfactorily. Fine almost paid. Letsie and Lerothodi promise that all stock taken before hostilities will be restored, which includes the greater part taken. Secretary Native Affairs, who is on spot, does not doubt promise will be fulfilled, and thinks prospects hopeful".(1)

However, many Basutos, in particular Masupha, flatly refused to accept the Award, and the affair which somebody once called "the sort of a war", dragged on. By the middle of September, Masupha finally fully accepted all the terms of the Award, and Sauer returned to the Cape, peace having been established. Matters began to progress slowly, Letsie using all his influence, and occasionally a certain amount of force, to get stolen cattle returned to their rightful owners, and it began to appear as if the Award had been successful in healing Basuto-Cape differences.

Meanwhile, however, another factor had entered the situation. The Basutos, while more or less accepting the Award, disliked the fact that they were still to be ruled from the Cape. They realized that they had got the best of the Cape in the recent war, and thus had little respect for the Cape. They therefore could not be expected to be very obedient to Cape laws, as administered by Cape officials.

The Cape Government realized that they had, and could hope in the future to have, little control over the Basutos, from whom they therefore could expect considerable unrest. In any case, the people of the Cape were heartily sick of Basutoland by now, and the Scanlen Ministry had hardly come into power than Resolutions were passed by both Houses of the Cape Parliament, requesting the Imperial Government to take Basutoland over from

(1) Telegram (Copy), enclosed in Herbert to Smyth (Acknowledg't), 22/7/1881, in GH 7/1.

the Cape, who no longer wished to rule it, especially as the Basutos did not seem to desire Cape rule at all, preferring Imperial rule.(1) Nothing came of this suggestion at the time, but it showed the beginning of a trend in Cape thought which was to culminate in the transfer of Basutoland from the Cape to Imperial control in 1884.

In Ministerial Minute Number 2004 to Robinson, dated December 29th 1881, Scanlen complained that affairs in Basutoland, while not critical, were not very satisfactory, due largely to the opposition of Masupha, who was now, after having previously been persuaded to accept the Award, resisting passively.(2) He went on to say that force would have to be employed if the Award was to continue to be applied. Short of recommencing hostilities, three possibilities existed. The first was to withdraw Colonial authority from Basutoland; the second was to enforce Colonial authority by force (as he had previously promised to do, if necessary), and the third was to ask the Imperial Government to re-establish control by Imperial troops. He was not prepared to recommend the first or the third to Parliament, but would recommend the second, but only if the Imperial Government undertook not to interfere in any way. It was only fair and right that, before the Colony embarked on the expensive job of enforcing the Award, made by the Queen's representative, it should be assured of being left "free to determine the terms on which the future relations of Basutoland must be conducted".

Robinson, as was usual for the Governor of a Colony in such communications between that Colony and the Imperial Government, acted throughout as a kind of liaison officer, transmitting messages from one to the other, but at the same time, in despatches accompanying the messages, doing all he could to smooth over the difficulties existing between the Colonial Government and the Home Government in the matter. Now, in his despatch accompanying Scanlen's request to the British Government, he gave it as his

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(1) In Despatch 234, Robinson to Kimberley, 23/5/1881, in GH 28/110.
(2) Despatch 469, Robinson to Kimberley, 31/12/1881, with Enclosures, in GH 28/111.

opinion that important issues rested on Kimberley's answer to Scanlen's enquiry. "There is a strong and growing feeling springing up throughout the country in favour of the abandonment of Basutoland by the Colony", the chief protagonists of which were the Dutch Press, the Afrikaner Bond, and some English Eastern Province newspapers. Unless Kimberley gives the desired assurance, Scanlen's Ministry would, they feel, have no possibility of defeating the Bill asking for the repeal of the Basutoland Annexation Act of 1871, which would be introduced when Parliament next met. Robinson could not decide whether Ministers really desired such an assurance, or whether they were really hoping that Kimberley, by refusing to agree to their request, would give them a convenient way out of their earlier promise to support the Award by force if necessary. He felt, however, that

> "so long as Scanlen remains Premier, no substantial risk would be run in giving the assurance he asks for, as I am sure he would not impose unjust or needlessly harsh terms upon Masupha".

He urged that, if Kimberley was not prepared to give the desired assurance, he at least tell Scanlen that the Imperial Government would be prepared to back the Cape up in the event of their having to adopt extreme measures against Masupha, for he felt that the present difficulty in Basutoland could in a large measure be traced to the fact that the Basutos believed that the Imperial and Cape Governments were not in accord on this matter of enforcement.

Kimberley replied that, while the Imperial Government would not question the Cape's taking extreme action against Masupha, it could not commit itself to complying with terms of the purport of which it was not aware.(1) Scanlen replied that this would not do, and said that, while realizing the possible bad effects on the Orange Free State (which, on the Basuto border, could expect considerable Basuto trouble if

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(1) Telegram (Copy), Kimberley to Robinson, 6/1/1882, in GH 7/1.

order were to be relaxed over Basutoland), and the loss of personal face involved, he was yet, under the circumstances, prepared to recommend to Parliament the repeal of the Basutoland Annexation Act, and Cape withdrawal of Basutoland, as the only practical course left to follow.(1)

Eventually, however, the Cape agreed not to abandon Basutoland, after Kimberley had strongly urged them not to take such a step, and had accepted the Cape statement that, unless the Award were fully complied with by a certain date, it would be cancelled, and fresh measures taken to secure the tranquillity of Basutoland.(2) The Award was duly cancelled, the Disarmament Act was repealed, the Cape Parliament once again changed its mind and once more passed a resolution requesting that they be allowed to abandon Basutoland,(3) General Gordon arrived to try to quell the Basutos, but quarrelled with the Cape Ministers, and retired at the end of 1882, and still the situation was the same as it had ever been.

By the middle of 1883, fighting between the sons of Molapo had involved the Cape in further complications, and they once more proposed abandonment. The Cape emphatically refused to continue the task of administering an unwilling Basutoland, and informed the Imperial Government that Merriman (the Commissioner for Crown Lands and Public Works) was coming to England to discuss with the Imperial Government what alternative rule could be provided when the Cape finally withdrew.(4)

Robinson left for England on leave just about this time, and was on the spot to give Derby the benefit of his knowledge of the situation, when the matter came up for discussion. Derby, in a despatch dated June 14th 1883, to Smyth, after saying that Her Majesty's Government was prepared, seeing that the Basutos

(1) Minute 124, Scanlen to Robinson, 24/1/1882, enclosure to Despatch 23, Robinson to Kimberley, 25/1/1882, in GH 28/112.
(2) Telegram (Copy), Kimberley to Robinson, 2/2/1882, in GH 7/1.
(3) In Despatch 170, Robinson to Kimberley, 4/5/1882, in GH 28/113.
(4) Minute 138, Scanlen to Smyth, 1/5/1883, enclosed in Despatch 130, Smyth to Derby, 1/5/1883, in GH 28/115.

wanted nothing more to do with the Cape, to see what it could do to relieve the Cape of its burdens there.(1) The Imperial Government would therefore be prepared to test, for a time, the sincerity of the Basuto claim that they desired to come back under the Crown. The conditions for taking over control of the Basutos once more were, first, that the Basutos prove their sincerity, second, that the Orange Free State, which seemed to be claiming too much by its interpretation of the Treaty of Aliwal North (that the Cape should protect her against Basuto encroachments), should be prepared to take steps to guard itself, and thirdly, that the Cape must undertake, in the Act repealing the Annexation Act of 1871, to hand over to Robinson, in his capacity as High Commissioner (for Basutoland would now pass entirely out of the legislative control of the Cape Government), all customs duties and other revenues got from goods imported into Basutoland. Finally, if the other parties do not show, by assisting her in every way possible, that they were appreciative of such intervention, the British Government reserves the right to discontinue its plans in this respect.

By the end of 1883, the Basutoland Disarmament Act had been passed by the Cape Parliament, and was in due course assented to by the Imperial Government. Colonel Marshall Clarke was appointed as Resident Commissioner in Basutoland, with the High Commissioner as his superior officer, to whom he must address his correspondence, and from whom he would receive his instructions when necessary. Eventually, on March 19th 1884, Clarke arrived at Maseru and proclaimed the transfer from the Cape to the Imperial Government of a Basutoland which was still unsettled by the lax supervision imposed on it during the interregnum, and of whose chiefs Masupha frankly refused to either accept Imperial rule or pay the hut tax. The big question was, could Clarke succeed where the Cape Government had failed? The answer to that question would be provided in the course of the next few years.

(1) Despatch 84, in GH 1/87.

CHAPTER IV

THE TRANSVAAL, BECHUANALAND AND BASUTOLAND FROM 1884

The period up to the middle of 1884 in the Transvaal and Basutoland, and up to the end of 1885 in Bechuanaland, was one of incessant turmoil. The London Convention gave the Transvaal the freedom it so dearly desired, and it remained comparatively quiet for the next few years, gradually recovering its economic balance under the stimulus of the discovery of gold in 1886, and concentrating on attempts to improve its communications with the outside world. In Bechuanaland, there was some difficulty as to whether the Cape or Britain should take over control, but this was finally resolved when, in 1885, Bechuanaland became a British Protectorate, and settled down to a period of quiet development. Basutoland, too, quietened down considerably after its being made a British Protectorate in March 1884. There, the chief difficulty remained getting the Basutos to obey the authority of the ruling Power, but this was gradually overcome, and by 1889 things became finally stable.

Relations between Robinson and the Transvaal after 1884 were of a very nebulous nature. The Transvaal Government concentrated on trying to get a railway line to Delagoa Bay, and other similar schemes of an economic nature, and with these Robinson had little or nothing to do. In fact, Robinson, never very friendly with the Transvaal Boers at any time, did not at any time have more to do with them than was absolutely necessary. Nor, for that matter, was he particularly well-liked by the Transvaalers, for he had in the past on many occasions severely criticised their native policy, in particular.

This mutual dislike may be seen quite clearly in much of the correspondence passing between Robinson and the Transvaal, as, for example, when Kruger, in the course of a speech in the Volksraad, early in August 1884, made several rather outspoken

references to Robinson. Robinson considered the possibility of sending a request to the Transvaal Government, asking whether the words reported to him as having been said by Kruger, were in fact the words Kruger had actually used. However, he decided against this, for

> "it appears to me unnecessary to notice the observations as regards myself, attributed to President Kruger. The President speaks only in Dutch and it is possible that the newspaper version of his remarks, as given in English, may be inaccurate. If, however, this should not be so, the President will, I feel sure on reflection himself regret the use in debate of language so unusual, and so little calculated to facilitate or to dignify the transaction of public business".(1)

In general, in fact, the Transvaal was not particularly well-liked in this period. Kruger was determined to get an outlet to the sea, and make his Republic as independent of the other States of South Africa as possible. However, all available ports were either in British hands, or required British sanction (which would not be given) to enable him to acquire them. He annoyed the Afrikaner elements in the rest of South Africa by his preference for employing Germans and Hollanders in the administrative posts of the Transvaal. Further, the Transvaal had become intensely protectionist in its effort to become self-supporting, thus further increasing the dislike felt in the other South African states towards that country.

The discovery of gold in 1886 on the Witwatersrand increased this trend towards protectionism. Kruger attempted to draw the Free State into the Transvaal's economic orbit, but Brand held out successfully, preferring to unite himself with the more stable South. A railway war also broke out in 1888, but was patched up, only to break out again in the following year, when the advent of the Chartered Company in the north of the Transvaal, and the railway line being built between there

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(1) Despatch High Commissioner No. 160, Robinson to Derby, 13/8/1884, p.450, in GH 25/4.

and the Cape, threatened to draw to it much of the traffic of the Western Transvaal. This crisis came just at the time when, after prodigious efforts and numerous delays, the railway line the Transvaal had managed to persuade the Portuguese to permit them to run from Delagoa Bay to the Transvaal, finally reached the Transvaal border. The war was on again, and was only one of the many problems which, lying more or less dormant during the latter part of Robinson's period as Governor and High Commissioner, came into full bloom to greet his successor, Sir Henry Loch, when he arrived, in December 1889, to replace Robinson, who had left in May.

In Bechuanaland, the London Convention brought little or no immediate relief to the problems existing there. In fact, over-hasty action there by Derby very nearly wrecked the Convention. Once the Convention would be ratified, the British Government would be empowered to appoint commissioners to co-operate with the Transvaal officials with a view to keeping order on their own sides of the eastern and western boundaries. However, Derby decided to send the Reverend John Mackenzie to Bechuanaland as commissioner immediately. He could hardly have made a more unfortunate choice, for Mackenzie was hated by the Boers, unpopular at the Cape, and does not seem to have been too well liked by the native chiefs themselves.

