

The British Government replied that it was prepared to consider the proposals indicated on their merits.

On August 19th, the Transvaal State Secretary presented a note of what his Government was prepared to recommend to the Volksraad ; *but it did not contain the proposal above quoted.*

This important omission having been brought to the attention of the State Secretary *he repudiated the British Agent's version of the matter, although the British Agent's telegram containing that identical proposition was initialled by the Transvaal State Attorney, who had represented his Government in the discussion of which the said telegram was the result.*

And further to show the shifting and unscrupulous methods of the Transvaal in these negotiations : when now, for the first time, proposing a franchise likely to prove acceptable to the Uitlanders, and consequently also to the British Government, they made it an express condition thereof that the claim of suzerainty should be abandoned, a condition which Sir Alfred Milner had declared at Bloemfontein could under no circumstances be entertained.

The British Government, while admitting that this franchise scheme was an enormous improvement on the previous ones, and expressing the opinion that it could easily be made the basis of a satisfactory settlement of the Uitlanders' grievances, firmly declined to accept the conditions attached thereto, and the Transvaal refused to withdraw them. There these negotiations really ended, although the Transvaal, until the last, kept up the pretence of wishing to come to an understanding, but with a lack of good faith which the despatches only too plainly show.

THE BRITISH CLAIM OF SUZERAINTY.

The term "suzerainty" is admittedly somewhat difficult of precise definition; but it has been stated time and again on the English side to mean that she, as the power having the vastly preponderating possessions and interests in South Africa, cannot permit anything dangerous to those possessions or interests to be done by the Transvaal, whether within its own borders or not.

The British Government maintain that the right of England to take that position is recognized by the Conventions of 1881 and 1884. They hold that although the *articles* of the former were replaced by those of the latter, the *preamble* of the first Convention was preserved. The Transvaal Government assert that the Convention of 1881 was entirely annulled by the later agreement; and to support their contention they have not hesitated to disregard certain evident facts, nor even to make statements which are positively without foundation.

We must leave it to lawyers to decide what the true interpretation of the document is; but we may at least look at the ground taken by the parties in their discussion thereof.