

nature of the changes shall be ; and third, those who, impressed with the advantage of the connection to both, regard its perpetuation as a paramount consideration ; who believe that on the whole the existing relations do not work badly, but who are ready to consider in what respect they may be shown to operate unfairly, and are equally prepared to revise them and to remedy whatever is inequitable ; who deprecate the attempt now made to apportion with sharpness and precision, and by one general rule, the exact rights and duties of each in the future, and to supersede a system which answers all present ends by one which is wholly experimental ;—but who, seeing in the present unsettled aspect of the question many elements of danger, consider that some authoritative expression of opinion or other form of action is called for, affirming the supreme condition of maintaining the integrity of the empire.

The merits of these various views can hardly fail to undergo discussion during the coming Session. Indeed, it would be most undesirable that discussion should be postponed, for, although I fail to perceive the existence of any tangible colonial grievance calling for relief by Parliament at present, it cannot be denied that the leaven of uncertainty and apprehension is doing its work in the colonies, from Canada to Australia ; and the consequences of allowing the question to drift on without some guidance cannot be other than pernicious. Continued speculation and doubts as to the probable immediate future is not a condition calculated to further contentment or the progress of a community. Men are distracted by the discussion of theories from the practical duty of the day ; good administration and the adoption of sound views of policy are all subordinate ; and becoming aspirations, either as Englishmen or as men founding a new nationality of their own, worthy of their race, are for the time wholly repressed.