Mackenzie's first action on arriving in Bechuanaland was to make a treaty with Mankoroane (as he had been told by Derby to do). He then began stepping on everyone's toes. He rode to Vryburg, the capital of Stellaland, where he found the people divided on the question of absorption in the Cape, a fairly large proportion preferring a Transvaal connection. He calmly took control of the Government by appointing Van Niekerk, the Administrator, as his assistant commissioner without bothering to ask his consent, and then hastened off to Goshen, where Montsioa and Van Pittius were once more at war. Montsioa had just seized Rooigrond, the Goshenites' headquarters, which

was to be part of the Transvaal under the Convention. Mackenzie declared a British Protectorate over Montsioa and all he held, then dashed back to Vryburg, where he raised the British flag.

This premature move raised storms of protest in Pretoria, and Robinson had to order him to lower it for the time being. Robinson also had to forbid the native levy Mackenzie had begun to raise in Stellaland, because it was "being organized under objectionable auspices and recruited from dangerous sources",(1) and, when, on August 19th, Mackenzie resigned as Deputy Commissioner for Bechuanaland, he was not slow to recommend that Derby accept his resignation, saying that, while he himself personally regretted that Mackenzie had become so repugnant to the Cape and Transvaal governments and people, yet as this was undoubtedly the case,

> "I feel that his continuance in office would be an obstacle to that cordial co-operation between these Governments and the Imperial Government which is essential to a peaceful settlement of the Bechuanaland difficulty".(2)

Accordingly, at about the same time as the Transvaal Government reluctantly accepted the Convention, Rhodes (newly appointed by Robinson) arrived in Bechuanaland to take over as Deputy Commissioner from Mackenzie, and proceeded to persuade the Stellalanders to accept the Convention, part of Stellaland going to the Transvaal, the rest, as well as Mankoroane's remaining territory, provisionally coming under Cape control, with an Administrator stationed at Vryburg. In Goshen, however, despite the combined efforts of Rhodes and Joubert (the Transvaal commissioner), fighting between Montsioa and Van Pittius continued unabated.

Meanwhile, even before the ratification of the Convention by the Transvaal Government, Derby, Robinson and Scanlen began a long, involved correspondence on the question of exactly what was to be done with Bechuanaland after the Convention came into

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(1) Despatch High Commissioner No. 157, Robinson to Derby, 13/8/1884 in GH 25/4.
(2) Despatch High Commissioner No. 171, 20/8/1884, in GH 25/4, pp. 455-456.

force. As a necessary preliminary step, Derby had instructed Robinson to obtain from Mankoroane and Montsioa treaties giving to the Queen the right to exercise civil and criminal jurisdiction within their territories.(1) This had been done, but in Montsioa's case had as yet had little effect in preventing the fighting that still dragged on there.

In May, the Scanlen Ministry fell, to be succeeded by the Bond-supported Upington Ministry. Scanlen had promised that, if the Imperial Government would arrange for the Cape's trade route to the interior (which ran through the Protectorate) to be free from interruption or taxation, the Cape would in return contribute towards the expenses of running the Bechuanaland Protectorate. Robinson reminded the new Ministry, in his capacity as High Commissioner, of this fact, and asked them to be prepared, if necessary, to make some contributions, by making provision, on the Supplementary Parliamentary Estimates, for the fulfilment of this promise made by their predecessors.(2) The Imperial Government seems to have been under a misapprehension on this matter, for Robinson, on September 17th, informed Derby that what Scanlen had promised was not that the Cape would make a substantial contribution to the running of the Protectorate in lieu of customs duties, but simply that it would

> "join in a Protectorate or any other scheme which the Imperial Government might devise for keeping the road open, and to pay a fair share of any expenses incurred".(3)

Scanlen had, indeed, made a promise of the type Derby referred to, but this was to take effect only in the event of the Imperial Government actually annexing Bechuanaland. Otherwise, it was to fall through, to be replaced by the promise now being fulfilled. (Robinson did not forward Derby's despatch containing this misapprehension to his Ministers until after he had acquainted Derby with the true facts of the situation; and

(1) Despatch 206, 5/3/1884, in GH 1/89.
(2) High Commissioner's Minute No. 3, South Africa, 17/6/1884, in PMO 21.
(3) Despatch High Commissioner No. 202, in GH 25/4, pp. 471-472.

thus avoided any confusion or misunderstanding that might have arisen as a result of it, between the Cape and Imperial Governments.)

On July 15th, Upington had introduced before the Cape Parliament a motion authorizing the Cape Government to negotiate with the Imperial Government

> "with a view to submitting to Parliament next Session a measure for the annexation to the Cape Colony of the territory on the South West Border of the South African Republic now under the protection of Great Britain".(1)

Negotiations continued slowly, and were still in a rather nebulous state when, in October 1884, General Sir Charles Warren arrived in South Africa, putting an end to these negotiations.

In September, Kruger, worried by the situation in Goshen, annexed it provisionally, subject to the Queen's consent. He seems to have had little real expectation that such consent would be forthcoming, but this appeared to him to be the best way to ensure that the Imperial Government would take steps to stop the confusion on his western border. He was right, for, no sooner had he withdrawn his provisional annexation of Goshen, (Under storms of protest from the Cape, in particular), than Warren arrived from Britain to undertake a punitive expedition against the warring parties in Goshen.

The idea of a punitive expedition was repugnant to the Cape Government, who repeatedly asserted(2) that if they were only allowed to carry out their scheme for the settlement of the Bechuanaland problem (which involved trying to reach a land settlement satisfactory to both Mankoroane and Montsioa, including the acceptance by both chiefs of adequate and satisfactory compensation for such of their land which, instead of being handed back to them, would instead be used to settle those Whites, of both Boer and British origin, who were resident in

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(1) Quoted in Despatch High Commissioner No. 112, Robinson to Derby, 16/7/1884, in GH 25/4, pp. 426-427.

(2) Minutes (Confidential), Nos 13/237 of 13/10/1884; 13/241 of 15/10/1884; 13/242 of 16/10/1884; 13/243 of 17/10/1884, Upington to Robinson, in PMO 304.

the ex-Republics of Stellaland and Goshen, and other parts of Bechuanaland), the unrest in Bechuanaland would soon die out, and the Cape might then be able to annex the Protectorate, for most of the difficulties in the way of agreement in the discussions between Robinson (in his capacity as High Commissioner) and the Cape Government on the matter would then probably fall away. Any warlike expedition would completely ruin any such scheme, and if one were to be undertaken, the Cape would not be prepared to annex an area held only by military force, which would require that the Cape thereafter keep a corresponding force there.

Robinson had, in a Despatch to Derby dated September 24th 1884, said that

> "it appears to me Her Majesty's Government must now either abandon the Protectorate and the Convention, or announce to freebooters and the South African Republic that existing arrangements will be enforced, if necessary, by the adoption of active measures".(1)

He seems, however, to have hoped that the employment of force would not be necessary, but that the mere threat of arms would perhaps have the effect of bringing about a satisfactory solution to the difficulties existing in Bechuanaland.

However, as might have been expected, the mere threat of arms had no effect at all, and despite Cape protests, Warren set out for Bechuanaland with 5,000 men at the close of 1884. During the next few months he managed to make himself very unpopular. Mackenzie joined his camp, and, under his influence, Warren declared martial law in Bechuanaland and attempted to alter the Anglo-Boer scheme of land settlement that Rhodes had set up, by changing it entirely in favour of the English, marched to Mafeking, to find the Goshenites fled into the Transvaal, then went beyond the Molopo, and declared a British Protectorate over the whole of what is now the Bechuanaland Protectorate. He was then recalled, having in the meantime further antagonized the Cape Government by his interference in their management of

(1) Despatch High Commissioner No. 224, in GH 25/4, pp. 480-481.

affairs in Griqualand West, and having been severely rapped on the knuckles on more than one occasion by Robinson, who had forced him to revoke his declaration of martial law, and who in general disagreed with him profoundly in most of his proceedings.(A) Still, although something of a fiasco, his expedition had at least shown all concerned that Britain would now be prepared to take a more aggressive policy as regards the interior of Africa, and, although the Cape still refused to take over any part of Bechuanaland, the Imperial Government, in September 1885, proclaimed British Bechuanaland south of the Molopo a Crown Colony, of which the Governor of the Cape was to be Governor. In the following month, the rest of Bechuanaland, north of the Molopo, was proclaimed a Protectorate, to prevent it from being taken over by filibusters or Foreign Powers, not because Britain really desired to take it over yet. The chiefs would administer this area themselves, without British interference or control, as far as possible.

Bechuanaland now settled down to a quiet period of recovery under British rule. The usual British system of permitting the individual chiefs a large degree of control over their tribes, but under the overall control of magistrates in the various districts, applying a mixture of native and British law (as embodied in Proclamations issued by the Governor), was introduced, the whole country being under an Administrator who was responsible to Robinson as Governor, who was in turn responsible for it directly to the Imperial Government. He left the Administrator and his local agents to do their work without much interference, and the system worked well.(1)

The ties between Bechuanaland and the rest of South Africa were gradually strengthened, by its adoption of such measures as (early in 1886) the "Compulsory Attendance of Witnesses Act" (which meant that witnesses to a crime could be compelled to attend the trial and give witness, even though the crime were com-

(1) For a detailed account of the state of Bechuanaland in this period, see the unpublished M.A. thesis "The British Government and the Bechuanaland Protectorate, 1885-1895", by Margaret Peters (U.C.T. 1947).

(A) C4438, passim.

mitted in another South African State which had accepted the same Act, as most in due course did, thus facilitating and greatly assisting the ends of justice), while it also participated in the spate of railway and telegraph lines set up throughout South Africa in this period. No further changes, however, were made to the state of Bechuanaland during Robinson's period of office, although, in 1888, the Cape put out a few tentative feelers towards finding out whether the Imperial Government would be willing to allow the Cape to annex the country in the near future, only to be informed by Lord Knutsford, the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, that such a change would be, at the moment at any rate, beneficial to no party, and might in fact perhaps have bad results on the natives, who did not as yet want such a change. In any case, in view of the possible northwards expansion of Bechuanaland, it would be better that the Colony be under the administration of officials directly responsible to the Imperial Government.(1)

Colonel Clarke, as soon as he had taken over the administration of Basutoland in March 1884, immediately plunged into the difficult task of pacifying Basutoland. Robinson from the first refrained from burdening him with too many orders, but instead permitted him a more or less free hand in his administration, relying on his judgement to work out gradually a system of what amounted to paternal government, a system that would get both the approval of the British Government and the sympathy of the Basutos. His orders to Clarke were usually to do the best he could with the materials at his disposal. He himself would encourage and not interfere, but Clarke must understand that he could provide neither troops nor money. This did not indicate a very strong Imperial policy, but it did at least provide a working proposition. Given time, much could be done by means of personal rule. Troubles and embarrassments could be smoothed out, and gradually a feeling of

(1) Despatch 157, Knutsford to Robinson, 12/10/1888; enclosed in Minute 365, Robinson to Ministers, 9/11/1888, in PMO 36.

trust would develop between ruler and ruled.

Many difficulties arose in the early months of Clarke's rule as a result of border troubles with the Orange Free State. The Free State was at first loth to take any responsibility for keeping order on the border, insisting that it was the responsibility of the British to do so. The Free State border farmers were responsible for much of the unrest, because many of them did a lucrative trade in smuggled guns and liquor.(1) This illicit trade continued to flourish, despite vigorous efforts on the part of the Basutoland Administration to put it down, but as the country gradually became more settled, this trade slowly died down to unimportant dimensions.

Clarke also had to deal with a certain amount of internal dissension among the natives. Masupha for a long time refused to recognize the authority of the Crown, and the sons of Molapo again made war against each other, with the result that Clarke had to station an officer between them. Then came Moroko's attack on Thaba 'Nchu, which resulted in his territory being incorporated in the Orange Free State (August 1884), an attack in which, as Robinson proudly reported to Derby,(1) no Basutos took part, despite provocation from some Orange Free State burghers who demanded from the passive border Basutos hostages for their good behaviour.

By the beginning of 1885, Robinson was able to congratulate the Administration of Basutoland on its successes under adverse conditions, but he complained to the Home Government that the non-permanent nature of the arrangement under which Basutoland had been taken over by Britain was proving a great handicap to the proper settlement of the country. He felt that an announcement that British rule in Basutoland could now be regarded as having been instituted on a permanent basis, was imperative under the circumstances. The Imperial Government must

"determine at once, before matters become worse,

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(1) Despatch High Commissioner (Confidential), Robinson to Derby, 13/8/1884, in GH 25/4, pp. 443-445.

> whether, if the whole tribe will not now submit to British authority, Basutoland shall be abandoned, or the contumacious minority coerced".[1]

It was not until February 1886, however, that Robinson's request was answered. Lord Granville, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, while

> "still unwilling to admit openly that Basutoland was regarded as under effective British rule, wrote to the High Commissioner: 'I see no objection to your making it known, if there should be any necessity for doing so, that Her Majesty's Government contemplate no change in their relations with the Basuto.'"[1]

This marked the turning point, and afte this it was freely admitted that Britain intended to stay in Basutoland indefinitely.

