

Dutch shipping had a legitimate *point d'appui* in the very centre of the English colonial system. It has further been pointed out that the Dutch were making attacks upon English forts in West Africa; so that the moment was not one of complete peace. Still, whatever excuses may be offered, the transaction was not one of which Englishmen have reason to be proud; English diplomatic action at the Hague can best be described by saying that it resembled German diplomatic action at Brussels before the violation of Belgian neutrality. In theory, English statesmen had always maintained that the Dutch were trespassers in a part of North America included in the English claim; and so, when the Dutch protested against the capture of New Netherland by force, the English ambassador arrogantly replied that 'the king did not look upon himself as obliged to give any account of what he did in relation thereunto . . . no more than he should think himself obliged . . . to have their consent in case he should think fit to proceed against the Dutch that live in the Fens in England'. But, whatever were the faults of the original proceedings, there can be no doubt as to the wisdom of English action afterwards. The conditions granted upon the surrender have been termed 'the most favourable ever granted by a conqueror'. The new English governor organized the government with an almost imperceptible interruption of the past state of affairs. The day after the surrender the local municipal bodies assembled and transacted business as though nothing had occurred. Most of the Dutch inhabitants came forward and took the oath of allegiance to their new sovereign, continuing almost undisturbed in their daily pursuits. The rule of the