Masupha soon afterwards was persuaded to surrender peacefully, and to receive a magistrate, and things began to settle down satisfactorily. In August 1887, the "Compulsory Attendance of Witnesses Act" was proclaimed by Robinson in Basutoland (the Cape and the Orange Free State being at this stage the only other participants in the scheme), and shortly before he left South Africa, Robinson was able, after praising Clarke and his officers for the immense amount of "patience, forbearance and sound judgement" they had shown in dealing with the difficulties they had faced and to a large extent overcome in Basutoland, to say, with a typical mixture of idealism and sound business sense, that

> "it is satisfactory to know that whilst the Basutos as a tribe have been saved from extermination by the resumption on the part of the Imperial Government of authority over them, this step has not imposed any charge whatever on the taxpayers of the United Kingdom".[2]

We may perhaps, in conclusion, say, with Sir Godfrey Lagden,[2]

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(1) Quoted in Lagden: The Basutos, Vol. II, p.573.
(2) Lagden, The Basutos, Vol. II, p.580.

that Robinson

> "laid the foundation of successful administration by his statesmanlike policy of giving the natives, who had been dragooned into surly acceptance of distasteful laws, relief from over-government, and of consigning them to the personal care of sympathetic officers who were let alone and encouraged to self-reliance at a time when little Imperial support stood behind them. That policy afforded the natives rest whilst they begat confidence in the good intentions of their new rulers",

and, continued by his successors, had the highly beneficial result of keeping Basutoland

> "outside the region of party politics either in England or at the Cape, aiding it sincerely without fettering and allowing it to progress unnoticed".

CHAPTER V

SOUTH AFRICA, 1881-1889

The Transvaal, Bechuanaland and Basutoland were the chief centres of interest in the South African scene during Robinson's period in office, especially during the first three or four years of that period, but it is hardly necessary to add that they were by no means the only parts of South Africa to engage attention during those eight and a half years. In fact, during this period, Natal, Zululand, the Orange Free State, Swaziland, Namaqualand-Damaraland, and the Transkei (with Pondoland providing a headache in its own right), all came at one time or another into prominence, while over all loomed the ever-present, commanding figures of the Cape Province and the Imperial Government.

Not all of these areas, needless to say, engaged the attention of the Governor and High Commissioner to the same extent. In some, acting in his capacity as High Commissioner, he took a large personal part (as in the Swaziland question), in others he acted, in his position as Governor of the Cape, merely as the mouthpiece of the Cape Government in its relations to foreign powers and the Imperial Government, while at the same time conveying to the Cape Government the Imperial Government's views on the matters under discussion, in his capacity as the Imperial Government's representative in the Cape (as in the Namaqualand-Damaraland problem), while in yet other cases (like the Pondoland question), he conducted a vigorous three-way correspondence with the Cape and the Imperial Governments, endeavouring to smooth over the difficulties that cropped up between the two, and taking things into his own hands when he saw the opportunity to do something constructive; but always carefully refraining from overstepping the bounds of his authority in the capacity in which he was at the time acting.

Before going on to deal in greater detail with each area, the problems it set for both Robinson and the various Governments concerned, and the methods used, successfully or otherwise, to solve these problems, it would perhaps be as well to first deal briefly with the general situation in South Africa during this period. In this connection, it must in the first place be noted that, when Robinson arrived at the Cape, South Africa was on the eve of entering into the latest of its almost periodic economic slumps (which had come by the early months of 1882), while at the same time the British Government had just entered upon a new policy of interfering as little as possible in the affairs of South Africa beyond the borders of its own Colonies, and, indeed, within their borders as well. (This attitude was resented by the British loyals abandoned by the retrocession of the Transvaal in 1881, while the retrocession did not earn Britain the friendship of the Boers, who resented the fact that it was not total. By 1885, however, the Imperial Government had regained the respect of the bulk of British South Africans, as much through the politic behaviour of Robinson as for any other reason.) It is therefore not surprising to find that, for the next three or four years, there was a tendency for each Government to keep its commitments to as few as possible, while at the same time doing its best to shift responsibility for taking such action as became necessary, on to the shoulders of another government. This was to be seen especially clearly in the relations between the Cape and the Imperial Government with regard to the the Bechuanaland and Basutoland affairs, and also, with sad effects, in the Namaqualand-Damaraland affair, where their mutual procrastination resulted in the loss of South West Africa to the wide-awake and eager-for-expansion German Imperial Government.

However, pressure of events (notably Germany's proclamation in 1884 of a protectorate over South West Africa, and her attempts to get footholds in Zululand and Pondoland, which, allied to her friendliness with Kruger, who in 1884 appeared

likely to be able to annex Stellaland and Goshen to the Transvaal, by 1884 threatened to create an anti-British bloc right across Africa to block the northwards expansion of Britain from the Cape, unless Britain took immediate and vigorous steps to prevent it) caused a change in policy on the part of the Imperial Government from 1884. In that year,

> "owing to a breakdown of Cape native policy, it was entangled once more in Basutoland in the heart of the South African state system",

while in 1886,

> "as a result of Transvaal restiveness and German intervention, it had annexed Saint Lucia Bay, extended a protectorate over the coasts of Pondoland and taken charge of all Bechuanaland from the borders of Griqualand West to those of Matabeleland".(1)

In 1887, Britain took over the bulk of Zululand, while the Cape, which had meanwhile recovered from the economic depression, and was, under the influence of men like Rhodes, (who, in 1889, opened up Rhodesia), beginning to adopt a vigorous policy of expansion, during the period 1884-1886 annexed nearly all the Transkeian territories.

This vigour was also to be seen in the other states of South Africa, where it showed itself chiefly in the sudden spate, from about 1886, of plans for railway lines, Postal and Telegraphic systems, and a renewed interest in the idea of Customs Unions, the chief instigators in such plans being Brand and Robinson, both confirmed believers in the necessity to South Africa of as close co-operation between the various states as those states would be prepared voluntarily to accept. In the political sphere, also, the Orange Free State's successful annexation of Moroko's territory in 1884, the Transvaal's unsuccessful annexation attempts in Bechuanaland, Zululand and Swaziland, and Natal's equally unsuccessful attempts to annex Griqualand East and Pondoland, bear witness to the

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(1) Walker, History, pp. 397-398.

vigorous expansionist mood which pervaded South Africa from about 1884 on.

Natal up to 1881 was, like the rest of South Africa, riding the crest of the country's current wave of prosperity. European immigration was at a high level, the country became linked by cable with London, and a railway project reached Maritzburg (where it stopped when the depression set in). The outbreak of the Basutoland War in 1880 had caused some concern in Natal, for in neighbouring Zululand there were signs that a new rebellion might be touched off by the example of the Basutos. The Governor of Natal and High Commissioner for South East Africa (which included Zululand), General Colley, busy directing operations against the Boers, felt it expedient (shortly before he met his death at Majuba) to request of the Cape whether they could spare a detachment of the troops at St John's River (Pondoland), just in case of a Zulu rebellion.(1) However, no such rebellion materialized, despite continued unrest between rival claimants to Cetewayo's throne, but the people of Natal, the memory of the 1879 war against Cetewayo still fresh in their minds, did not for a long time cease to fear the prospect of one, only to have their fears justified when, in 1884, a rebellion broke out against the newly-restored Cetewayo.

This fear of the possibility of a Zulu rebellion coloured the political horizon of Natal. In 1882, Kimberley, in reply to a request for Responsible Government, said that he was willing to grant it provided that Natal would pay for its own defence. A general election on this issue made it plain that the people of Natal were unwilling to accept such a proposal, and instead they resigned themselves to getting "as much control of policy as was consistent with the retention of a considerable garrison".(2)

It was not surprising, under these circumstances, that

(1) In Minute No. 95, Robinson to Sprigg, 12/2/1881, in GH 32/1, pp. 445-447.
(2) Walker, History, p.397.

the Natalians tended to be somewhat touchy about any action that could be construed as a reflection on their independence. This fact goes a long way towards explaining a rather unfortunate interchange of blows between Robinson and the Natal Parliament in October 1882. Robinson had submitted to the Cape Parliament a despatch from Sir Henry Bulwer (the Governor of Natal and Special Commissioner for Zululand) on the subject of a proposed conference of delegates from Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange Free State. A veritable storm of protest was raised in Natal at this move, which was called an insult to the independence of that country.(1) Robinson, in reply, said that he failed to see how his action could indicate a want of regard for Natal as a separate colony, for

> "Occupying as I do the double position of Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for South Africa, I think I should have been wanting in courtesy and fairness, if I had concealed from my Ministers that in my capacity as High Commissioner I was at the instigation of the Natal Legislature about to submit to the Governments of the Transvaal and the Orange Free State proposals which might possibly affect prejudicially the interests of this Colony".(2)

Bulwer agreed with Robinson, but it could be argued that he had been rather tactless, and perhaps even a trifle high-handed, in not first requesting the Natal Legislature to permit him to present the document to the Cape Parliament. In any case, Robinson was after this pretty universally disliked in Natal.

The depression put a stop to nearly all important public works in Natal during the next few years, but it passed in due course, and Natal began to show signs of vigour again. In November 1885, she complained to the Cape about the latter's re-establishment of Customs Houses on the border between Griqualand East and Natal. Robinson, in reply, said that she had no legitimate cause for complaint, for the Cape could do what she

(1) Enclosure to Despatch No. 544, Kimberley to Robinson, 25/10/1882 in GH 1/86.
(2) Despatch No. 409, Robinson to Kimberley, 20/11/1882, in GH 23/38, pp. 203-204.

liked with her own territory (she had annexed Griqualand East in 1876), which up to now had been losing her considerable sums of money annually through the fact that, having no Customs barrier as a source of revenue, it was therefore far from self-supporting. Anyhow, Natal charged duties on goods imported through Port Natal for consumption in Griqualand East, so why could the Cape not also erect her own customs barriers? However, after mentioning the several other trade barriers that existed in South Africa at that time, he concluded by advocating a Customs Union as the only sensible solution, "short of unification or federation", to this evil, although he rightly believed that public opinion was not yet ready for such a step.(1)

In October 1886, Natal requested the Cape to be allowed to annex Griqualand East, but was curtly told that such a step would be too dangerous to the peace of the Cape's Eastern Frontier.(2) In March 1888, the Imperial Government, with the complete approval of the Cape Government, refused a request from the Natal Government that it be allowed to annex Pondoland.(3) Frustrated on all sides, Natal retired into her shell, from which she was not to emerge for several years.(4)

When he was defeated in July 1879, Cetewayo was exiled from Zululand, and later sent to the Cape, to be kept a semi-prisoner. He was still there when, in 1881, a heated controversy broke out about whether he should be permitted to return to Zululand or not. In the second half of 1881, Cetewayo, pining to return to his country, requested permission to be allowed to go to England, where he felt sure he could persuade the British Government of his sincerity when he said that he wished for nothing better than to be reckoned as a friend of the English, whom he had only attacked because they had invaded

(1) Despatch No. 140, Robinson to Stanley, 23/12/1885, in GH 23/38, pp. 540-546.
(2) Minute No. 1/141, Upington to Robinson, 4/11/1886, in PMO 287.
(3) See Minute No. 1/28, Sprigg to Robinson, 5/3/1888, in PMO 287.
(4) But see below, p.63 for concessions made to Natal with regard to St Lucia Bay (1884) and Zululand (1892).

his country.[1] Smyth was sympathetic, but the British Government was not yet ready to permit him to come to England.

Early the following year, it for a moment appeared as if Cetewayo might never be allowed to come to England, for Lady Florence Dixie received several letters of an anti-British tenor, purporting to come from him, but which were, after a careful investigation, discovered to be forgeries made by Samuelson, his interpreter, who was trying to discredit him.[2] Robinson promptly requested that Samuelson be dismissed, and the latter was duly replaced.

In May, Bulwer informed the Imperial Government that it would be imprudent for Cetewayo to go to England just yet, as even the report of the possibility of such a visit had led to a report of his restoration, and had caused much agitation, interfering with the settlement of Zululand. Finally, on July 12th 1882, Cetewayo left for England, where, after prolonged discussions, the Imperial Government agreed to restore him to his country (with rather reduced boundaries), on condition that he observed his boundaries, refrained from restoring the Zulu military system, imported no arms and ammunition, conducted no "smelling-out" rituals, made no treaties except with British approval, accepted British arbitration in disputes with his neighbours on such subjects as boundaries, and submitted to the British Resident for trial all cases where the defendant was a British subject. In all other respects, he must rule according to usage and the ancient laws of his people.[3]

On September 25th, Cetewayo arrived back in Cape Town, and early in 1883, having finally accepted the terms under which he was to be returned, he returned to rule a rather depleted and very unruly Zululand. He had been disappointed by the amount of territory taken away from him, as he had confided to Robinson (who, convinced of his sincerity from the start, had throughout done his best to get the Imperial Government and Bulwer to permit

(1) See Despatch No. 304, Smyth to Kimberley, 15/7/1881, in GH 23/37, pp. 442-443.
(2) See, in particular, Minute No. 118, Robinson to Ministers, 8/8/1882, in PMO 12.
(3) Despatch (Confidential), Kimberley to Robinson, 25/8/1882, in GH 4/4.

Cetewayo to return to Zululand), but had accepted the terms given him, as he had no choice but to do, saying, however, that he would honourably abide by them.(1)

However, he was not to be given much opportunity to carry out his promises. He had hardly settled down in Zululand when war broke out, some chiefs siding with him, the others (the majority) against him, and he was driven out to die in 1884 in the Reserve. The Imperial Government would not give Natal permission to annex Zululand, nor would it do anything constructive about the situation itself. However, a group of Boers converted part of Zululand into the "New Republic", with Dinizulu, son of Cetewayo, as a vassal king. Vryheid was the capital of the Republic, which was to include in its boundaries St Lucia Bay, the only serviceable harbour between Durban and Lourenço Marques. However, hearing that the harbour was to be sold to Germany, Britain hastily dug out an old 1843 treaty with Panda and, despite German and Transvaal protests (the latter having had its eye on the Bay for some time as the most suitable and convenient port for its projected scheme to achieve self-sufficiency), annexed the Bay in the interests of Natal in December 1884. In 1886-1887, she annexed the vast bulk of Zululand,(2) with the exception of the New Republic, which remained independent until its annexation to Natal in 1892, after earlier negotiations (1888) for its transfer to the South African Republic had broken down.

Relations between the Orange Free State and the rest of South Africa were on the whole less stormy than those of the Transvaal, or, indeed, of any other of the various territories of South Africa. This was due in large measure to President Brand, who always tried to keep the peace between the various states of South Africa. His persistent requests to the leaders

(1) Interview between Robinson, Cetewayo, Smyth and Dunn, 7/12/1882; enclosure to Despatch 424, Robinson to Kimberley, 11/12/1882, in GH 28/114.

(2) See, in particular, C 4913 and C 4980, for the British annexation of Zululand and the events leading up to it.

of both sides to confer rather than fight played no small part in the eventual patching up of peace in the Transvaal in 1881. He and Robinson got on quite well together, and seemed to admire one another very much, but they did have many differences of opinion, particularly in the matter of the rights and wrongs of the Basutoland situation, Brand insisting that it was the duty of the Cape, and afterwards the Imperial Government, to prevent the Basutos from making any inroads into the Orange Free State, Robinson retorting with justice that Brand must, on his part, make a contribution towards the pacification of Basutoland by enforcing on his side of the border the laws forbidding the sale of liquor and guns to the Basutos. Eventually, Brand accepted Robinson's point, and after 1884 Basuto-Free State border troubles dwindled to almost nothing.(1)

The matter of guns was always a touchy point with the President. Early in 1881, he sent a series of telegrams to the Cape Government, asking why his people were being prevented from buying the quantities of guns and ammunition they desired to buy, and insisting (on hearing their reply) that neither the Basutos nor the Transvaalers were getting supplies of arms from Orange Free State sources (which was not quite true, although he may have genuinely believed it to be true).(2) He eventually had to accept the Cape restrictions on the sale of guns, and the subject was dropped. It came up again a couple of years later (again in connection with the Basutos), but was entirely dropped after the border troubles between Basutoland and the Free State died out after 1884. In 1884, with British concurrence, Brand incorporated Moroko's territory in the Orange Free State, but after this, his energies, like those of so many other South Africans at this time, were concentrated in the spheres of Customs Unions, Telegraph and Postal conventions, and Railway conventions and lines.

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(1) See also ~~Chapter III, p. , and~~ Chapter IV, p. 53, above.
(2) Telegrams (Copies), Brand to Robinson, Nos 63 and 73, February 1881, in GH 35/1.

About Swaziland there is comparatively little to say. Under the terms of the Pretoria Convention, it was to become independent. Therefore, when the Convention came into force, the British Resident withdrew, leaving the Swazi Paramount Chief, Umbandeen, to rule his people in his own way, unrestricted by White overseers. His methods aroused some considerable protests, especially from Churchmen, leading Robinson to remark (in reply to a protest from the Bishop of Zululand) that these people should realize that no native chief, however well-disposed, could possibly keep order in his land without the exercise of a certain amount of violence, unless supported and directed by a civilized Government, and that therefore

> "unless Her Majesty's Government is prepared to direct and support the Swazi chief by British Authority it seems to me it would be unreasonable to ask him to abandon the ancient mode of ruling by which alone, as the Bishop observes, he can keep order in his country".(1)

The British Government emphatically denied any desire to take over the control of affairs in Swaziland,(2) and the existing state of affairs continued.

In 1884, the Transvaal reiterated its recognition of the independence of Swaziland, in the London Convention, but very soon after this, many Boers, who for long had been casting covetous eyes on the wide, fertile pasture lands of western Swaziland, began systematic encroachments into that territory, which led Umbandeen in 1886, and again in 1887, when conditions had become infinitely worse as a result of the discovery, at the end of 1886, of gold in Swaziland, to request British protection.(3)

Robinson, in a telegram to Secretary of State Holland (later Lord Knutsford), summed up the situation in Swaziland

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(1) Despatch No. 402, Robinson to Kimberley, 13/11/1882, in GH 23/38, pp. 198-200.
(2) Despatch No. 21, Derby to Robinson, 31/1/1883, in GH 1/87.
(3) C 5089 passim.

rather well.[1] After pointing out that the Transvaal Government was as little able to control its people outside its own borders as were the British, he went on to say that Umbandeen was double dealing, protesting to Kruger about the British, and to the British about the Boers. He could not have prevented a certain amount of encroachment on his territory, in the circumstances, but he must be held responsible for much of the present trouble, for he had sold gold concessions throughout his land to the hordes of undesirables who had flocked there from all over South Africa in search of gold, while at the same time he had sold grazing rights to Boers for the same lands, the proceeds of which sharp practice he was now squandering in dissipation. Apparently, he hoped that the Imperial Government would now come and save him from the consequences of his own folly. If the Imperial Government was not prepared to annex Swaziland outright, Robinson concluded (matters having gone too far for a Protectorate to have any effectiveness), it should suggest to Umbandeen that he seek the protection of the South African Republic, with which it could, if he wished, conduct negotiations with a view to safeguarding native interests.

The British Government were not prepared to annex Swaziland, nor to establish a Protectorate over it, and Umbandeen was not prepared to accept the protection of the South African Republic. Kruger's request for permission to annex the country was refused by the British Government, and finally, in 1890, it was decided to institute what proved to be a rather unsatisfactory system of dual control by Britain and the South African Republic over Swaziland, which in 1906 finally became a British Protectorate.

By 1881, the scramble for Africa was already in full swing. France, Italy and Belgium had already in various quarters taken steps to contest with Britain the supremacy of Africa. Now,

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(1) Document No. 9, 7/3/1887, in C 5089, p.18.

impelled in part by Imperialistic and economic motives, and in part by a desire to "twist the Lion's tail", Germany began to take a hand in the scramble, and one of the first objectives she set herself to achieve was the annexation of the Namaqualand-Damaraland area.

In this area, Walvis Bay and the Guano Islands were British, and British subjects held the bulk of the concessions on the mainland, but, on the other hand, most of the missionaries were German, while German traders, in the main, controlled the trade in ivory and feathers. The coast was vaguely accepted as being under the control of the Cape, but there was no definite arrangement on the matter. Robinson, writing to Kimberley late in May 1881, pointed this fact out, and suggested that, to avoid the possibility of trouble in the area in the future, some definite steps be taken towards either annexing it to the Cape or making it an independent British possession.(1) No such steps were taken, however, and matters drifted on as vaguely as ever.

In the middle of 1881, war broke out between the Namaquas and the Damaras. The Cape, busy with the Basutos, confined itself to cutting off supplies of arms to the contending parties, and left them to fight it out undisturbed, although Major Musgrave, in charge of the British settlement at Walvis Bay, was told to do what he could towards arranging peace between them, but was not given any facilities for helping him to arrange such a peace. He naturally was unable to make any such arrangement, and the war dragged on.

Towards the end of the year, Robinson sent a warship up to Walvis Bay, a move which temporarily eased the situation, but in January 1882 it became necessary to take action of a more permanent nature, and so Mr Hahn was sent up to the area by the Cape Government, taking with him 25 soldiers. However, it was clearly stated that their sole job was to be to protect the thin strip of British territory around the Bay, and those living there, from possible attacks by one or other side in the Namaqua-Damara war.

(1) See Telegram (Copy), Robinson to Smyth, 25/5/1881; enclosure to Minute No. 381, Smyth to Ministers, 26/7/1881, in PMO 10.

The Cape Government had

> "no intention to take any part whatever in support of either side in the war now unfortunately being carried on between the Damaras and the Namaquas".(1)

This disclaimer on the part of the Cape of all desire to take active steps to accept responsibility in the affairs of a territory it did not for a moment cease to regard as within its exclusive field of influence could not have been any more clearly put.

In 1881, in reply to a German request for information as to jurisdiction in the area, the Imperial Government had returned a non-committal answer. Now, in the latter half of 1882, a German merchant, Herr Lüderitz, acquired some land from a Namaqua chief in the Angre Pequena area, and within a year (October 1883) the harbour of Angra Pequena and its environs had been annexed by Germany, in the interests of its subjects in the area, while a year later (September 1884) Germany proclaimed a protectorate over just about the whole of what is to-day South West Africa, with the single exception of the small British settlement at Walvis Bay.

Both Britain and the Cape, neither of whom had been willing to extend their commitments while they still had the opportunity, right up to September 1884, protested vigorously at these steps on the part of the German Government, claiming that the latter was over a large part of the area it claimed, usurping earlier British treaties, the most notable of which was Smyth's discovery, in November 1883, that "the harbour of Angra Pequena was annexed (to the Cape) by Captain Forsyth in H.M.S. Valorous on the 5th of May, 1866".(2) Nothing much came of these claims (unsupported as they were by any positive action on the part of either the British Government or the Cape Government while such

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(1) Letter (Copy), Rose Innes to Hahn, 14/1/1882; enclosure to Despatch No. 11, Robinson to Kimberley, 14/1/1882, in GH 28/112. It is significant of Robinson's largely passive rôle in this entire affair that he made no active objection to this dangerous attitude the Cape Government had adopted to the problem of Namaqualand-Damaraland.

(2) Despatch No. 329, Smyth to Derby, 13/11/1883, in GH 23/38, pp. 377-378.

action was still possible, up to September 1884), but at the beginning of 1885, a Joint British and German Commission was set up to go into the whole matter of rival West Coast claims.(1) By the end of 1885, this Commission had succeeded in defining the limits of British and German territory in and around South West Africa, although it was not until 1890 that Britain and Germany finally came to complete agreement on the matter, and signed a treaty defining these boundaries, Germany retaining all of South West Africa except Walvis Bay, which was to remain in British hands. In the meanwhile (1886), Germany had signed a similar treaty with Portugal defining the boundaries between South West Africa and Angola, and thus by 1890 German South West Africa had achieved its final shape.

The Eastern Frontier of the Cape, that perennial problem that had plagued Cape Governments for so many years, proved itself to be still able to produce plenty of headaches for Robinson and the Cape Government during the 1880's. Fingoland and Griqualand East had been annexed to the Cape in 1879, while most of the other districts were under Cape magistrates, although Pondoland (both East and West) was still fully independent. Disarmament had been fairly effectively carried out in the areas under Cape control, and, in the sphere of administration, magisterial control was gradually being substituted for that of the chiefs, while legislation for the area was by the Governor-in-Council, no Cape Acts applying unless specifically stated. The sale of liquor was forbidden, and the vote promised as soon as the territories became ordinary districts of the Colony.(2)

Despite this fairly close control, the outbreak of the Basuto War in September 1880 gave rise to some unrest in the

(1) The proceedings of, and the evidence presented to, this Commission may be found in GH 21/17 - GH 21/21.

(2) None of the above applied to Pondoland, and from this point on in this section, all references to the Transkeian Territories, unless otherwise stated, are references to the whole of the Transkei except the two Pondolands.

Transkei. The East Griquas, stirred up by the East Pondos, rose in revolt against the Colony, but, helped by friendly tribes, the Colonial troops were quickly able to restore peace, and shortly after his arrival at the Cape, Robinson was able to report to Kimberley that, in the Transkei, "rebellion appears collapsing".(1)

The revolt had been put down, but intermittent unrest continued during the next four years. At first, the Galeka Chief Kreli, in hiding since the War of 1877-1878, was the centre of a certain amount of trouble. In April, he declared himself willing to surrender (an act which would have materially reduced Transkeian disorder), provided he was not sent to Robben Island, but in June, alarmed by the arrival of fresh Colonial troops in the Transkei, he fled across the border into Pondoland, from where, despite the repeated assurances he gave through the mouths of those Counsellors he had left behind to treat with the Cape Government, that he desired to submit, he yet continued to agitate against Cape actions in the Transkei (particularly the movement of Galekas from the Bashee to Willowvale). However, by late August, his sympathizers had become very few in number, thanks to "the liberal and generous terms accorded by the Government to Kreli and the Galekas",(2) and he soon ceased to be a significant problem, and disturbances in the Transkei became much less frequent.

By the end of 1881, the problem of the legal position of the Transkei had come to the fore. East Griqualand and Fingoland were part of the Cape Colony, but Tembuland, Galekaland, Emigrant Tambookieland and Bomvanaland were not, although a Bill for their annexation had been passed by the Cape Legislature in its 1880 session, which, not having received the Queen's assent yet, could therefore not be put into operation. Therefore, although the magistrates appointed by the High Commissioner exercised a <u>de facto</u> jurisdiction over these areas, this juris-

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(1) Telegram, 28/1/1881; enclosure to Herbert to Robinson (Acknowledgement), 28/1/1881, in GH 7/1.
(2) Letter, Blyth (Chief Magistrate, Transkei) to Rose Innes, 26/8/1881; enclosure to Despatch 377, Robinson to Kimberley, 13/9/1881, in GH 28/110.

diction could at any moment be set openly at defiance, as had recently happened at St John's River. Pointing these facts out, the Cape Ministers, in October 1881,[1] asked that, in view of the fact that matters in the Transkei were on the way to peace, it was desirable that Her Majesty's Government now come to some decision which would enable laws to be made for this area, and legally enforced there by magistrates. If they were unprepared to request the Queen to assent to the 1880 Bill, they should then, as they had done in the case of St John's River, issue a Commission appointing the Governor to be Governor of these areas, with power to legislate by proclamation and appoint officials. Accordingly, in the following month, a Commission was issued appointing Robinson as governor, with power to make laws for their "peace, order and good government", of "certain territories situated in the Transkei, and commonly known as Tembuland, Emigrant Tambookieland, Bomvanaland, and Galekaland".[2]

The Imperial Government had been unwilling to assent to the Bill of 1880 in the absence of any real Code of Native Law and Administration in the Cape.[3] A Native Law Commission was accordingly set up, which by 1883 had drafted a new Code (which came into force in 1886), involving the retention, on the whole, of the native civil law, and the replacement of the native criminal law by a more Europeanized criminal code.

Meanwhile, White immigration (especially by Boers) was taking place into the unannexed areas of the Transkei. In an effort to prevent possible trouble between Boer and native over land, Robinson, in June 1882, issued a Proclamation making it necessary for all Whites wishing to settle in the area, to get first a permit from a magistrate.[4] In July, a Cape Parliamentary Commission went into the whole matter, and eventually large areas along the base of the Drakensberg were set aside for White settlement. This system worked fairly well, although there were

(1) Minute 1488, Scanlen to Robinson, 8/10/1888; enclosure to Despatch 396, 10/10/1881, Robinson to Kimberley; in GH 28/111. See also the Despatch itself, which is to be found in GH 23/38, pp. 2-3.
(2) A copy of this Commission may be found in GH 1/84.
(3) Despatch No. 363, Kimberley to Robinson, 15/11/1881, in GH 1/84.
(4) Despatch No. 219, Robinson to Kimberley, 12/6/1882, in GH 23/38, pp. 114-117.

intermittent quarrels as to ownership of land, over the next few months.

Early in 1884, Great Britain took over Basutoland from the Cape, and Scanlen, in dire financial straits, considered getting rid of the Transkei as well. However, he was defeated in the general election in May on this issue, and in June, a resolution was passed by the Cape Legislature asking that the Cape be allowed to annex Tembuland, Emigrant Tambookieland, Galekaland and Bomvanaland. In October, Letters-Patent authorizing such annexation were issued,(1) the Cape Parliament passed the necessary Law, and all of the Transkei, except Pondoland and the Mount Ayliff district, had passed into Cape hands.

Few adjustments were necessary to the structure of government in these areas, the magisterial system having been applied there in essence long before the annexation. In 1886, the new Native Code was applied throughout the Transkei, which now settled down to a period of comparative peace.

Pondoland caused Robinson and the Cape Government quite an amount of trouble. Despite the fact that the East Pondos had incited the East Griquas to revolt against the Cape at the end of 1880, the Cape carefully refrained from taking any punitive action against these people. However, the question of what to do about the Pondos remained, and in a despatch to Robinson, dated January 27th 1881, Kimberley, after saying that "the matters in dispute are such as should be dealt with by you as High Commissioner", instructed him to attempt to make the Pondos understand that, so long as they remained friendly, they would be left undisturbed by the Imperial Government.(2)

Even before Robinson's telegram on this subject had reached him, the Pondo Chief, Umqnikela, had asked Mr Oxland, the British Resident in Pondoland, to tell the Cape Government

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(1) Letter-Patent annexing Tembuland, etc., 2/10/1884, in GH 1/89.
(2) Despatch 168, Kimberley to Robinson, 27/1/1881, in GH 1/83.

"that he is most anxious to remain at peace, and that never by his consent will anything be done by his people to destroy the friendly relations which have so long subsisted between the Pondos and the Government of the Cape Colony",(1)

and, on the receipt of Robinson's telegram, he inquired whether the High Commissioner would be prepared immediately to receive a Pondo deputation (which had been proposed some time before). Robinson agreed to receive the deputation as soon as it arrived, but somehow it never got sent, the usual excuse offered being lack of funds.(2) This unsatisfactory beginning was characteristic of relations with the Pondos during the early 1880's.

Early in February 1881, the Governor of Natal asked for some troops from St John's River. Robinson was of the opinion that these should be sent, and asked the Cape Ministers whether these should be replaced by men from the small Cape garrison, or whether they felt that Imperial troops could be dispensed with altogether at St John's River.(3) In reply, the Ministers said emphatically that if the British troops were removed, the Pondos could not be expected to remain quiet, and suggested that troops from the Cape garrison be sent up to replace those sent to Natal,(4) which was done.

In July 1881, the St John's River Territory, in response to complaints about the legal right of the Cape to charge customs on goods entering at Port St John's,(5) was declared by a Royal proclamation to be under the control of the Governor of the Cape as Governor, he to be responsible for providing for its government by legislating by proclamation and appointing officers there,(6) which meant, in effect, that the territory was to be under Cape control, although not forming part of the Cape, as yet.

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(1) Letter, Oxland to Rose Innes, 5/2/1881; enclosure to Despatch No. 66, Robinson to Kimberley, 19/2/1881; in GH 28/109.
(2) See, for example, telegrams passing between Oxland and Rose Innes, March 1881; enclosure to Despatch 132, Robinson to Kimberley, 25/3/1881; in GH 28/109.
(3) Minute 95, Robinson to M'ters, 12/2/1881, in PMO 8; also in GH 32/1, pp. 445-447.
(4) Minute, M'ters to Robinson, 14/2/1881; enclosure to Despatch No. 68, Robinson to Kimberley, 21/2/1881; in GH 28/109.
(5) Despatch No. 311, Smyth to Kimberley, 18/7/1881, in GH 23/37, pp. 445-446.
(6) Despatch (General), Kimberley to Robinson, 28/7/1881, in GH 1/84.

This last step, the annexation of the Territory to the Cape, was declared by Letters-Patent dated October 10th, 1881,[1] but was not implemented by Act of the Cape Parliament until 1884.

The Pondos, who had long resented the presence of British and Cape elements within their boundaries, no sooner learned that the St John's River Territory was likely to be annexed to the Cape, than they protested vigorously. The border clans, in particular, were in an aggressive mood, and, at a meeting held on October 1st, 1881, it was decided to expel the Xesibes, inhabitants of the Mount Ayliff area.[2] This decision amounted to an indirect attack on the Cape Government, which was on very friendly terms with the Xesibes. However, although sporadic fighting broke out between the Pondos and the Xesibes, it soon died down to almost nothing, and the next three years passed without any really important incidents.

However, they were far from quiet years. Pondo-Cape relations gradually became more and more strained, due in large measure to the fact that the Pondos at frequent intervals made cattle-stealing raids on pro-Cape tribes, especially the Xesibes, with which people they had a long-standing feud. They also made frequent complaints to the Imperial Government, through Mr Welbourne, Umqnikela's Secretary, to the effect that the Cape was interfering in Pondoland and paying no attention to frequent Pondo pleas that they refrain from so doing. He said that the Pondos hoped that the Imperial Government would step in and prevent Pondo independence being thus violated. The Cape Government proved this to be a tissue of lies, the Pondos being the real aggressors.[3]

At the close of 1884, the Cape Government, goaded beyond endurance, wanted to send an ultimatum to Umqnikela, demanding that unless he ceased his persistent marauding expeditions, the Cape would send troops into Pondoland to destroy him, but Robinson

(1) Letters-Patent ... for annexing St John's River, 10/10/1881, in GH 1/84.
(2) Telegram (Copy) No. 2031, C.M. Kokstad to Rose Innes, 8/10/188[illegible] enclosure to Despatch No. 398, Robinson to Kimberley, 11/10/188[illegible] in GH 28/111.
(3) See, especially, Despatch 75, Derby to Smyth, 21/5/1883, with Enclosures, in GH 1/87.

refused to assent to such a drastic step,[1] which was accordingly dropped. A correspondence ensued which ended in the Imperial Government proclaiming a protectorate over the whole coast of Pondoland, on the understanding that at some future date the Cape would annex the whole country.[2]

Umqnikela protested against this Protectorate, but to no avail. The protectorate continued, but it did not prevent the continuance of Pondo-Xesibe disorders, which continued unabated, without ever breaking out into open warfare, until, at the close of 1886, the Cape finally annexed the Xesibe country.

From this point, the disorders in Pondoland quietened, Umqnikela became more tractable, and the Cape began to regard the Transkei with less anxiety than had been the case for many years. On October 28th 1887, Umqnikela died, to be succeeded by his son Sigcau. Natal asked to be allowed to annex Pondoland, and was refused permission, and when Robinson left South Africa in 1889, the problem of the Transkei had dwindled to a mere shadow of its former rather frightening self.

By 1887,

> "the whole coast from the mouth of the Orange round to the Portuguese border south of Delagoa Bay was in British hands save the narrow belt of Tongaland wherein lay the harbour of Kosi Bay. Inland, a great wedge of British territory had been driven between the Transvaalers and the Germans up to the boundary of Matabeleland".[3]

Further territorial expansion was for the moment at a standstill throughout South Africa, and the time had come for concentrated economic effort, centred round greatly improved inter-state communications, based on greater inter-state co-operation, and leading to a certain amount of closer co-operation between the states of South Africa.

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(1) Minute 289, Robinson to Ministers, 15/9/1884, in PMO 22.
(2) See Documents dated 1/1/1885 - 7/1/1885, in PMO 23 and PMO 287.
(3) Walker, History, p.410.

In these affairs, Robinson played a largely passive part. He was very interested in such subjects as railway, postal and telegraphic development, and encouraged them as much as possible in the Cape, thus making for more certain trading facilities, and improved revenues. In the inter-state sphere, too, he did what he could to see that communications were improved, but he could do little apart from urging the various states to make every effort to join in schemes of that nature, as the next-best substitutes for the highly-desirable Union of the South African States.

In 1885, the Transvaal was at a low ebb financially. The railway line from Delagoa Bay had struck a snag, in the form of the mud-banks near the Bay, the Dutch-German company to which she had given the monopoly of Transvaal internal railway construction had not yet begun work, she had no chance (since the formation of the Bechuanaland Protectorate) of joining up with the projected German South West Africa railway, and the Orange Free State refused to consider the possibility of a republican union. Kruger, in desperation, therefore on two separate occasions suggested the idea of a Customs Union to the Cape, even going so far as to suggest the extension of the Cape trunk line (then having got as far as Kimberley) into the Transvaal, while President Brand came up with the wider suggestion of a General Customs Union, in January 1885.

However, unfortunately, the Upington Ministry at the Cape, faced with numerous difficulties, let this chance slip, and after that it was too late to get anything like a truly South African Customs Union, for, before the year was out, gold had discovered on the Witwatersrand, and the Transvaal was enabled to return to its protectionist policy, aimed at becoming self-supporting. Natal, never very keen on a Cape connection, and finding it in its own economic interests to work with the Transvaal against the Cape, also turned its back on any idea of a general Customs Union. That left the Cape and the Orange Free State.

In 1887, Kruger tried to force the Orange Free State into

the Transvaal's economic orbit. However, Brand was not very keen on joining on the basis of an offensive and defensive alliance with an economic alliance tacked on to it, and refused. Instead, he turned to the Cape, where his state's economic interests lay, and secured a Customs Convention (January 1888). The Transvaal refused to attend, and although Natal sent delegates to the Conference, they backed out towards the end of the year, and it was left to the Cape and the Free State to sign the Convention in April 1889.

On July 16th 1888, President Brand had died. He had arranged for the extension of the Port Elizabeth railway line to Bloemfontein, and the signing of the Customs Convention meant that the economic ties between the two states were very strong (a Postal Convention having also been signed, in December 1888), although, in the political sphere, the Transvaal and the Free State were very close, especially as in March 1889, Reitz, the new Free State President, had concluded a close defensive alliance with the Transvaal.

Meanwhile, differences continued on railway matters. The Cape was constantly threatening to extend the Kimberley line to the Transvaal border, while Kruger each time retorted that, if they waited until the Delagoa line got closer to the Transvaal, he would permit free trade to the Colony. Eventually, in June 1889, the Delagoa line, taken over by the Portuguese, reached Transvaal soil, thus giving the Transvaal access to a large non-British port. In reply, the newly-formed British South Africa Company carried the Kimberley line northwards through Bechuanaland, which line could be counted on to draw the traffic of the Western Transvaal.

This, then, was the tangled, complex, depressing, and yet at the same time in many respects encouraging scene that Robinson left behind him on his departure from South Africa in May 1889, and which Sir Henry Loch found facing him when he arrived in December 1889, to take over from Robinson.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOVERNOR AND THE CAPE, 1881-1889

In general, the Governor of a colony with Responsible Government had to act on the advice, and with the consent, of his Ministers, that is to say, his Ministers had to be prepared to accept responsibility in Parliament for his actions. This did not mean that he could do nothing unless his Ministers told him to do it, but it did mean that, when he wanted anything done, he had to persuade his Ministers to accept the responsibility for his plan in Parliament. He thus generally worked behind the scenes, doing his best to persuade Ministers to agree to be responsible for his schemes, and also frequently preventing Ministers from carrying into effect schemes which he felt would be detrimental to the Colony, or which the Imperial Government (whose representative he was, and whose consent he had to have before he could carry out any important official action) disapproved of, by simply refusing to act on their advice in any such matter. In this way, a really strong, popular Governor could in certain circumstances achieve almost dictatorial powers, or at least ensure that the country was running in the way he felt it ought to.

We have already seen, in the specific case of Basutoland,(1) how Robinson, in the early stages at any rate, was able to control the course of events to a quite remarkable extent, without at any stage overstepping the bounds of his legitimate position as Governor, although he did on one or two occasions threaten, in the interests of peace, to do so. Let us now see what, in general, his relations were with the various Governments that ruled the Cape in the 1880's, while at the same time dealing briefly with the more important events that took place in the Cape at this time, and also the effects on the Cape of events outside its borders.

(1) Chapter III, above.

The Cape Colony, in this period, was at once the largest, the most powerful, the most stable, and the most influential of all the states and territories in South Africa. These facts did not prevent it from suffering extremely seriously as a result of the great slump of the early 1880's, which made it chary of taking on new commitments in South Africa, and ready to get rid of such of its already-accepted commitments as it could. However, it never actually went bankrupt, and in any case, by about 1885, it had recovered most of its equilibrium, and continued with its earlier plans for improving the quantity and quality of both internal and external communications.

Never slow to drop down heavily on anything that looked remotely like excessive expenditure, one of Robinson's first actions after taking over the Government of the Cape was to address a strongly-worded minute to the Premier, Gordon Sprigg, to the effect that

> "the Governor considers the practice of habitually exceeding the amount voted by Parliament for any particular service objectionable",

and to suggest that only such sums as were "absolutely necessary for the conduct of these Offices" be placed on the annual estimates, and all would then have to keep within the limits of such sums as Parliament might set aside for the purpose.(1)

Robinson then settled down to the task of governing the Cape, and being at the same time High Commissioner for South Africa. He received a never-ending stream of Despatches, Petitions, Letters, Telegrams and Circulars, some of which could be dealt with immediately in his capacity as High Commissioner, while a large proportion had to be sent to the Ministers for their consideration, often with a request as to what steps he should take in regard to a certain matter, while occasionally he would "suggest" a course of action to the Ministers, a suggestion

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(1) Minute 61, Robinson to Sprigg, 29/1/1881, in GH 32/1, pp. 394-396.

which, when offered, was very rarely not concurred with.

By the time that Robinson arrived in the Cape, it had become clear that the days of the Sprigg Ministry were numbered. Sprigg's attempt to push the unpopular Confederation scheme through Parliament early in 1880, followed closely by his inept native policy, culminating in the Basuto War, all served to discredit him. He lost a large amount of support in Parliament by these policies, and his inability to bring the Basuto War to a conclusion increased the growing disfavour with which his Government was becoming looked upon. Robinson's Award came too late to save him, but in any case, it is doubtful if it would have done so, even had it come earlier, involving as it did in effect the almost complete reversal of his disarmament policy.

At the beginning of May, Robinson left for Newcastle to take up his appointment as President of the Royal Commission on the Transvaal, and on the 5th, after a member of his Cabinet had resigned, and a large body of members, led by Rhodes, then a new member for the new area of Griqualand West (annexed a year before), had declared their intention to vote against him in a proposed no-confidence vote, Sprigg tendered his resignation to Lt-General Sir Leicester Smyth, who, as Officer Commanding the Cape Garrison, automatically became Acting Governor when Robinson was for any reason away from the Cape. Smyth accepted it, subject to Robinson's approval, which came the next day, together with his approval of Smyth's decision to send for Thomas Scanlen, Leader of the Opposition, to form a new Government. This he did, and on May 8th, with a promise to adhere to the Award, he became Premier of the Cape.(1)

Scanlen's Cabinet was: Premier and Attorney-General, Thomas Scanlen; Colonial Secretary, J. C. Molteno; Treasurer, C. H. Hutton; Commissioner for Crown Lands and Public Works, John X. Merriman; Secretary for Native Affairs, J. W. Sauer; Minister without Portfolio, J. H. Hofmeyr. However, Merriman

(1) Despatch No. 225, Smyth to Kimberley, 10/5/1881, in GH 23/37, pp. 414-416.

made a number of rather ill-advised speeches attacking Hofmeyr's plan and campaign for the recognition for Parliamentary purposes of the Dutch language, and at the end of November, Hofmeyr resigned from the Cabinet, although he and his followers still continued to support the Government.

Meanwhile, at the end of August, Robinson had returned from the Transvaal, the Transvaalers having at the beginning of the month reluctantly signed the Pretoria Convention. Robinson, who was always eager for any opportunity he could get to conduct on the spot investigations of the problems he had to tackle, suggested that Ministers might like him to stop off either in Basutoland or at Port St John's on his way back from the Transvaal,(1) but they felt that this would not be necessary, and so he returned direct via Durban.

The new Ministry, which he now met for the first time, was a rather heterogeneous mixture, and it soon showed that it was going to pursue a rather different policy to Sprigg's "policy of vigour". The Scanlen policy could hardly be called a policy at all, as it consisted simply of dealing with each problem as it presented itself. In many respects, this policy worked rather well, but unfortunately, this led to the extremely vacillatory attitude the Cabinet adopted towards the Basuto problem, thus bringing it into disrepute.(2)

Early in 1882, the long-expected slump finally came, on the collapse of the over-capitalized diamond mines. The Scanlen Ministry replied to this challenge by the introduction of an extremely thorough-going policy of retrenchment, and waited for the storm to blow over, which it had begun to do by 1884, although it was many years before the Cape began to show any annual profits.

At the close of June, 1882, the Colonial Secretary, John Charles Molteno, resigned. He had originally retired from

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(1) Telegrams (Copies), Robinson to Smyth, 26/7/1881 and 29/7/1881; enclosures to Minutes 382 and 389 respectively, Smyth to Ministers, 27/7/1881 and 30/7/1881; in PMO 10.

(2) pp. 39-43, above. Note, also, Robinson's high opinion of Scanlen's personal integrity, p.41; and the great degree of co-operation achieved between the two in their relations to each other.

Parliament in 1878, only to return in 1880 to active political life, and had agreed to be a member of the Cabinet as a temporary measure, until a satisfactory solution to the question of the Attorney-General could be found, for Scanlen, a member of the side-bar, had, in the absence of any Advocates in his party, been forced to take the Attorney-Generalship on himself, contrary to usual practice. Now, however, James Leonard, the man whose resignation from Sprigg's Cabinet in May 1881 had been the beginning of the end for that Government, was appointed to be Attorney-General in Scanlen's Ministry (it would have been very bad form to appoint him too soon after he had resigned from an Opposition Party), and Scanlen himself was able to relinquish that post, and take over the Colonial Secretaryship, which, involving as it did the running of external affairs, was usually associated with the Premiership.(1) This left Molteno free to resign, which he did gratefully, and in August, he was informed that he had been made a K.C.M.G. as a reward for his long years of service to the Cape.(2)

In February 1883, Robinson wrote to the Earl of Derby, asking for leave of absence to England during the summer (the English summer, that is), "if as the year advances I find I can be absent from my post here without public inconvenience". He is entitled to some leave, for in 30 years' uninterrupted service as a Governor, he had only twice been given leave, the last being from Ceylon 14 years before. He would like to leave in April, but will not specify a particular day, as he would only leave if after consultation with his Ministers, it were to be decided that it could be done without inconvenience. Nor would he specify the length of time his leave was to take, for he was prepared

> "at any moment after I had been a couple of months in England to return if any unforeseen difficulty or complication rendered my presence here desirable".

(1) Despatch No. 246, Robinson to Kimberley, 1/7/1882, in GH 23/38, p.127; also J. H. Hofmeyr, The Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr, pp. 187-188.

(2) Despatch (Honours), Kimberley to Robinson, 17/8/1882; in GH 1/86.

He also asks for his leave to be on half pay. Finally, while he is away, the Senior Military Officer, the Hon. Leicester Smyth C.B., will take over. He had

> "acted as my deputy for 4 months in 1881 whilst I was absent in the Transvaal, and I have ascertained from the Premier that his temporary administration of the Government in the event of my absence is an arrangement which would be acceptable to Ministers".(1)

Having thus, in his usual meticulous, almost pedantic manner, put his case before his superior, he quietly awaited the inevitable answer, and on April 26th 1883, he set sail for England on the S.S. "Mexican", leaving Smyth to take care of the Governorship and High Commissionership during his absence.

Scarcely had Robinson left for England than Scanlen, worried by continued Basuto unrest, plagued by Orange Free State requests that he prevent Basuto encroachments into the Free State, and concerned at the tremendous drain on the still pitifully meagre Cape financial resources occasioned by the continued unrest in Basutoland, came to a final decision. Basutoland must go. He accordingly sent Merriman to England, with orders to make arrangements for the future of Basutoland when the Cape withdrew.

Robinson, in full sympathy with the Cape Ministry, did all in his power to smooth the path for the Cape. He, Merriman and Scanlen, who arrived later in the year, urged the somewhat over-cautious Derby on, until finally a settlement was reached,(2) to which the passing of a Disarmament Act by the Cape Parliament was a necessary preliminary.

To get such an Act passed was, however, no easy matter. Back in 1881, secure in the support of Hofmeyr and the Bond, Scanlen would have had little difficulty in getting such an Act passed, but there had been many changes since then. Hofmeyr's resignation from the Cabinet in November 1881 had not had the effect of sending him over to the Opposition. In

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(1) Despatch No. 29, Robinson to Derby, 6/2/1883; in GH 23/38, pp. 228-229.
(2) See page 43 above.

fact, he continued for some time to vote with the Government on most matters, especially with regard to Basutoland. In return, the Government, possibly mainly through fear of losing his support, had supported his Bill to allow the use of Dutch in Parliamentary Debates, which had accordingly had an easy passage, and which, promulgated on June 9th 1882, was the first step towards the recognition of Dutch as an official language in British South Africa.(1) By 1883, however, Hofmeyr had drifted nearer to the Opposition point of view, and, while supporting the idea of Disannexation on the part of the Cape, he was not entirely in favour of the Imperial factor being allowed to take over when the Cape left.(2) Still, the Disannexation Act got through Parliament somehow, and in March 1884, Basutoland was formally taken over by Britain as a Protectorate.

Meanwhile, the Cape Parliament had been dissolved at the close of its 1883 session, and, from late in 1883 to early in 1884, fresh elections took place, the elections being fought on the issue of whether the Transkei should go the same way as Basutoland. Scanlen had for a long time felt that the two areas presented similar problems, and must be solved by similar methods. He had almost decided to press the question when in England in 1883, but had concluded that

> "any pressure with regard to the Transkei might imperil the pending negotiations as to Basutoland".(3)

As for getting such a measure through the Cape Parliament, Scanlen had not been very hopeful, and so he had left the question out for the time being, concentrating on getting the Basutoland Disannexation Act through.

The idea of disannexing the Transkei was anathema to Hofmeyr, who just before the election broke completely with Scanlen, and allied himself with Upington and Sprigg, the leaders of the Opposition party, until lately opponents of his, but

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(1) Hofmeyr, op.cit., p.224.
(2) Hofmeyr, op.cit., pp. 230-237.
(3) Sir Perceval Laurence, The Life of John Xavier Merriman, p. 79.

with whom he now reached an understanding.[1] Faced with this powerful coalition, Scanlen knew he had little hope of winning the election.

So events proved. Hutton, unable to get re-election to either the Council, or, later, the Assembly, resigned as Treasurer, and Rhodes was appointed to be Treasurer in his place.[2] At the same time, many lesser Scanlenites also lost their seats, and the new Parliament wore a predominantly non-Government look, with Hofmeyr pledged to vote with the old Opposition on the Transkei question, and to accept Sprigg and Upington as Scanlen's successors, if necessary.[3]

On March 27th, 1884, after an absence of exactly eleven months, Robinson returned to the Cape, and resumed the government of the Cape and "the duties devolving on me as Her Majesty's Commissioner for South Africa".[4] On May 2nd, he opened the "first session of the Seventh Parliament" of the Cape,[5] and four days later Scanlen was defeated in the Assembly "on a motion condemning the issue by the Government of the recent Phylloxera proclamation" (which altered an 1880 Proclamation preventing the importation into the Cape of any types of plants), and resigned on the following day, with his Cabinet.[6]

It would appear that the Scanlen Ministry, knowing that it would be defeated on any vote on the Transkei, chose rather to go out of office on a comparatively unimportant point, thus avoiding

> "the odium, which would have clung to themselves as a result of their support of an unpopular cause",

and thus keeping to the fore the strong possibility that, under the stress and strain of holding Ministerial office, the Hofmeyr-Upington coalition would crack, and that they would then

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(1) J. H. Hofmeyr, op.cit., p.238.
(2) Minute No. 13/49, Scanlen to Smyth, 19/3/1884; enclosure to Despatch No. 87, Smyth to Derby, 20/3/1884; in GH 28/118.
(3) Hofmeyr, op.cit., p.243.
(4) Despatch No. 92, Robinson to Derby, 27/3/1884, in GH 23/38, p.431.
(5) Despatch No. 126, Robinson to Derby, 2/5/1884, in GH 23/38, pp. 443-444.
(6) Despatch No. 140, Robinson to Derby, 13/5/1884, in GH 23/38, pp. 448-449.

be back in office before the end of the year.(1)

In a letter to Merriman, in August 1883, Robinson, writing from Scotland, had said that

> "until you can bring home to the Dutch party that they must be prepared to carry out in office the policy they advocate in Parliament there will be nothing but confusion and insincerity all round. I have long looked to the advent of a Dutch Ministry for a short time as a cure for many of the existing anomalies".(2)

His opportunity now came, and he lost no time in taking it. Scanlen suggested that Hofmeyr (as leader of the largest party in the Cape Parliament) be asked to form a new Government. When Robinson had suggested to him some time before, that he might soon be asked to form a Government, Hofmeyr had answered that he would not be able to do so, for if he did, his opponents would "raise the racial issue, and I hate racial issues". Now, faced with the reality of being asked to form a government, Hofmeyr asked for time to consider the matter and to consult his friends, but the same afternoon he refused, on personal grounds, and suggested Upington for Prime Minister. On the 8th, a meeting of Bond supporters elected Upington unanimously as leader, and Robinson then asked him to form a new Administration. By the 13th, the Cabinet was complete, and consisted of Thomas Upington (Premier and Attorney-General); J. G. Sprigg (Treasurer-General); J. Ayliff (Colonial Secretary); Col. Schermbrucker (Commissioner); and J. A. de Wet (Secretary for Native Affairs).(3) There had been some considerable objection to Sprigg among the Bond members, who had not forgotten his anti-Afrikaaner attitude in 1881, while the memory of his Confederation and Basuto War fiascos died hard. However, Upington insisted on his presence in the Government, and he got his way.

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(1) Hofmeyr, op.cit., p.246.
(2) Laurence, op.cit., p.80 (present writer's italics).
(3) Despatch No. 140, Robinson to Derby, 13/5/1884, in GH 23/38, pp. 448-449; also, Hofmeyr, op.cit., p.247.

Had Hofmeyr accepted office, it might well have happened that Scanlen's hope of a break-up of the coalition would have been justified, but he realized that, with the other two men holding office, and himself in a position of independent and external support, the safety of the Upington Cabinet would be assured. This combination ruled the Cape until 1890, concentrating its efforts on annexing to the Cape the rest of the Transkei (except Pondoland), and applying there strict but fair laws.

Robinson at first did not get on any too well with his new Ministry, being much more in sympathy with the Scanlen Opposition. In fact, it was widely whispered that, while in his capacity as Governor he took the advice of his Ministers, in his capacity as High Commissioner he "lent his ear to the Opposition".(1) It is undoubtedly true that he had a close personal friendship with Rhodes, in particular, but it is also true to say that, as time went on, he got over his slight antipathy towards Sprigg, and that when he left in 1889, all parties in the Cape were genuinely sorry to see him go.

The Cape in the period from 1885 need not detain us long. In March, 1885, Ayliff resigned from the Cabinet because of ill-health, and was replaced as Colonial Secretary by John Tudhope. During the course of the year, the Cape Town - Kimberley railway reached completion, and further lines were contemplated. By 1890, the Cape had a fairly extensive network of railways, particularly in the Eastern Cape region, and the South Coast. In the financial sphere, however, the Cape still produced regular annual deficits, which nothing seemed able to reduce, not even the unpopular but lucrative Excise.

In October 1885, the proclamation of the free sale of liquor to natives in the Transkei led to storms of protests being hurled at the Cape Government for passing the Act, and

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(1) Laurence, op.cit., p.101.

at Robinson for assenting to it. At the close of that year, Robinson went on an official visit to British Bechuanaland, the Orange Free State, Basutoland, and the Eastern provinces of the Cape Colony, while, in April 1886, he went to England again on leave, this time for three months only, leaving Lt-General Towens as his Deputy.

In November 1886, Upington was compelled, due to ill health and the fact that he was unable to carry on his law practice and be Premier at the same time, to give the Premiership up. He retained his position as Attorney-General, however, and Sprigg, now a K.C.M.G., who had by now succeeded in allaying the doubts the Bond had earlier felt about him, took over the Premiership, while still retaining the position of Treasurer. In 1888 they won the general election, but were gradually drifting away from Hofmeyr, and in 1890, Rhodes, with Hofmeyr's help, became Premier.

CHAPTER VII

HIGH COMMISSIONER AND/OR GOVERNOR ?

Since the earliest days of British rule in South Africa, it had been customary for the offices of Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner for South Africa, to be vested in the same person. However, recent extensions of British interests had made a certain degree of decentralization necessary, and Frere had had to hand over his powers in South-East Africa to Wolseley. Further,

> "the state of Bechuanaland, Basutoland and the Transkei had either called for or pointed towards direct Imperial intervention to relieve the self-governing Cape Colony of responsibilities which it was either unable to bear or unwilling to assume. Now, in 1888, wide extension of European control in Southern Africa was plainly about to take place. Assuming that this extension was to be British, was it to be carried out by the Colonial or by the Imperial authorities?"(1)

Those who believed that such expansion should be carried out by Imperial authorities were generally also in favour of the separation of the office of Cape Governor from that of High Commissioner. The reason was obvious. They feared that a man with these dual positions would as a rule tend towards giving greater prominence to the Colonial attitude than to the Imperial attitude to each problem tackled, with the probable result that Imperial interests would suffer, would, in fact, frequently not be taken into consideration at all.

It was this suddenly renewed interest in Imperial and Colonial expansion which led to the spate of correspondence on the subject of dual control in the years 1886-1888. The

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(1) Walker, De Villiers, p.199.

subject had been cropping up at odd intervals over the past few years, but had aroused no more than sporadic interest. Then, in 1885, Sir Charles Warren came out to South Africa to take charge of the expeditionary force to Bechuanaland. He soon antagonized the Cape Ministers, who were in any case against forcible pacification, by his interference in Griqualand West affairs, which were none of his concern, Griqualand West being part of the Cape. Therefore, when Robinson began rapping him on the knuckles for overstepping the bounds of his Commission in Bechuanaland, he complained bitterly to the Imperial Government that he was being so hemmed in by orders from Robinson that he could hardly act at all, and immediately jumped to the erroneous conclusion[1] that the High Commissioner was being influenced by spiteful Colonial Ministers and other officials to try to keep him from getting on with his job of forcibly pacifying Bechuanaland prior to its becoming a British Protectorate.[2] He accordingly began vehemently to recommend that England should manage native affairs through a High Commissioner, independent of the Governor and any Colonial influences.

This cry was taken up on all sides. First a deputation went to see Stanley (then Secretary of State for the Colonies) to inform him that they were in complete agreement with Warren's recommendations, and urging him to implement them without delay. Then, a meeting of Cape merchants at that time in London sent a resolution to Stanley to the effect that it was unfortunate that Warren had been recalled. They said that Native affairs beyond the Cape and Natal borders should be under the control of a special officer, free from Colonial influence, for it was impossible under existing conditions for the High Commissioner to take action in matters of extra-Colonial concern without deferring to the views of his Colonial Ministers.[3]

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(1) For proof that, although obviously resentful of Warren's interference, Ministers did not influence Robinson against him (except in so far as their Minutes on the subject indicate clearly their own views on Warren), see Minutes, Upington to Robinson, in PMO 287 passim; particularly Minutes 189, 199; 34.
(2) C 4432, passim.
(3) C 4643, No. 17, p.53, 16/9/1885.

Between June and August 1885, it so happened that Hofmeyr was in England. He had made the journey purely for health reasons, but he could not resist the opportunity to try to remove some of the misapprehensions about South African affairs in the minds of leading British politicians. Among the interviews he held was one with Stanley, during the course of which he pointed out to the Colonial Secretary that, as the Native question in the Colony cannot be separated from the Native question outside the Colony,

> "if you adopt Warren's proposals, you run the risk of finding that your two representatives hold each one-sided views, the one secretly opposed to the other, and the one complaining that his action is rendered nugatory by the action of the other - you will get endless misunderstandings and deadlocks",

whereas, if you have dual status, the Governor and High Commissioner will probably be able to reconcile the Imperial and Colonial views, thus avoiding misunderstandings, and enabling effective action to be taken where necessary.(1)

Robinson later thanked Hofmeyr for this, because the latter's interview with Stanley had gone a long way towards convincing the Colonial Secretary that the single man system was more advantageous than the separation of offices, a conviction that was crystallized by Robinson's reply to the resolution mentioned above.(2) In his reply,(3) Robinson pointed out in the first place, that owing to the fact that Tembuland, Emigrant Tambookieland, Galekaland and Bomvanaland, as well as St John's River and Walvis Bay, had all during the course of the past two Parliamentary sessions been annexed to the Cape, while the entire West Coast up to Frio Bay, with the exception of Walvis Bay, had also been recently annexed by Germany, there were therefore only four Native Territories left, Zululand, Pondoland, Basutoland and Bechuanaland. Zululand, he reminded the Minister, had in Frere's

(1) Hofmeyr, op.cit., pp.272-275; quotation from p.274.
(2) See page 90 above.
(3) C 4643, No. 44; Robinson to Stanley, 14/10/1885; pp. 195-197.

time been taken from the sphere of influence of the High Commissioner for South Africa and given into the care of the High Commissioner for South-East Africa. In 1882, Bulwer had, in addition to his appointment as Natal Governor, been appointed Special Commissioner for Zululand. In view of the close connections existing between these two territories, and because of the possibility of a Natal annexation of Zululand in the near future, the existing arrangement was the most convenient possible, and could be extended easily to include Swaziland, should that territory ever come into the British sphere of influence.

Pondoland, an independent native territory, was practically surrounded by Cape territory, with the Cape's recently-acquired St John's River Territory right in the heart of Pondoland. There were no Imperial officials inside Pondoland, and the High Commissioner conducted all his relations with the Pondos through the neighbouring Colonial officials (the Chief Magistrates in Tembuland and Griqualand East, and the Resident Magistrate in St John's River). Most of the questions discussed with the Pondos were about border thefts and disturbances, fugitive criminals, and evasions of Cape customs duties. Under the circumstances, it would obviously be practically impossible for an independent High Commissioner, resident in, say, Bechuanaland (or even, indeed, in the Cape), to conduct such affairs at all satisfactorily.

Basutoland, since its disannexation in 1884, had been governed by the High Commissioner under the terms of Order-in-Council, 2/2/1884. In this capacity, the High Commissioner is subject solely to the Imperial Government, and he is as independent of Ministers as if he were not the Cape Governor. He does not consult the Ministers, nor does he send them the reports of the Resident Commissioner. Nothing would therefore be gained by separation, for no change could possibly make Basutoland freer from Cape Ministerial control than it now is. In fact, any other system would simply be less convenient and more costly.

Bechuanaland had been an Imperial Protectorate since 1884. This step had been taken mainly in the interests of Cape trade, at the urgent request of the Cape Government. Following its policy of avoiding permanent commitments in the centre of South Africa, the Imperial Parliament was aiming at bringing about, as soon as possible, the annexation of Bechuanaland to the Cape. This being so, it should be obvious that a man who was both Governor and High Commissioner would be in the best position to carry such a scheme out, for he would be in constant confidential communication with the Cape Ministers. If that policy were to change, the High Commissioner would then be as little influenced by the Cape with regard to Bechuana affairs, as he was with regard to Basuto affairs.

Robinson summed up the situation by saying that, in the case of Zululand and Pondoland, separation would be impracticable, while in the case of Bechuanaland and Basutoland, it would be both unnecessary and undesirable. Where co-operation with the Cape was not desired, as was the case in Basutoland, the High Commissioner had as free a hand as if he were not also Governor of the Cape, while where co-operation was desired, as in Bechuanaland, separation would render much more difficult, if not altogether frustrate, the Imperial Government's policy.

Stanley's reply, to the effect that "I have to express my thanks to you for this valuable record of your opinion in this matter",(1) closed the subject from the official point of view, for the time being, at least.

In 1886, however, the Reverend John Mackenzie, whom we met earlier when he was Deputy Commissioner in Bechuanaland in 1885, entered the lists against Robinson. An excellent missioner, Mackenzie unfortunately believed himself to be also a politician of some capability, which he most certainly was not. Shrewd and sceptical in many ways, he had an almost

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(1) C 4643, No. 56; Stanley to Robinson, 30/11/1885; pp. 205-206.

childlike belief in the practicability of even his wildest schemes. He seems to have regarded it as his mission in life to persuade the British Government to extend its direct authority over all the native territories south of the Zambesi, to which end he had from time to time addressed long, rambling, vague letters to the British Government, filled with impracticable schemes. Finally, holding the beliefs he did, it is not surprising that he was violently separationist in the matter of dual powers.

On June 9th, 1886, he addressed to Granville a long letter on this subject, which the latter sent on to Robinson for comment.(1) In this letter, Mackenzie put forward a scheme whereby all of British-controlled South Africa, outside the Cape and Natal, would be under the overall control of an independent High Commissioner, the supreme Imperial officer in South Africa. After implying that, in some vague way, the presence of this officer would evoke such feelings of confidence in the minds of the Transvaal and Free State people that they would off their own bat request Confederation, under his general control, Mackenzie went on to make the even more remarkable and naïve statement that the Native chiefs would be so keen to come under this Imperial Commissioner that they would actually pay the expenses of the administration, in their areas, of the general scheme. He now declared himself to be sceptical of Robinson's statement that, in his capacity as High Commissioner, he was able to avoid being influenced by his Cape Ministers. As proof of such things having happened in the past, he declared that Frere, in 1880, had wanted to adopt a different policy from that the Cape Ministers were following, but that he had been prevented from so doing by his Ministers. This was a very good story, but as Robinson pointed out in his retort to this letter, it suffered from two defects, the first being that Frere had <u>not</u> wanted to adopt a different policy to the Ministers, the second and more important

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(1) C ~~2822~~ 4839, No. 52 (Enclosure); Mackenzie to Granville, 9/6/1886; pp. 100-105.

being that, as Basutoland was in 1880 a fully annexed part of the Cape, there could be absolutely no question of Frere even considering the possibility of acting in his capacity as High Commissioner.(1) Robinson also made the point that it was absurd to believe that a High Commissioner with such few territories under him could do all the wonderful things Mackenzie seemed to think he could do. Nor did he believe that the states of South Africa would be prepared to give up any of their independence to a Confederation under the personal rule of one official.

Mackenzie, undeterred by the hot reception his letter had received from Robinson, compiled another, even longer letter to the Colonial Office in London.(2) He had by now found powerful supporters both at the Cape and in England, while he was much heartened by the widespread belief, especially prevalent at the Cape, that the new Colonial Secretary, Holland (later Lord Knutsford), was sympathetic towards "the idea of the division of powers and the pursuit of an Imperial as distinct from a Colonial policy in South Africa".(3)

In this long letter, Mackenzie quoted opinions of Warren, the "Cape Times", and a certain Baron von Hübner, in support of his contention that the fact that the offices of High Commissioner and Governor were vested in the same person was, and could be, nothing but a cause of trouble, both to the man himself, and to those whose duty it was to advise him in one of his capacities, but not in the other. On closer examination, however, all three would fall away. Both Warren and von Hübner appear to have reasoned that, as Warren and Robinson had disagreed on many points, and as it was not possible that Warren could have been in the wrong, and as Robinson was also an Imperial man and could therefore not off his own bat think so differently from Warren, it therefore followed that Robinson

(1) C 4890, No. 24; Robinson to Granville, 4/8/1886; p.31.
(2) C 5488, No. 1; Mackenzie to Colonial Office London, 28/2/1887; pp. 3-15.
(3) Walker, De Villiers, p.199.

had been forced by his Ministers to act in the way he had acted. This line of reasoning had little to commend it.

The "Cape Times" article, dated 3/10/1885, gave veiled hints of undercover political strategy, involving Robinson. Mackenzie took this as proof of his contention that a certain Cape Party considered it its duty to advise the High Commissioner as well as the Govenor. However, what it probably meant was simply that Robinson, still a little bit uncertain of the Sprigg-Upington Government, prefered to go to the people he had in the past learnt to like and trust, people like Scanlen and Rhodes, when he was free to pick his own men for the job in hand, which meant in effect, when he was acting in his capacity as High Commissioner. He undoubtedly acted tactlessly at times, notably in his appointment of Rhodes to replace Mackenzie as Deputy Commissioner in Bechuanaland in August 1885, but he was not bound under such circumstances to select a member of the Government, unless he wanted to, for as High Commissioner, he could appoint or dismiss anyone under his jurisdiction.

Sprigg had said in July 1885, that

> " there are some matters in which the High Commissioner might receive the advice of his Ministers without following it. He could conceive some circumstances of that nature, but such circumstances have rarely, if ever, occured in this Colony".

Mackenzie, quoting this in his letter of February 28th 1887, took this to mean that the Ministers normally advised the High Commissioner, and that Sprigg was saying that he could not conceive a situation where the High Commissioner should not take such advise. Surely what Sprigg actually meant was that he could scarcely conceive a situation where the Ministers <u>should</u> advise the High Commissioner.

Mackenzie then blandly stated that his

> " arguements are not addressed against Sir Hercules

Robinson personally, but against the impossible and compromising offices which he has been called to fill, and the conjunction of which he thinks it his duty to defend",

and then branched off into a long, involved discussion on Imperial policy during the past few years, which he considered to be non-existent, and he closed by giving what in his opinion the duty of the Imperial Government was. This duty involved protectorates over all native chiefs as far north as the Zambesi, with the possibility of later still greater expansion. This plan the Imperial Government not unnaturally declared itself unwilling to adopt.(1)

In June 1888, Robinson, in a very blunt despatch to Knutsford,(2) demolished the case for separation, of which no more was heard after this, but so blunt had he been that relations between Knutsford and himself were thereafter somewhat strained. After giving a clear resumé of the geographicepolitical situation in South Africa, he posed and answered four questions which would arise if an independent High Commissioner were to be appointed. In the first place, it would be difficult to find a place for him to live. Secondly, he pointed out that the High Commissioner would have very small portions of South Africa only to deal with. Even there, he would have no advantage over the Governor and High Commissioner system now in existence, for it was a ddelusion to say that the Governor and High Commissioner was influenced by his Ministers.

> "In matters wherein the co-operation, or financial assistance of Ministers is not sought for, they have no more knowledge of the High C ommissioner's work, or control over it, than they have of the affairs of Natal or Mauritius".

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(1) C5488, No.2; Knutsford to Mackenzie, 25/3/1887, P.15.
(2) C5488, No.6; Robinson to Knutsford, 11/6/1888, pp. 16-19.

In the third place, the expenses involved would be enormous, while in the fourth, the British taxpayer would get no advantage at all from this expenditure, for Imperial and Colonial interests are not opposed, so that

> "the appointment of two officers is unnecessary, and would only result in cross purposes and friction".

He then took a deep breath, paused, and let fly.

> "I have been nearly eight years in South Africa. I am acquainted with the practical working of the existing administrative system, and with the varied conditions with which it has to deal. I have also no personal interest in the matter, my term of office having long since expired.
>
> The conclusion at which I have arrived is that the present plan by which the duties of High Commissioner and Special Commissioner are entrusted to the Governors of the Cape and Natal, is, apart altogether from its economy, the very best that can possibly be devised for effecting the object desired. What is that object? To reconcile as far as possible South African interests and opinions with Imperial obligations of honour and duty. Has the existing arrangement failed to secure this result? The Governments, Legislatures, and people generally of South Africa seem at all events satisfied with it, whilst the Imperial Government, as far as I am aware, have had no reason to complain of inability on the part of its representatives to give effect to Imperial wishes and policy. There is peace and rest now throughout the length and breadth of the country, and contentment prevails on all sides with existing arrangements. Why not leave well alone? Why risk a change which, in the judgement of the majority, would be disasterous?"

Even the "Cape Times", for long firmly separationist, agreed with this last remark of Robinson's,[1] while Sprigg, speaking in the Legislative Council, strongly asserted the friendliness of the relationships existing between the Cape Government and the High Commissioner,[2] and, finally, at the end of June, 1888, a unanimous resolution was passed by both Cape Houses of Parliament to the effect that

> "the separation of the Office of Governor of the Cape and High Commissioner would be fraught with danger to the future peace and welfare of South Africa."[3]

(1) C5488, Enclosure to No.6, 11/6/1888, pp. 19-20.
(2) C5488, (Enclosure to No.8, Robinson to Knutsford, 4/7/1888) pp. 21-22
(3) C5488, No.9, P.22.

C O N C L U S I O N.

On May 1st, 1889, Robinson left on leave for England. Early in June, the Cape learned with deep regret that he had decided to retire, and that his resignstion had been accepted. This was a great blow to the many, from Cape Town to Pretoria, who had hoped that he was going to England merely to be reappointed.

However, his clash with Knutsford of the previous year had made such reappointment somewhat unlikely. Three days before he was due to leave, it became absolutely certain that he would not be reappointed, when, in a fit of indiscretion, he

> "delivered himself of a speech, in which he laid bare his ideas of the Government of South Africa. What he believed to be the true policy, was Colonial expansion through Imperial aid, but for the rest he declared, that there was no place for direct Imperial rule in South Africa, and he deprecated the 'amateur meddling of irresponsible and ill-advised persons in England, which makes every resident in the Republics, English as well as Dutch, rejoice in their independence and converts many a Colonist from an Imperialist into a Republican.' "(1)

This speech raised a terrific furore in England, and Robinson , unable to obtain any assurances of support, refused to return, and on December 13th 1889, Sir Hugh Loch replaced him as Governor and High Commissioner for South Africa.

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(1) Hofmeyr, op. cit., P.386.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

The two chief sources of information for this thesis were the Government House Records and the Archives of the Prime Minister's Office (Cape of Good Hope), both housed in the Government Archives in Cape Town. Particularly useful was the Government House collection, containing as it does Despatches, Letters, Minutes, Telegrams and various other Papers passing between the Governor and High Commissioner and the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Native Chiefs, Government Officials throughout South Africa, and the Cape Ministers and Parliament. The Prime Minister's Office records, which consist chiefly of Minutes passing between the Governor and High Commissioner and the Cape Ministers, was particularly useful for events occurring in the Cape and the various territories it administered, although documents dealing with events in other parts of the country also appear in these records.

The Prime Minister's Office records cover the complete period of the thesis, but unfortunately the Government House documents come to an end in 1885. The records in this series which deal with the period from 1885 were transferred to the Archives at Cape Town late in 1954, and have not yet been sorted. When I inquired, at the beginning of this year, whether these documents would be made available to me for research purposes, I was informed by the Cape Town Archivist, that they would be. Later, however, strict instructions were received from Pretoria to the effect that no access to these documents was to be given to anyone until such time as they were fully sorted. I was thus cut off from what would probably have proved to be a profitable source of information.

Fortunately, however, Robinson was during the second half of the period faced with fewer pressing problems than had been the case during the first four years of his period in office, and I was able to compensate to a large extent for the non-availability of the later Government House papers, partly through

the use of the Prime Minister's Office records, and partly through the use of Imperial Blue Books published in this period, these latter being particularly useful in the question of Swaziland, and even more important, in the whole controversy over the question of whether or not the Governorship of the Cape should be separated from the High Commissionership of South Africa.

Apart from these extremely full primary series of documents, very little information was to be had on Robinson. He himself does not appear to have written anything for publication and no biography, as far as I could ascertain, has been written on him.

Aside from the lack of a biography on Robinson, the situation with regard to secondary sources generally was disappointing. Professor E. A. Walker's invaluable History of South Africa provided much of the necessary general background material, while the same author's Lord de Villiers and his Times was very useful, especially in regard to the Transvaal, and the Cape. J. H. Hofmeyr's Life of Jan Hendrik Hofmeyr was possibly the most valuable secondary source of information, particularly as regards the Cape. Sir Godfrey Lagden's The Basutos, and Miss Peters' thesis on Bechuanaland (especially the Introduction) were also useful in their own spheres. Little information was to be found in other works consulted.

Finally, a word about the footnotes to the thesis. Throughout, the symbols GH and PMO are used to signify the Government House and Prime Minister's Office records respectively, and these symbols are immediately followed by the archival index number of the volume from which the document quoted is extracted, exact page references, where they exist, being also given. Walker's History of South Africa and his Lord de Villiers and his Times are throughout referred to as, respectively, "Walker, History" and "Walker, De Villiers". Imperial Blue Books are referred to by their "C" numbers. All other sources referred to are given in full.

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